



**NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY
STEERING COMMITTEE FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY**

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For Official Use**

Minutes of the 118th Session of the Steering Committee for Nuclear Energy

**Held at the OECD Conference Centre, 2 rue André-Pascal, Paris 16th
on 28-29 April 2009**

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**118th SESSION
OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY**

28-29 April 2009

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA [NEA/NE/A(2009)1]

The Agenda *was adopted*.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SESSION HELD ON
16-17 OCTOBER 2008 [NEA/NE/M(2008)2]**

The Minutes of the 117th session held on 16-17 October 2008 *were approved*.

3. REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL [Oral report]

Mr. Echávarri, NEA Director-General, provided an overview of recent developments of interest to the Steering Committee. After having thanked the national delegations for their participation in the NEA 50th Anniversary and asking them to transmit the Agency's appreciation to the ministers and senior representatives that took part, he referred to the OECD and International Energy Agency (IEA) ministerial meetings which would be taking place on 24-25 June and 14-15 October respectively. Regarding the NEA budget situation for 2009-2010, he highlighted recent difficulties and deferred further discussion of this subject to item 4 of the agenda. He referred to the Reflection Group Meeting that he had convened in February 2009 to discuss the NEA budget and thanked Dr. Bendiksen (Steering Committee Bureau Vice-Chair, Norway) for his very useful contribution.

Mr. Echávarri then briefly reviewed current relations with the Russian Federation, referring in particular to two meetings held with the Chairman of Rostekhnadzor. Regarding relations with China, he summarised OECD/NEA involvement in the recent International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century held in Beijing, notably the keynote speech delivered by the OECD Secretary-General during which he stressed the importance of the contribution that nuclear energy could make to the security of energy supply and to preventing the risk of climate change, and discussions which were conducted with the Chinese authorities on future collaboration between China and the NEA. Details concerning the framework for such co-operation would be discussed under item 13 of the agenda. Mr. Echávarri described continuing good co-operation with the IAEA, potential future co-operation with India, and renewed Polish interest in NEA membership.

He informed the Committee of a request made by the Belgian government for the NEA to carry out an international peer review of the Myrrha project, as well as Belgium's intention to cover the cost of this peer review with a voluntary contribution. He then provided highlights of the NEA programme of work in the areas of nuclear safety and regulation, radioactive waste management and decommissioning, radiological protection, nuclear science, the Data Bank and nuclear development. He regretted to inform the Committee of the passing away of Mr. Shapar, NEA Director-General between 1982 and 1988. On the occasion of their departure from the Agency, he thanked Mr Gordelier, Head of the Nuclear Development Division, and Mr. Hasegawa, Head of the Data Bank, for their much-appreciated contributions to the work the Agency.

The Delegate from Belgium provided further details regarding the Myrrha project and expressed his thanks to the NEA for accepting to carry out the international peer review. **The Representative of the IAEA** expressed his organisation's appreciation to the NEA for its co-sponsorship of the ministerial conference in Beijing and the participation of the OECD Secretary-General at that event. **The Delegate from Mexico** indicated that her country was developing, with the help of NEA studies and publications, a long-term strategic document on Mexico's future national energy strategy. **The Delegate from Hungary** informed the Committee that his country's Parliament had adopted, with a 95 % majority, a decision in principle in favour of constructing one or two new units at the Paks nuclear power plant.

The Steering Committee:

- i) ***noted with appreciation*** the report by the Director-General, which was made available as a room document;
- ii) ***noted*** developments in relations with China and ***agreed*** to discuss such co-operation in further detail under agenda item 13;
- iii) ***noted*** the request from the Belgian government for the NEA to carry out an international peer review of the Myrrha project as well as Belgium's intention to cover the cost of this peer review with a voluntary contribution;
- iv) ***noted*** the information provided by the Delegate from Hungary regarding the Parliament's decision in principle in favour of constructing one or two new units at the Paks nuclear power plant.

