

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AT SEVILLE IRRS MEETING**

**SEVILLE (SPAIN)**

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I am grateful to the Spanish Nuclear Safety Council (Consejo de Seguridad Nuclear) for taking the initiative to host this workshop on lessons learned from the IAEA's Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS).

I believe IRRS, which was launched in 2006, is making a significant contribution to improving international nuclear safety. Key to its success is the fact that it relies on peer review and information exchange on safety practices regarding nuclear installations, radiation, waste, transport, emergency preparedness and security.

The IRRS is neither an inspection nor an audit. Rather, it is a mutual learning mechanism through which the IAEA helps Member States strengthen their national regulatory infrastructure.

There has been talk for some years of the likelihood of a nuclear renaissance, but not a single new country has introduced a new nuclear power programme since 1996, when the first Romanian plant joined the grid. However, it seems that change is finally in the air.

In the past few years, no fewer than 50 countries have informed the Agency that they are considering introducing nuclear power, 12 of which are making active preparations. Most of the likely newcomers are in the developing world.

Overall, nuclear safety throughout the world has improved significantly, but vulnerabilities remain and continued vigilance is required. We must work together to close the gaps that exist today in the coverage of international safety conventions and codes of conduct. A single nuclear accident anywhere in the world would be a major setback to the future of nuclear power everywhere. It is essential to ensure that a true safety culture takes root worldwide, not least in countries new to nuclear power.

IRRS focuses on requirements for the legislative framework and the effectiveness of regulatory body activities. The successes of the first missions in Romania, the United Kingdom and France clearly demonstrated the value of the service to both reviewers and host countries. A nuclear security module was added for the first time this year here in Spain. It is encouraging to see how many other countries have requested the service in the coming years.

While nuclear regulation remains a national responsibility, international nuclear regulatory forums have been established to strengthen cooperation and harmonization of safety approaches, exchange information and best practices and address common regulatory challenges.

The IAEA Safety Standards, designed to protect people and the environment from the harmful effects of ionizing radiation, are the essential reference documents for the IRRS missions.

Earlier this year, a Commission of Eminent Persons, appointed by me, issued a report on the future of the IAEA up to 2020 and beyond. It gave special attention to the issue of nuclear safety and recommended, among other things, that the Agency should lead an international effort to establish a global nuclear safety network, based on *binding* agreements instead of the current voluntary system. It also proposed that international nuclear safety peer reviews should be made mandatory. It is my hope that Member States will give serious consideration to the Commission's proposals.

I very much welcome Spain's decision to make use of IRRS and congratulate the Consejo de Seguridad Nuclear under the able leadership of its President, Carmen Martínez Ten, for taking this initiative. I wish you a successful meeting and compliment you on the contribution your deliberations will make to improving nuclear safety throughout the world.