

Press Release Statement

31 August 2012

Main Conclusions of the 2nd Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety

Nuclear regulators and operators reaffirmed their commitment to nuclear safety at the 2nd Extraordinary Meeting of the CPs to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. We must ensure that operators, who have the primary responsibility for safe operation of nuclear power plants, make needed safety improvements to address and draw the lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi accident.

1. Nuclear power plants are robust facilities designed to withstand a wide range of natural hazards. Nonetheless, the Contracting Parties have undertaken comprehensive reassessments (e.g. stress tests) of natural hazards, including earthquake and floods, to identify measures to improve nuclear safety based on the lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi accident. Improvements to the plant design, procedures and processes have been implemented or are in progress and as further information and analysis on the accident emerges, which will take several years, the Contracting Parties remain committed to take any follow-up and additional actions needed, to enhance the ability of nuclear power plants to withstand natural hazards.

2. The Contracting Parties agreed that nuclear power plants should be designed, constructed and operated with the objectives of preventing accidents and, should an accident occur, mitigating its effects and avoiding off-site contamination. The Contracting Parties also noted that regulatory authorities should ensure that these objectives are applied in order to identify and implement appropriate safety improvements at existing plants.

3. The regulator's top priority must be to protect public health and safety. The Contracting Parties will ensure that regulatory bodies have sufficient resources to undertake their duties and are effectively independent from entities having responsibilities or interests in the promotion or utilization of nuclear energy that could conflict or unduly influence the regulator's decision making.

4. The Contracting Parties encourage international cooperation through the IAEA and networks of regulators, operators and technical support organizations, to share information on the lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi accident.

5. The Contracting Parties recognize that it is important to share information, including predictive tools, on extreme natural hazards at nuclear power plants and to update the relevant IAEA guidelines. These updates will also serve to enhance the reassessment of such hazards, plant robustness, and timely in-depth safety assessment, such as Periodic Safety Reviews. In addition, communicating the outcome of these assessments in an open and transparent way to the public remains a high priority.

6. The Contracting Parties highlighted the importance of maintaining containment integrity to protect public health and safety in case of a severe accident, and agreed that, where appropriate, to take further measures to maintain containment and to prevent a large radiation release would be taken.

7. The Contracting Parties agreed that on-site and off-site emergency preparedness should be enhanced to ensure the public is adequately protected from all events, including severe accidents.

8. The Contracting Parties agreed that the National Reports for the 6th Review Meeting, and subsequent Review Meetings, would include information about how IAEA Safety Standards are taken into account in a Contracting Party's obligation to implement the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

9. The Contracting Parties made several revisions to the procedures and guidance, which will ensure more robust peer reviews process and greater transparency. In addition, a working group open to all Contracting Parties was established with the task of reporting to the next Review Meeting on a list of actions to strengthen the peer review process and on proposals to amend, when necessary, the Convention.