PART I – PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET

4. MAIN LINES OF THE NEA PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2009-2010

[NEA/NE(2009)3]

- Status Report on the NEA Budget for 2009-2010 [NEA/NE(2009)3/ADD1]
- Status of Activities of the NEA Standing Technical Committees – Annual Report [NEA/NE(2009)3/ADD2]
- Status Report on Current NEA Joint Projects [NEA/NE(2009)3/ADD3]
- Status Report on Cost-free Experts at the NEA [Room document]
- Status of Voluntary Contributions Provided to the NEA in 2008-2009 [Room document]
- Letter to the ambassadors of the permanent delegations to the OECD dated 3 February 2009 concerning the status of the NEA budget [Room document]
- Non-paper containing proposals for a sustainable budget [Room document]

Ms. Dunn Lee, NEA Deputy Director-General, presented this item, highlighting in particular recent developments in the budgetary situation of the Agency. She informed the Committee that the NEA was operating under a Continuing Resolution of the OECD Council until 31 May and had been asked to prepare a budget based on zero nominal growth before its expiration, despite the Steering Committee having pronounced itself in favour of a zero real growth budget at its previous meeting in October 2008. In short, the situation had been brought about by a lack of consensus among member countries on whether and how to apply financial reform to the NEA. In order to achieve a zero nominal growth budget, it would be necessary to freeze six posts over the 2009-2010 time frame [see NEA/NE(2009)3 for details], including two A2/3 posts in the nuclear development and radioactive waste management areas, as well as to reduce the frequency of delivery of certain Data Bank outputs.

Ms. Dunn Lee reported that in 2008, with the help of the *Nuclear Energy Outlook*, publications revenue had exceeded its target amount by EUR 38 675. Given the budgetary situation, the NEA Secretariat was requesting that the Agency be allowed to carry forward this sum to supplement the 2009-2010 budget. A room document on cost-free experts had also been circulated in which requests for additional assistance were made. She thanked member countries for the numerous voluntary contributions received to support the preparation of the *Nuclear Energy Outlook*, and highlighted the additional voluntary contributions received from Japan and the United States in particular for other substantive work areas. She stressed the importance of such contributions for helping to supplement work on certain specific outputs of the Agency. To this end, she noted the special voluntary contribution expected from the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission to enhance the NEA's efforts in establishing an effective, sustainable international approach for requests anticipated from both developed and developing countries.

The Delegates from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Spain and the United States thanked the Secretariat for its efforts in exploring different options to find a solution to the NEA's budget problems. **The Delegate from Canada** requested that the budget issue be raised again in the context of the 2011-2012 programme of work and budget with the hope that a process could be found for moving forward and avoiding another deadlock. **The Delegate from Japan** agreed, considered that financial reform of the NEA budget was necessary and supported the undertaking of discussions on the 2011-2012 budget. **The Delegates from Australia, Denmark, Finland, Greece and the Netherlands** regretted the budget cuts, favoured zero real growth and also supported undertaking discussions on the 2011-2012 budget in order to find a way to maintain the quantity and quality of NEA work. **The Delegate from Norway** regretted the current budget cuts but agreed to the Secretariat's proposal in NEA/NE(2009)3 as no alternative seemed to be available. He considered, however, that a zero nominal growth budget was not sustainable and wished to come back to the issue for the 2011-2012 biennium in order to clarify the situation and to obtain at least zero real growth. He underlined the importance of timing when preparing budget proposals for adoption and felt that thought should be given to finding a mechanism that could actually assist the Secretariat and the Steering Committee in obtaining budget-related information at an earlier stage, including details about the processes and budget considerations being carried out within the OECD system.

The Delegate from Belgium expressed his concern that a few countries were blocking the NEA budget despite recognition of the value and efficiency of the Agency's work at its 50th Anniversary. He considered that it was very important for the NEA to have the necessary resources to carry out its work and was not pleased to limit the budget to zero nominal growth. He also did not wish to see resources cut in the radioactive waste management area but accepted not to counter the proposal on the table. **The Delegate from Mexico** agreed with the proposal laid out in NEA/NE(2009)3. **The Delegate from Portugal** considered that the budgetary cuts were not in line with the current nuclear energy context and the work that was expected of the Agency, but had no alternative suggestions to propose. **The Delegate from Korea** suggested delaying certain projects rather than freezing posts. **The Delegate from Finland** also found that the budget cuts were unfortunate and incongruous with the fact that the work of the NEA was needed now more than ever. **The Delegate from Austria** deeply regretted the situation that the Agency was in as well as the corresponding budget cuts. He was open to discuss any sensible way forward but did not wish to simply apply the agreement made for Part I directorates or to discuss the contributions of individual member countries.

