
STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL

6TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

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INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

I carry a simple message on behalf of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In your deliberations on climate change, we ask that you consider nuclear power in exactly *that* context — that is, in terms of its impact on future climate change.

The membership of the IAEA consists of 130 countries, nearly all of which are parties to the UNFCCC. Our mandate contains three fundamental objectives: to help ensure nuclear safety worldwide; to help prevent nuclear weapons proliferation; and to enhance the contribution of nuclear technologies towards meeting, in a sustainable manner, the needs of Member States — not only with regard to nuclear power, but also in areas ranging from agriculture and medicine to hydrology, industry and protection of the environment. Additionally, in 1999 our members — in large part *you*, the Parties to the Convention — specifically asked that we assist our developing country members to explore and prepare potential Clean Development Mechanism projects based on nuclear power.

Yet, there are currently proposals before you to exclude nuclear power from the CDM, JI, and/or emission trading. Such proposals, however, *cannot* be based on climate concerns; nuclear is undeniably benign.

The underlying concerns about nuclear power are rather that it could be unsafe, uneconomic, or associated with weapons production. But we respectfully suggest that negotiations on climate change are not the appropriate forum to deal with any of these concerns. As regards *safety*, the Convention on Nuclear Safety provides an effective international mechanism for review. Moreover, the conventional wisdom among technical experts is that most nuclear reactors are safe — the remainder are being either upgraded or phased out — and that the means exist for dealing safely with waste. Regarding *costs*, it is investors who are best equipped to forecast what will be economically attractive in 2010. And, as concerns *proliferation*, there is in place the robust, near-universal, indefinitely extended Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the growing adherence to the Additional Protocol, which further strengthens the safeguards agreements under this Treaty. Finally, it should be noted that nuclear power is a relatively young and evolving technology and work is currently well under way on the development of new generation reactors which use inherent safety mechanisms, and are both proliferation resistant and economically more competitive.

Reducing future greenhouse gas emissions is the issue before you. With continuing population and economic growth, and increasing needs in the developing world, substantially greater electricity demand is a given. Nuclear power is today a significant contributor to both the world's electricity supply *and* greenhouse gas abatement. More specifically, it produces 16% of the world's electricity, and, in doing so, avoids 8% in GHG emissions which would otherwise result. That amounts to approximately 600 million tonnes less of carbon annually, about the same as is avoided by hydropower. Moreover, nuclear power has the potential for much greater capacity — without adding GHG emissions.

At this juncture, the exclusion of *any* technology with clear climate benefits can only limit options, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness. The best chance for sustainable development — that is, for meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs — lies in allowing those future generations to make their own decisions about energy supply options, and allowing all these options to compete on a level playing field.

Thank you.