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Introductory Statement to the 4th Scientific Forum during the 45th Session of the IAEA General Conference

Technical Co-operation for Development

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IAEA Director General Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei



Introduction

I am pleased to welcome all of you to our 4th Scientific Forum. Our theme this year is "Serving Human Needs: Nuclear Technology for Sustainable Development."

This theme is different from those of previous years, in that it does not focus on one technology or technology sector but, rather, on nuclear technology transfer itself, and how that transfer can promote sustainable development in Member States, by matching specific technologies to meet their development needs.

Forum Goals

We hope by this Forum to raise general awareness of some lesser known nuclear technologies, by presenting a number of highly successful examples of technology transfer activities. These nuclear technologies have several things in common. They have comparative advantages over other available technologies. They have resulted in positive socio-economic impact in recipient countries. And they have been achieved through effective partnerships between the IAEA and governments, ministries, and other UN and non-governmental organizations.

We have brought together at this Forum technical experts, policy-makers and other concerned constituents to examine the impact of these technologies from the perspective of developing countries, to comment on the record of the Agency in providing and delivering to its Member States a technical co-operation programme that is demand driven rather than technology driven, and to discuss concrete methods of moving forward.

Focus Areas

We have divided the Forum into three focus areas of non-power nuclear applications: food security, water resources management and human health. *Food security* can be enhanced by using radiation and radioisotopes to help improve agricultural productivity - and by promoting more efficient use of available resources. *Clean water* is also vital to sustainable development, and the techniques of isotope hydrology can provide a detailed understanding of underground aquifers, significantly improving the ability to manage scarce water resources wisely. And the use of nuclear techniques to enhance human health ranges from well known technologies - such as radiotherapy for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer - to less familiar isotopic applications to improve the health of children or to develop new vaccines. In promoting these and other technologies, the Agency teams with counterparts in Member States to develop sustainable capabilities that will serve the needs of their populations.

Key Questions for Consideration

In planning this forum, we have been fortunate to secure the participation of eminent international experts - experts in sustainable development and experts in each of the technologies under consideration. But another resource is the audience itself: I am encouraged to see a list of attendees that covers a broad range of experience and perspectives, and I would encourage your active participation in the discussions with our lecturers and panelists over the next two days. In particular, I would like to focus your attention on a number of key areas that shape our programme for technical co-operation.

First, I would encourage you to discuss the importance of comparative assessment to ensure that the nuclear technology selected or transferred in any given case is the best technology available. Who is best placed to make that assessment? What factors should be considered in reaching a conclusion?

A related question relates to the importance of *government commitment* in influencing the success of technology transfer and sustainable development. What is the cost of ensuring government participation and investment in shaping the technology transfer programme, and what are the corresponding benefits?

Third, many of our success stories involve partnerships - with other international organizations, regional bodies or private sector groups. In a time of limited financial resources, these partnerships help to leverage resources in areas of common interest. I would ask the Forum to consider the factors that have made these partnerships successful. Are there other types of organizations to whom we should also market our capabilities and with whom we should be creating partnerships? What steps can be taken to demonstrate to the private sector the value of partnering with developing countries or developmental organizations? And specifically, for development projects that require both nuclear and non-nuclear activities to be successful, how do we establish partnerships with knowledgeable partner organizations that can perform the necessary non-nuclear activities?

Fourth, where does the Agency's role in partnership end? How can development organizations themselves work together with their national or regional counterparts to build on initial successes, to ensure a greater impact? For example, I am sure you will hear discussions of how important the eradication of the tsetse fly is to improving livestock production and thereby to reducing poverty. But once the tsetse has been eradicated in a given country, whose role is it to buy healthy livestock? Who "picks up the ball," so to speak, after the basic conditions for success have been established?

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Finally, a very important issue for this Forum to consider is how to ensure the sustainability of a particular technology, once the developing country has built the necessary capacity - in terms of expertise or the necessary equipment. What linkages must be in place before a project starts - or by the time we declare it completed - to ensure that the technology transferred is sustained? What is the Agency's role in this regard?

Conclusion

These and other questions I hope will be part of a stimulating discussion here at the Forum over the next two days. Again, I welcome each of you, and I encourage your participation. I look forward to the Forum report, which will summarize your views and recommendations and will be conveyed to the plenary of the General Conference.

We are pleased to have as our chairperson of this Scientific Forum, Professor V. S. Ramamurthy, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Science and Technology. Dr. Ramamurthy has a rich academic and professional background in theoretical and applied physics and, in his current position since 1995, has had a direct role in the development and transfer of science and technology for the social good. Given this background, he is especially qualified to chair these sessions.

With these remarks I hereby open the 4th Scientific Forum, and turn the podium over to Dr. Ramamurthy.

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