The Delegate from Turkey expressed his esteem for the work of the Agency and its benefits even for countries not currently using nuclear power. He regretted the cuts in the Agency's budget and considered that in future a zero real growth budget was unavoidable for the sustainability of NEA activities. Similarly, **the Delegate from Australia** did not consider a zero nominal growth budget sustainable. **The Delegates from Germany, Italy and Mexico** praised the work of the Agency and wished

to find a more sustainable path for the future of the NEA budget. **The Delegate from Germany** added that care should nonetheless be taken to assess tasks and to prioritise work, as well as to ensure that proper cost-recovery rates were applied for projects not on the regular programme of work. **The Delegate from the United States** did not believe that a zero nominal growth budget would adversely affect the work of the NEA and its committees, suggested that the Agency look to prioritise activities and to maximise efficiency, and agreed to the proposed budget cuts. In a departure from previous practice, she indicated that the United States could, however, support the carry-over of surplus income from the sales of publications. **The Delegate from Austria** also agreed to this carry-over. **The Delegate from Spain** understood the reason for a zero nominal growth budget but considered that it put in danger the sustainability of the Agency's activities, not only in terms of scope but in quality as well. He hoped that a consensus could be reached for the next biennium and that a budget could be adopted that would enable the continuing quality and scope of NEA activities.

The Chairman and the Delegates from Austria and Belgium indicated an interest in seeing the Agency's final budget figures which corresponded to the zero nominal growth budget, instead of just the reductions required as presented in NEA/NE(2009)3/ADD1 or the scenarios which were under consideration in February and presented in the letter to ambassadors. **Mr. Echávarri** confirmed that the Secretariat would provide the figures requested in follow-up to the meeting. **The Chairman** also referred to the question of OECD financial reform, and notably the revised scale of member country contributions, and wondered if this would help the Agency to reach a sustainable budget situation with zero real growth. He considered that a small group should be formed to look into the NEA budget issue and to report back to the Steering Committee. Such a group's mandate and composition would need to be determined. **Ms. Dunn Lee and Mr. Echávarri** provided further explanations as to why it had not been possible to transpose the Part I financial reform directly to the NEA, the difference in the membership base being part of the reason, but more fundamentally it reflected the lack of agreement among NEA member countries on carrying out financial reform. **Mr. Echávarri** supported the idea of creating a task group or small forum in which member countries could discuss proposals for establishing a sustainable budget for the Agency by the 2011-2012 time frame.

The proposed Steering Committee decisions, representing the summary of the discussions, were circulated to delegates on paper and further discussion was deferred until the end of the afternoon in order to enable consultations with capitals. When the Committee members returned to this item of the agenda various details and drafting considerations were discussed, notably as regarded the creation of an advisory group to address budget issues; the agreed decisions have been reproduced below.

The Steering Committee:

- i) **noted** the decision of the OECD Council to apply a Continuing Resolution to the budget of the NEA and its Data Bank for the 1st quarter of 2009 [C(2008)218, C/M(2008)22, Item 332] as well as documents C(2009)46 and C/M(2009)7/PROV, Item 87, by which the OECD Council approved the extension of the Continuing Resolution for a two-month period until 31 May 2009;
- ii) **noted** that this extension was intended to provide the NEA Steering Committee with the opportunity to adjust the content of the NEA Programme of Work [C(2009)30/REV1] as set out in paragraph 2 of C(2009)46, on the basis of a zero nominal growth (ZNG) budget;
- iii) **approved** the use of 2008 surplus income from the sales of publications to supplement the budget for 2009-2010 in order to facilitate the transition from a zero real growth to a zero nominal growth budget;

- iv) **approved** the modifications made to the Main Lines of the Programme of Work for the Agency and its Data Bank for the biennium 2009-2010;
- v) **approved** their transmittal to the Secretary-General and, in turn, their transmittal to the Council in the context of the Programme of Work and Budget of the Organisation as a whole;
- vi) **noted** the status of activities of the NEA standing technical committees and the status report on current NEA joint projects;
- vii) **requested** the Director-General to prepare options for consideration by the Steering Committee, at its October 2009 meeting, for the creation of an advisory group to assist and advise the Steering Committee on the NEA Programme of Work and Budget for 2011-2012.

PART II – MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST

5. THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY [NEA/NE(2009)4]

Mr. Echávarri introduced this item, recalling that the current Strategic Plan had been extended until 31 December 2010 and that a new Strategic Plan needed to be prepared and adopted for the period beginning 1 January 2011. He highlighted a selection of the main contextual changes since 2005 and challenges for consideration. He then outlined the proposed five-step process for preparing the next Strategic Plan. These five steps, which would include a policy debate in October 2009 and culminate in the presentation of a new Strategic Plan for discussion and approval at the April 2010 meeting of the Steering Committee, were described. Full details of the process can be found in NEA/NE(2009)4.

