



International Atomic Energy Agency
INFORMATION CIRCULAR

INF

IAEA - INFCIRC/507/Add.1
5 June 1996

GENERAL Distr.
Original: ENGLISH



XA9744067

**COMMUNICATION TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
OF 24 APRIL 1996 RECEIVED FROM THE
RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SAUDI ARABIA
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

Reply by the Director General

The text of the Director General's reply to the communication of 24 April 1996, reproduced in the Attachment to document INFCIRC/507, is also being circulated for the information of Member States.

**TEXT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPLY TO THE COMMUNICATION
FROM THE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SAUDI ARABIA
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

Excellency,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 24 April 1996 concerning the Israeli Dimona Reactor. As requested, your letter has been circulated for the information of Member States (INFCIRC/507, 8 May 1996).

As you are aware, the IAEA has been endeavouring to establish internationally binding legal norms in the field of nuclear safety. The Nuclear Safety Convention relevant to nuclear power reactors has recently been concluded and it is hoped that it will enter into force sometime this year. A Convention on the Safe Management of Radioactive Waste is under active preparation by an international technical and legal group of experts from the Agency's Member States. At present the Agency's role is limited to providing advisory services, facilitating exchange of information and developing safety standards. These standards, which are recommendatory in nature, are not, however, legally binding upon the Member States. It follows that, unless requested and authorized by a Member State, the Agency has no legal authority to make radiological measurements within a State or intervene, even in cases of nuclear accidents except with regard to an Agency project.

The Agency has been entrusted with certain responsibilities under the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident. Under the terms of that Convention, Parties to the Convention are obliged to inform the IAEA and potentially affected States, either directly or through the Agency, of a possible or actual transboundary radioactive release that could be of radiological safety significance. No such notification has been received from Israel, as Party to the Early Notification Convention, relating to the Dimona Research Reactor.

Mr. Essa Al-Nowaiser
Dean of the Arab Diplomatic Corps and
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia
to the IAEA
Formanekgasse 38
A-1190 Vienna

In view of media reports brought to our attention on a leak from the reactor, the Agency on 4 April 1996 approached the competent authorities in Israel to ask them to comment on these reports. As a consequence of that enquiry, the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission informed the Agency on 12 April 1996 that "The Ministry of the Environment [of Israel] monitors the air, water and ground outside the perimeter of the Nuclear Research Centre Negev (NRCN) and to this day no radioactive leakage endangering the population has been detected. NRCN monitoring inside its perimeter ensures the same results" and that "the radioactive waste at the NRCN does not endanger the population, the environment and water sources. All the waste is stored safely according to the strictest international criteria and is constantly monitored. No contamination was ever detected".

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(signed) Hans Blix
Director General