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**Joint Convention
on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and
on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management**

Remarks of the President of the Sixth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties
21 May 2018, IAEA Headquarters, Vienna, Austria

Director-General Amano, thank you for your opening remarks. I would like to add my personal remarks and guidance to the distinguished delegates gathered here as Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention.

The diverse applications of nuclear energy are fundamental to our everyday life. Application of nuclear technology and radioactive materials provide a vital contribution to modern society, as do the radioactive sources used in industry, medicine, agriculture, research and other fields. As we continue to expand our application of nuclear technology radioactive materials and radioactive sources, one cannot overemphasise the need to ensure the safe management of the spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste arising from these applications, to assure the protection of persons, property and the environment, and continue to earn the trust of society at large that the continued and expanding applications of nuclear technologies are both safe and sustainable.

The Joint Convention applies to countries both with and without nuclear power programs and is aimed at

- achieving and maintaining a high level of safety in spent fuel and radioactive waste management,
- ensuring that there are effective defences against potential hazards during all stages of management of such materials,
- preventing accidents with radiological consequences, and
- to mitigate their consequences should they occur.

I am very pleased to confirm to you that since the last review meeting, in May 2015, the number of Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention has increased from 69 and with the recent addition of Mexico the number of Contracting Parties is now 78. I invite you to join me in expressing a special welcome to our new Contracting Parties – Botswana, Cuba, Jordan, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mexico, Niger, Peru, and Serbia.

[applause]

As encouraging as this is, it must however be recognised that a number of IAEA Member States are not yet Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention. Included among these are

- some Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and
- several States that have issued expressions of support for the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

We need to collectively increase our efforts to encourage those IAEA member states who are not yet Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention to become Contracting Parties.

Since the inception of the review meetings in 2003, the peer review process has evolved and continues to mature. In our last review meeting we piloted the application of a revised definition to the concept of Good Practice. During the Third Extraordinary Meeting and, as confirmed during the Organizational Meeting for the Sixth Review Meeting, held over the period 16–19 May 2017, the Contracting Parties agreed that, similar to the approach used during the Seventh Review Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), the concept of “Areas of Good Performance” would be introduced on a trial basis during this Sixth Review Meeting. The Chairs of the Country Groups will guide you on the application of this new concept in the respective Country Groups. Furthermore, the officers of the Joint Convention Sixth Review Meeting committed to a rigorous and uniform application of the concepts of “Good Practice” and “Area of Good Performance” during the Sixth Review Meeting.

I am delighted to confirm that 75 of the 78 Contracting Parties have submitted their National Reports ahead of this review meeting. It must be remembered that the Joint Convention entered into force for Mexico on 17 May 2018, which was just a few days ago, consequently Mexico has not submitted a National Report but will make a presentation in the Country Group sessions. Uzbekistan has submitted a National Report in Russian only. National Reports have not been received from Gabon and Niger. Furthermore, Kyrgyzstan initially submitted a National Report in Russian only, this has however subsequently been withdrawn.

Following review of the National Reports, the Contracting Parties have raised an impressive 3684 written questions and comments on National Reports submitted. The fact that all Contracting Parties that submitted a National Report received questions from other Contracting Parties, is evidence of the improved functioning of the peer review process and the commitment of you, the Contracting Parties.

I am also very pleased to report that, in response to the questions/comments raised, a total of 3563 responses were provided ahead of this review meeting. It must however be noted that 5 Contracting Parties have not submitted responses to questions/comments posed on their National Reports.

A robust peer review process requires full and active engagement by all Contracting Parties. I look forward to your constructive exchanges and sharing of knowledge and experiences over the next few days and thank you for your commitment in ensuring the enhancement of safety in spent fuel management and radioactive waste management. In the interest of transparency, I urge all Contracting Parties to make their National Reports publicly available through the IAEA website and to share their National Presentations in the JC secure web.

Thank you.

ENDS