Several Delegates thanked the Secretariat for the thought given to the process and the preparatory work accomplished. **The Delegates from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Spain, Turkey and the United States** supported the five-step process proposed. **The Delegate from the United States** described the Agency as a forum for mutual collaboration unfettered by politics and industry, a cost-effective mechanism for a frank assessment of issues and a highly respected source of reference for policy and decision makers.

The Delegates from Australia, Spain and the United States endorsed the creation by the Director-General of a High-level Advisory Group (HLAG) with the objective of helping the Secretariat to develop a new Strategic Plan. Regarding the composition of the HLAG, **the Delegate from Austria** considered that it would be important to have a variety of disciplines represented in the group as well as balanced geographical and nuclear policy representation. **The Delegate from Australia** felt that the positions and aspirations of non-nuclear member countries should also be taken into account by the HLAG when preparing the Strategic Plan. Responding to requests for further elaboration by **the Delegates from Greece and Spain**, **Mr. Echávarri** explained that the HLAG would be composed of a small group of experienced, high-level advisors from a variety of nuclear-related disciplines who could provide the Agency with an external, yet knowledgeable view of the role that the NEA should play in the years to come. Efforts would also be made to include representation from a wide range of nuclear policy positions, while keeping in mind that the advisors were participating in an independent capacity, not as national representatives. **The Delegate from Spain** considered that the HLAG would be particularly well-positioned to comment on the extent of NEA involvement in the areas of costs, climate change and non-proliferation.

As part of the preparation process, **the Delegate from Norway** considered that it would be important to assess whether the Agency had achieved the objectives set out in the current Strategic Plan.

He also suggested that input be sought from the standing technical committees. **Mr. Echávarri** confirmed that this would be the case. **The Delegate from Korea** noted his country's preference for a six-year rather than a four-year plan. **Mr. Echávarri** considered this to be a good proposal based on the rate of change in the nuclear field and the amount of time required to prepare a Strategic Plan.

The Delegate from Japan highlighted the work areas of nuclear science and development and nuclear safety and regulation as two of the major strengths of the Agency which should be kept in the next Strategic Plan. **The Delegate from France** encouraged the Agency to focus its work on subjects within its specific competence, taking into account those subjects which are dealt with at the IAEA. **The Delegate from Austria** felt that a reference should be made to security in the Strategic Plan, even if the Agency decides to leave activities in this area to other organisations. He also considered that social acceptance, transparency and participation should figure among the cross-cutting issues. **The Delegate from Australia** stressed the importance of co-ordinating NEA work with that of other organisations. **The Delegate from Turkey** agreed that care should be taken to avoid duplication of work and also considered that priorities should be set for NEA areas of work. He felt that the NEA had a role to play in co-operating with new entrants, but should do so on a case-by-case basis. Responding to a comment by the Delegate from Turkey, **Mr. Dujardin** ensured the latter that NEA work on the financing of nuclear power plants was being co-ordinated with the IAEA and that the contents of the studies of the two agencies falling under this broad theme were different. **Mr. Echávarri** confirmed that the Strategic Plan would make a direct reference to avoiding overlap with other organisations. He also noted that the Plan would need to be realistic as compared with the budget situation. Some areas of work, for example in the case of new entrants, could require additional voluntary contributions. Overall, he agreed that setting priorities was an important part of the exercise and an element of interest to the OECD Council.

The Steering Committee:

- i) *approved* the five-step process for preparing the new Strategic Plan, which would be effective as of 1 January 2011, as set out in the document NEA/NE(2009)4;
- ii) *approved* the sending of a questionnaire by the Secretariat to member countries as a first step in the preparation of the new Strategic Plan;
- iii) *endorsed* the creation by the Director-General of a High-level Advisory Group with the objective of helping the Secretariat in developing the new Strategic Plan;
- iv) *agreed* to have a policy debate on the future Strategic Plan at its next meeting.

6. NEA RELATIONS WITH INDIA [NEA/NE(2009)5]

Mr. Echávarri outlined recent developments in this area which were opening up new possibilities to establish relations with India, and referred delegates to NEA/NE(2009)5. He recalled that in the past, the NEA had no direct relations with India given that the latter had not signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). However, as India has long been a member of the IAEA, there have been circumstances, such as in joint NEA/IAEA meetings, where India has attended. He further noted that India began to take part in OECD activities in 1995 and is now one of the countries included in the OECD Enhanced Engagement Programme. Indian authorities have expressed their interest in co-operating with the NEA. Given the decision by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and the signing of a Safeguards Agreement between India and the IAEA, both described in further detail in NEA/NE(2009)5, it was now possible to propose a gradual opening of relations on a case-by-case basis. Such co-operation, on a more modest scale than that being proposed for the Russian Federation or China, would be subject to certain conditions as described in NEA/NE(2009)5. It was proposed to begin with discussions concerning

ad hoc participation of Indian technical experts in a selection of NEA meetings, notably in the area of nuclear safety, and then to proceed progressively. It was not yet a question of establishing a memorandum of understanding on co-operation or of extending observer status.

