

Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety
15-17 December 2012

Statement by Dr RB Grover, Principal Advisor DAE

Excellency Mr K Gemba Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan,

Excellency, Dr. Onkili, Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation of Malaysia,

Excellency, Mr Yukiya Amano, Director General of the IAEA,

On behalf of the Indian Delegation, I would like to convey our appreciation to the Government of Japan for organizing this Ministerial Conference in co-sponsorship with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). At the outset I would like to express our solidarity with the Japanese people, in particular those from the Fukushima Prefecture, where this Conference is being held, in the face of the grave tragedy resulting from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami while noting the admirable recovery and reconstruction efforts that have been undertaken since. This Conference is an invaluable opportunity to share further knowledge and lessons learned from the Fukushima accident and to contribute to international efforts for strengthening nuclear safety worldwide.

India views nuclear energy as an essential element of its national energy basket and is committed to taking forward its three stage nuclear programme based on a closed fuel cycle. India is undertaking a major expansion of its nuclear energy programme in the coming decades and expected to reach 20,000 MW by 2020. Our nuclear safety track record has been impeccable about 365 reactor years of operation. India is committed to continuous improvement and innovation in our nuclear safety standards and practices covering the entire range of activities – siting, design, construction, operation and up-gradation.

Speaking in Parliament after the Fukushima incidents, the Prime Minister of India underscored that safety of our nuclear plants is a matter of the highest priority and ordered safety audits of all Indian nuclear power plants. Specific task forces were constituted to review safety of various reactor designs by the Nuclear Power Corporation of India. Committees of specialists to review and recommend safety upgrades were constituted by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board. At the same time, our Government has introduced a bill in Parliament to create an independent and autonomous Nuclear Safety Regulatory Authority to strengthen India's nuclear safety regulatory framework by conferring statutory status to the regulatory body. India's National Disaster Management Authority has drawn up "Management of Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies" which provides a holistic and integrated approach to disaster management at nuclear power plants. India has submitted a detailed National Report, available on the Agency website, on actions taken subsequent to the Fukushima nuclear accident to the Second

Extraordinary meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety held in August this year, which was peer reviewed by the Contracting Parties of the CNS.

At the request of the Indian Government, Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) from IAEA performed an in-depth operational safety review at units 3 and 4 of the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station which identified a number of good practices at the plants and made a number of recommendations which will be addressed by the Plant Management which has also requested that the IAEA to schedule a follow-up mission in another 15 months. We also plan to approach the IAEA to invite the Agency's Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) for peer review of our regulatory system. India has participated and benefitted from peer reviews of WANO and will be participating in the multi-national design evaluation programme of the OCED-NEA.

We appreciate the efforts of the Director General His Excellency Yukiya Amano and the activities undertaken by the International Atomic Energy Agency to coordinate international efforts to address the concerns of the safety of nuclear power plants against extreme natural hazards. While nuclear safety will continue to be primarily a national responsibility, we believe that the Agency has the required mandate and the necessary competence to steer efforts to strengthen relevant cooperation mechanisms to enhance nuclear safety. This is important to enhance public confidence in nuclear power as a safe, secure and clean source of energy.

In addition to enhancing safety, it is also essential to project credible and authentic scientific information on the effects of nuclear radiation on human health to dispel misconceptions against nuclear power. The IAEA should take the lead and coordinate with other appropriate international organizations to consolidate and review all relevant updated scientific findings to help dispel misperceptions in public mind regarding low-dose radiation effect. The Agency has, over the years, developed capabilities to undertake appropriate technical assessments through effective pooling of resources for the benefit of Member States.

The IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June 2011 convened at the initiative of the Director General served as a platform to make an initial assessment of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident and lessons to be drawn from it. The Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Conference and the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety subsequently approved by the Board of Governors in September 2011 provided the way forward. India is committed to the successful implementation of the Action Plan. We appreciate the information that has been made available by the Government of Japan and look forward to the Agency's Comprehensive Report on the Fukushima accident in 2014.

The Convention on Nuclear Safety is the pillar of the international safety regime. The 2nd Extraordinary Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties which took place in Vienna in August 2012 provided a platform to gain valuable insights to address issues emerging from the accident. The Convention on Early Notification

of a Nuclear Accident is an important instrument for prompt information sharing with the Agency and the states affected in cases of significant trans-boundary radiological incidents.

India will actively contribute to international efforts for enhanced nuclear safety standards and practices, evolved through consultations, based on a scientific and objective approach that allows sharing of scientific knowledge and technology relating to nuclear safety, promotion of innovation and investment in new technologies and increased transparency and capacity building that allows timely response to nuclear accidents should they occur.

Enhanced nuclear safety standards would enhance public confidence in nuclear energy as a clean, affordable, safe and secure source of energy, vital to meeting global energy demands especially in developing countries. We hope that this meeting would send a strong and unambiguous signal of support for nuclear energy while underlining our common determination to strengthen the mandate and resources of the IAEA to discharge its role and responsibilities.

Thank you.