



## Japanese crisis highlights need for enhanced nuclear safety, transparency – UN



IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano

4 April 2011 – The head of the United Nations atomic watchdog agency today called for robust safety standards and full transparency, both of which are vital for restoring public confidence in nuclear power in the wake of the Japanese power plant crisis.

“The worries of millions of people throughout the world about whether nuclear energy is safe must be taken seriously,” Yukiya Amano, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), told delegates gathered in Vienna for the Fifth Review Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety Convention.

“Rigorous adherence to the most robust international safety standards and full transparency, in good times and bad, are vital for restoring and maintaining public confidence in nuclear power,” he stated

The situation at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant remains “very serious,” he told the opening of the 10-day conference. The plant suffered major damage from the earthquake and tsunami that struck the country on 11 March and has been spewing radioactive contamination into the environment ever since.

“The immediate priority is to overcome the crisis and stabilize the reactors. But we must also begin the process of reflection and evaluation,” said Mr. Amano, who will be convening a high-level meeting of IAEA Member States in June to discuss the Japan crisis.

He reported that, as of the end of 2010, more than 60 IAEA Member States had informed the agency that they were considering introducing nuclear power programmes. Almost all of the 29 countries which already had such programmes planned to expand them.

In the light of the Fukushima Daiichi accident, some countries have announced reviews of their plans for nuclear power.

However, the basic drivers behind the interest in nuclear power have not changed as a result of Fukushima. These include rising global energy demand as well as concerns about climate change, volatile fossil fuel prices and energy security.

Nuclear power has contributed to expanding the supply of energy and has also reduced greenhouse gas and other emissions.

"The IAEA will continue to work closely with both established users and newcomers to ensure that nuclear power is used efficiently, safely and securely, and without proliferation of nuclear weapons," said the Director General.

"In the light of the Fukushima accident, we will redouble our efforts to help newcomer countries to put an effective nuclear safety infrastructure in place well before the first reactor starts up."

Mr. Amano added that a 'business as usual' approach will no longer work. "It is clear that more needs to be done to strengthen the safety of nuclear power plants so that the risk of a future accident is significantly reduced."

The Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) is a legally binding international instrument borne out of the Chernobyl nuclear accident 25 years ago for which IAEA provides the secretariat.

Seventy-two countries are contracting parties to the Convention, which aims to promote nuclear safety, safety culture, safety management and knowledge sharing among current and future nuclear power States.

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