The Delegate from Japan had transmitted a request in the days preceding the meeting to modify subparagraph iv) of the Steering Committee decision in NEA/NE(2009) and to add a subparagraph regarding keeping the Steering Committee informed of new developments. The modifications are reflected in the decision below, adopted by the Steering Committee in session. **The Delegates from France and the United States** supported the proposed establishment of relations as well as the modifications requested by the Delegate from Japan. **The Delegate from Austria** also supported the modifications requested by Japan and further requested that subparagraph iv) of paragraph 10 referring to longer-term co-operation be deleted, that at most the Committee “note” rather than “welcome” India’s commitment to nuclear non-proliferation objectives in subparagraph iii) of the proposed decisions (paragraph 11) and that continuing co-operation be tied to India making progress on meeting safeguards and Additional Protocol agreements. **The Delegate from France** did not agree to the NEA playing an assessment role in measuring such progress. Responding to a request for clarification by **the Delegate from Korea, Mr. Echávarri** explained that the Secretariat would only be seeking to identify possibilities for co-operation in the first instance and that specific proposals regarding the invitation of Indian experts to NEA meetings would be submitted to the Steering Committee for consideration.

The Steering Committee:

- i) **noted** the “Statement on Civil Nuclear Co-operation with India”, agreed by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and the steps cited therein that India has taken with respect to international safeguards and export controls;
- ii) **noted** that the possibilities for pursuing co-operation between the NEA and India increase as India moves to broaden the application of IAEA safeguards and to implement the Additional Protocol;
- iii) **agreed** to open discussions between the NEA Secretariat and the Indian Government to explore possible co-operation related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, within the scope of the “Statement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India” adopted by the NSG and with potential applications in Indian facilities under IAEA safeguards;
- iv) **requested** the Director-General to keep the Steering Committee informed of developments in this area.

7. NUCLEAR ENERGY OUTLOOK [NEA/NE(2009)6]

Mr. Gordelier, Head of the NEA Nuclear Development Division, presented this item of the agenda. He recalled the objectives of the *Nuclear Energy Outlook* (NEO), including providing a full range of trustworthy data and analyses that policy makers would reach for first and increasing the profile of the NEA at a critical time. He then provided an overview of some of the book’s key statistics: 460+ pages printed in English, French and Japanese, 1 000 complimentary copies distributed in English and a further 600 sold, and 7 000 downloads of the Executive Summary provided on the NEA website in ten languages [further details and statistics are provided in NEA/NE(2009)6]. At present, the Secretariat was looking for feedback from the Steering Committee on the book’s usefulness and other aspects which would help determine whether, when and how to produce future editions.

The Delegates from Austria, Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Turkey and the United States congratulated the Secretariat on the quality and comprehensiveness of the book and thanked it for the major efforts made to produce such a book in addition to the regular programme of work and according to schedule.

The Delegates from Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey and the United States found the NEO to be a very useful publication. **The Delegate from Japan** underlined the usefulness of the Japanese edition and informed the Committee members that it had been widely distributed throughout Japan to inform the policy debate. **The Delegates from Japan and Norway** believed that the publication had significantly contributed to enhancing the visibility of the NEA. **The Delegates from Hungary and Italy** had found it particularly useful to have Hungarian and Italian versions of the Executive Summary. **The Delegate from Italy** also noted that a full translation of the book into Italian was being considered.

Based on discussions amongst the Steering Committee Bureau members on the previous day, **the Chairman** reported that a publishing frequency of every four years seemed to be the most appropriate. **The Delegates from France, Hungary, Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Turkey and the United States** also supported a four-year publishing cycle. **The Delegate from Italy** considered that the frequency should not be less than four years, and **the Delegates from Finland and Germany** every four to six years. **The Delegate from Korea** was also interested in investigating the possibility of updating parts of the book, for example the Executive Summary, every two years. **The Delegates from Belgium and Spain** favoured frequent, partial updates concentrating on a topical theme of interest, for example safety issues, economic considerations or financing. **The Delegates from Austria and Norway** did not favour the idea of producing partial updates or supplements. **The Delegate from Mexico** suggested including topical chapters, according to interest at the time of writing, which did not necessarily need to appear in each edition. She also offered detailed suggestions regarding the contents of Chapter 6 on Providing Electricity at Stable and Affordable Costs. **The Delegate from Turkey** suggested publishing appendices to the book on special topics. **The Delegate from Canada** cited the lack of public knowledge about nuclear energy and suggested more frequent and wider communication on the subject.

