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## **DEBATE ON NUCLEAR ENERGY SPARKS SIGNIFICANT INTEREST**

During a session of the World Energy Congress that he chaired earlier today, Luis Echávarri, Director-General of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), stated that “this debate on nuclear energy could not be timelier. The coming years will be crucial in determining what contribution nuclear energy will make to the world energy supply and to sustainable development. Experience shows that as a large-scale, nearly carbon-free energy source, it is one of the cheapest ways to reduce GHG emissions.” Mr. Echávarri noted that the security of energy supply, in terms of both availability of resources and affordable prices, as well as the protection of the environment, notably from climate change, were driving many governments to reassess their energy policies and to consider several options, including nuclear. Mr Echávarri’s comments came during a discussion session on nuclear power at the 19<sup>th</sup> World Energy Congress in Sydney, Australia.

In summing up the session – the conclusions of which will be presented to the WEC ministerial forum tomorrow – Mr. Echávarri said that nuclear power is already making an important contribution to the diversification of energy resources as well as to the prevention of climate change. Nuclear power currently provides 16% of the world electricity supply, reducing global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by nearly 10%. Session participants discussed means to increase the competitiveness of nuclear power in liberalised electricity markets and the progress achieved in providing acceptable solutions for the final disposal of high-level radioactive waste. Mr. Echávarri joined many key speakers at the congress in concluding that this 19<sup>th</sup> World Energy Congress is a turning point in the consideration of nuclear power as one of the viable options for future sustainable energy policies.

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The World Energy Congress meets every three years. It brings together over 2000 participants from all over the world and includes energy industry leaders, government ministers, heads of inter-governmental organisations, academics and international energy experts. (WEC website: [www.worldenergy.org](http://www.worldenergy.org))

*The OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1958. Its primary objective is to assist its member countries in maintaining and further developing, through international co-operation, the scientific, technological and legal bases required for a safe, environmentally friendly and economical use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is a non-partisan, unbiased source of information and analyses, drawing on one of the best international networks of technical experts. The NEA currently has 28 member countries.*

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