

**MDEP CONFERENCE ON NEW REACTOR DESIGN ACTIVITIES  
10-11 September 2009**

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

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Good morning everyone. I would like to welcome you in the name of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) to the first Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP) Conference on New Reactor Design Activities and to the OECDs Headquarters. At this event, at which there are more than 170 attendees representing 23 countries and 10 international organizations, we will be discussing between regulatory authorities and the industry, the joint efforts of regulators from various countries to ensure that the new reactor designs, so important for the future of nuclear power, are safe, secure, and environmentally friendly.

I would like to commend you for taking time out of your very busy schedules to discuss the ongoing activities and accomplishments of the MDEP and the international initiatives that the industry and other stakeholders are undertaking to increase the focus on safety in new reactor designs. I would like to welcome and thank Mr. André-Claude Lacoste, President of the French Nuclear Safety Authority and Chairman of the MDEP Policy Group, for his efforts on this important multinational initiative. He has provided excellent guidance and forethought to the MDEP organization by bringing his expertise to the table. Thanks also to the Policy Group for placing its trust in the NEA who is proud of performing the technical secretariat duties for the MDEP, through its experienced staff and because of our well established communications lines with the other Committees and Programmes of the NEA, such as the Committee for Nuclear Regulatory Activities (CNRA), the Committee for the Safety of Nuclear Installations (CSNI), and the Generation IV International Forum (GIF).

Coordination of MDEP efforts with these groups as well as with the IAEA that takes part in MDEP, other international groups, and industry representatives, is one of the most important goals of the MDEP. This Programme was initiated by the member countries to address near term needs to cooperate on new reactor designs and it is meant to complement the work that others are doing to ensure the safety of new nuclear power generating facilities through standardization of designs and regulatory requirements and practices.

A number of you may be unfamiliar with the OECD and NEA so let me briefly explain their roles. The OECD brings together the governments of countries committed to democracy and the market economy from around the world. Under the OECD umbrella the 30 member countries work together to support sustainable economic growth, to raise the living standards in their countries and to assist the economic development of other countries. The organisation provides a setting where governments compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practices and coordinate domestic and international policies. The topic which is gathering us here today fits very well with the aim of the Organisation.

The Nuclear Energy Agency, a member of the OECD family, has 28 of the 30 OECD members. Our mission, in line with the overall aim of the OECD, is to assist our member countries in maintaining and further developing through international cooperation, the scientific, technological and legal bases for a safe, environmentally friendly and economic use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Our members include very advanced nuclear countries and represent 85% of the world's nuclear capacity. In addition we have a well established and formal relationship with the Russian Federation. Last October, the NEA

celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of providing quality service to its member countries in supporting the safe use of nuclear power. With the efforts that are ongoing now as part of the MDEP with respect to new reactors, nuclear power will be in a better position to remain a key part of the energy mix for many decades to come and, as such, the NEA looks forward to continuing its value-adding work in this field.

Speaking of the future, I hope that some of you are familiar with the Nuclear Energy Outlook (NEO) produced by the NEA in 2008 on the occasion of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The NEO addresses, among other things, how nuclear energy can play a pivotal role in minimizing the negative consequences of the world's growing energy demand. The NEO is considered by many to be "THE Reference" for looking at the future of nuclear power around the world, as well as for analysing the challenges ahead and the role of governments to cope with these challenges. In addition to the English and French versions, a complete Japanese version was produced with the financial support of the Japanese government. The Executive Summary itself was issued in 10 languages. We are hoping to update this document periodically to reflect the ever evolving challenges for the future.

With regard to important challenges, the NEA is helping to address some of the most important societal issues facing the world today. One such issue is for example ensuring the safe supply of medical radioisotopes. With the assistance of the government of Canada and the French Nuclear Safety Authority, the NEA quickly organized a workshop to bring together some of the key players in the production, supply, and distribution chains of these important radioisotopes. The result was a fuller understanding of the challenges ahead and recommendations to try to ensure the continued availability of medical radioisotopes. I mention this issue because it emphasizes the importance of the work we do. The NEA sees

the work with MDEP to have very significant influence, to ensure that the construction and operation of NEW nuclear reactors is SAFE, SECURE, and ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY, and you all play an important part in this work.

It is also with the spirit of addressing new challenges that the NEA welcomes performing the technical secretariat functions for the MDEP. We were involved in the very initial discussions of this unique multinational initiative with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the French Nuclear Safety Authority in 2005 and we are happy to see that the Programme has been converted to a long term project that focuses on interim results so that we can facilitate the cooperation on new reactor design reviews, exploring opportunities to converge on regulatory requirements and practices, and coordinating vendor inspections.

So...with such a lofty goal as helping to ensure the safety of the new reactor fleet worldwide.....I encourage you to get the most out of this conference – to provide frank and constructive comments and let others benefit from your experience. Take a look at the subjects that we will be discussing in each of the 6 Sessions. Today we have the status of the work and accomplishments of the MDEP. As you will hear, this is a unique multinational initiative that looks to leverage the expertise of the involved regulators to cooperate on new reactor design reviews as well as to work towards harmonization and standardization of regulatory requirements and practices. We invite your perspectives on this programme and how we may be able to better achieve results. The conduct of this Conference is a result of the MDEP Policy Group wanting to solicit input from industry stakeholders and to more fully communicate the work of MDEP to the entire spectrum of stakeholders. The work to date already includes input from industry standards development organizations such as IEC,

AFCEN, ASME, JSME and KEPIC, and some vendors and licensees worldwide. Tomorrow, the industry will share with us the efforts that they are undertaking to encourage standardization also. The benefits of standardization and harmonization in both reactor designs and regulatory requirements and practices will allow all stakeholders (whether they be vendors, licensees, or regulators) to focus their limited resources on those issues that are the most safety significant. You will certainly hear more about that throughout the next two days.

To wrap up, I would again like to thank you for attending this event and I look forward to productive interactions with and among you. Thank you again to the MDEP Policy Group members who are here today – it is with your dedication and devotion to this initiative and that of your staff that will undoubtedly ensure its success. And as a final note, the NEA staff is here to assist you in any way possible. If you have a need, they are here to help. You can spot the NEA staff by their OECD badges. Again...Welcome and please enjoy the NEA/MDEP Conference on New Reactor Design Activities.

It is now my pleasure to introduce the Chair of the MDEP Policy Group, Mr. André-Claude Lacoste.....