In the perspective of producing future editions of the NEO, **the Delegates from Austria, France, Norway and the United States** requested that further cost information be provided so that future cost estimates may be made and budget implications considered, including the possibility of needing to supplement the regular budget with voluntary contributions. **The Delegate from Finland** also requested cost information but considered that the publication was a central piece of work for the NEA and that the costs should be included in the regular budget. **The Delegate from Japan** stated that due consideration would need to be given to the resources necessary to produce this publication. **The Delegate from the Netherlands** acknowledged that there were some budgetary constraints to consider. **Mr. Echávarri** estimated the costs of the publication to be roughly EUR 350 K in consultants' fees and another EUR 350-400 K to cover the work of the Secretariat. He noted that the next edition would surely benefit from the experience acquired in producing the first one. He offered to present a proposal for organising the production and funding of future editions at the Steering Committee's October 2010 session.

The Chairman invited delegates to send any additional comments they may have to the Secretariat and noted that the Secretariat may also wish to send out an assessment questionnaire or request for further information. **Mr. Echávarri** felt that delegates' comments expressed thus far could be accommodated and encouraged the Steering Committee members to transmit any detailed comments they may have to the Secretariat so that they may be taken on board in future editions. He recalled that the NEO benefited from the findings of a number of NEA publications and pointed out that the next edition would include the latest findings of the 2010 update of *Projected Costs of Generating Electricity*.

The Steering Committee:

- i) **noted** that the *Nuclear Energy Outlook* (NEO) has been well received and widely distributed;
- ii) **noted** that the NEA Secretariat had made a major effort to produce this publication in addition to the regular programme of work;
- iii) **expressed interest** in further editions of the *Nuclear Energy Outlook* and suggested a possible frequency of once every four years;
- iv) **considered** that the current content was comprehensive and **suggested** that future content be similar while also taking account of important issues of interest at the time of writing;
- v) **proposed** various options for financing future editions, the exact method of which remained to be determined along with cost estimates;
- vi) **noted** that the NEA Secretariat would bring forward a firm proposal for organising the production and funding of future editions at the Steering Committee's October 2010 session.

8. MULTINATIONAL DESIGN EVALUATION PROGRAMME (MDEP) [Oral report]

Mr. Reig, Head of the NEA Nuclear Safety Division, presented the Steering Committee with an update on the activities of the Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP) as well as NEA involvement therein as Technical Secretariat. He recalled that the expected outcomes of the programme are to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of regulatory design reviews, to raise the quality of safety assessments and safety more generally, and to facilitate convergence of regulatory requirements. He presented the organisation chart of the MDEP and then described the goals and scope of work of the five working groups on Vendor Inspection Co-operation, Codes and Standards, Digital Instrumentation and Control, the EPR and the AP1000. He reported the results of the MDEP Policy Group meeting held in Washington DC in March 2009. He closed his presentation by reviewing recent MDEP achievements in the issue-specific and design-specific working groups and by outlining next steps. These included a meeting with the nuclear industry and other stakeholders to be held in September 2009, the development of an international vendor inspection programme and the formulation of recommendations to standards development organisations.

The Steering Committee **took note** of the status of the Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP) activities and NEA involvement as Technical Secretariat.

PART III – SPECIFIC PROGRAMME AREAS

9. STATUS REPORT BY THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR REGULATORY ACTIVITIES (CNRA) [Oral report]

Dr. Weightman, Chair of the NEA Committee on Nuclear Regulatory Activities (CNRA), presented a status report on the work of the CNRA, covering its main achievements between 2006 and 2008. He summarised the mission and composition of the CNRA and outlined the main challenges faced in the 2005-2009 period and those that were expected in 2010-2014, including providing adequate nuclear infrastructure, improved operation of existing facilities, the safety of new nuclear facilities and the safety of advanced reactor designs. He then reviewed the main accomplishments of the working groups on Operating Experience (WGOE), Inspection Practices (WGIP), the Regulation of New Reactors (WGRNR)

and Public Communication of Nuclear Regulatory Organisations (WGPC). He highlighted the publication of the CNRA series of “green booklets” designed to help regulators and policy makers quickly ascertain main issues in the field. He also noted wide CNRA co-operation with other parts of the NEA and other international organisations (notably the IAEA, the European Commission, the Western European Nuclear Regulators Association and the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group). He ended his presentation by referring to CNRA expectations in terms of sharing experience, achieving further convergence and harmonisation, and providing feedback to national and international programmes. His final remark was to stress the importance of not becoming complacent about safety and continuously seeking to improve it.

The Steering Committee *noted* the report by Dr. Weightman, Chair of the Committee on Nuclear Regulatory Activities (CNRA), on the achievements of this standing technical committee and prospects for its programme.

10. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW JOINT OECD/NEA PROJECT IN THE NUCLEAR SAFETY AREA – THE SANDIA FUEL PROJECT (SFP PROJECT) [NEA/NE(2009)7]

Mr. Reig provided the Steering Committee with an overview of the new joint OECD/NEA Sandia Fuel Project which would be implemented among interested member countries. This fuel safety project would specifically address loss of cooling at zero power conditions under various scenarios (including in spent fuel pools and transport casks), and would be carried out at the facilities of the US Sandia National Laboratory in two phases over the 2009-2012 time frame with a US\$ 5.2 million budget. Thus far, 12 member countries had indicated their intention to participate. The first project meeting would be held in May or June 2009.

The Delegate from the United States indicated that the US was pleased to serve as the operating agent for this project which will make an important contribution to the data needed for light water reactor fuel safety. **The Delegate from Korea** was particularly interested in the safety review aspects of spent fuel management in pools and the project’s potential contribution to the design of repositories for spent nuclear fuel. His country intended to participate actively in the project and to make in-kind contributions.

The Steering Committee *noted* the implementation of the new joint OECD/NEA Sandia Fuel Project (SFP Project) among interested member countries under Article 5b) of the NEA Statute.

PART IV – PROCEDURE

11. DOCUMENTS APPROVED UNDER THE WRITTEN PROCEDURE

The Steering Committee *noted* the adoption under the written procedure of:

- i) Programme of Conferences and Symposia for 2009-2012 [NEA/NE(2009)1] on 10 April 2009;
- ii) Draft 2008 Annual Report on the Activities of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency [NEA/NE(2009)2] on 2 April 2009.

12. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Steering Committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on **29-30 October 2009**, and to finish at 4:30 p.m. on 30 October in order to accommodate a full-day policy

debate on the next NEA Strategic Plan, and that it was planned to hold the spring session on **21-22 April 2010**.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

NEA Relations with China [Room document]

Mr. Echávarri provided the Committee with an update concerning relations with China. He indicated that the Chinese authorities continued to be very interested in developing co-operation with the NEA. In order to pursue such co-operation, however, including in the priority area of nuclear safety, an umbrella agreement is needed in order to obtain the necessary political support at a wider level. Proposed Steering Committee decisions were shown on the meeting room screens for consideration. **The Chairman** opened the floor for comments or questions regarding the proposed decisions; **Delegates** adopted the following decisions without further comment.

The Steering Committee:

- i) **noted** the willingness of the Chinese authorities to develop relations with the NEA;
- ii) **noted** that a broad political umbrella is required to develop co-operation in specific areas such as nuclear safety, and that a joint declaration on possible co-operation may be the most suitable instrument to provide this political umbrella;
- iii) **reiterated** its wish that nuclear safety be considered as the first priority in the development of co-operation between China and the NEA;
- iv) **agreed** that the Director-General begin negotiating with the Chinese authorities the text of a joint declaration on possible co-operation;
- v) **requested** that the Director-General keep the Steering Committee informed of developments in negotiations at its next meeting and submit a draft joint declaration for its approval when available;
- vi) **agreed** that the above decisions will be effective only if no Delegation expresses its opposition in writing before 15 May 2009.**

POLICY DEBATE ON THE PRODUCTION OF RADIOISOTOPES FOR MEDICAL USES

The Chairman welcomed the participants to the policy debate and noted the considerable interest in the United States and elsewhere in the production and security of supply of radioisotopes for medical uses. **Mr. Echávarri** recalled that the Steering Committee policy debates are a mechanism not only for informing Committee members of important developments and challenges in the nuclear field, but also for the Committee members to guide the work of the Secretariat and the standing technical committees in specific areas. He pointed out that an NEA workshop had been held in January 2009 on this subject and would be reported on in the first presentation. A background document had also been prepared for the debate and made available to delegates under reference NEA/SEN(2009)1. The Secretariat was specifically looking for guidance on how to proceed in this area and to obtain the Steering Committee's reaction to the

** No Delegations expressed any opposition.

Canadian proposal for establishing a high-level group to carry forward the agenda of the workshop. **The Chairman** then introduced each of the four invited speakers, who gave the following presentations:

- **Overview of the Mo-99 supply issues and the outcomes from the NEA workshop on security of supply**
Mr. Serge Dupont, Associate Deputy Minister, Natural Resources Canada
- **Recent Australian experience in the supply of Mo-99: the difficulties and the Australian strategic response**
Dr. Ron Cameron, Chief of Operations, Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO)
- **Korea's experience in supply and demand of Mo-99: an evolving national strategy in response to the difficulties**
Dr. Sun-Ju Choi, Director, Radioisotope Research Division, Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute (Korea)
- **Mo-99 supply and demand in the coming decades: why security of supply is not a short-term issue?**
Mr. Marc Gheeraert, President, Association of Imaging Producers & Equipment Suppliers (AIPES)

The background note and the speakers' presentations have been made available to NEA delegates at www.nea.fr/documents/sc/; new delegates can obtain passwords for this section of the website by writing to nea@nea.fr.

Overview of the debate

The Chairman opened the debate, recalling that two additional room documents were available to the delegates, one containing the Canadian proposal [which replaced the earlier draft proposal contained in NEA/SEN(2009)1] and another setting forth IAEA observations and suggestions on next steps.

Participants were informed about medical radioisotope supply disruptions which were having a negative impact on patient services throughout the world, and many noted that the issue was being taken very seriously in their respective countries. Participants also heard about more specific issues, such as the reason for the temporary shutdown of the High Flux Reactor (HFR) in the Netherlands, one of the five reactors across the world supplying molybdenum-99 (Mo-99), and the repair work that would be necessary. They were provided with an overview of IAEA activities under way in helping to ensure sustainable and reliable supplies of Mo-99. The important role of international organisations, including the NEA and the IAEA, in helping to resolve this issue was noted.

Market and supply issues were addressed, including the poor economic incentives for supplying Mo-99. This reinforced the need for a governmental/intergovernmental role in helping to ensure supply. Effective communication between different government departments concerned with the issue of medical isotope production was considered important, for example between energy and health departments, and in some countries could be improved. Reference was also made to the advanced age (40+ years) of all the main reactors currently producing Mo-99 and the need to ensure new sources of supply in the years to come. The possibility of an international initiative to construct a new reactor was raised. Bottlenecks in processing and transporting the targets were another issue of concern. Finally, the question of using high-enriched uranium (HEU) versus low-enriched uranium (LEU) was briefly discussed along with the advantages and drawbacks of each. Conversion of all production facilities could, however, take time and

more research may be required to reach a definitive conclusion on this topic. The potential role of accelerators in the future was cited.

The Steering Committee members supported the Canadian proposal to establish, within the NEA framework, a high-level group to carry forward the agenda of the January workshop on the security of supply of medical radioisotopes. The work should, however, be carried out in close co-operation with the IAEA. The high-level group would be small in size and cover a broad jurisdiction of major producers and consumers in a dialogue with regulators, professional associations and nuclear medicine societies. The work of the group would require specific financing since it is not currently included in the NEA Programme of Work, and some countries indicated their willingness to provide financial support. It was suggested that the group conduct a worldwide survey among end-users to determine future medical radioisotope needs, as well as to involve regulators, industry, academic and nuclear medicine societies. It was expected that the group would suggest sustainable solutions for long-term security of supply. Urgent, short-term management of supply questions also needed to be resolved.

The Steering Committee:

- i) ***noted*** that the NEA organised, at short notice, a workshop on the security of supply of molybdenum-99 and technetium-99m, which was supported financially by the government of Canada;
- ii) ***noted*** that this workshop was warmly received by the participants, but was only the start of any process to improve security of supply, and that one key outcome of the workshop was a request that the NEA continue work in this area;
- iii) ***agreed*** that the NEA should conduct further work to help resolve these issues, and that this work should be conducted in close co-operation with the IAEA;
- iv) ***agreed*** to the Canadian proposal for a high-level group to carry forward the agenda of the workshop and to identify additional practical measures that should be taken.

COMITÉ DE DIRECTION DE L'ÉNERGIE NUCLÉAIRE
STEERING COMMITTEE FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY

118^e session du Comité/118th session of the Committee

Paris, 28-29 April 2009

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PRODUCTION DE RADIOISOTOPES À DES FINS MÉDICALES
THE PRODUCTION OF RADIOISOTOPES FOR MEDICAL USES

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