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### **IAEA Director General Reviews State of the World's Nuclear Security, Safety and Technology at Annual IAEA General Conference**

**Vienna 16 September 2002** – Commenting on the situation in Iraq in his opening address today to the IAEA General Conference, Director General Mohamed ElBaradei said, “At the time of our last inspection in December 1998 we reported to the Security Council that - based on our inspections over a period of more than seven years - there was no indication of Iraq having achieved its goal of producing a nuclear weapon, nor were there any indications that there remained in Iraq any physical capability for the production of amounts of weapon usable material of any practical significance,” he said.

“Since that time, however, the Agency has been unable to draw any conclusion or provide any assurance regarding Iraq’s compliance with its obligations under the Security Council resolutions,” Mr. ElBaradei said. “It will therefore be important for the Agency to resolve, upon recommencement of inspections, the key issue of whether the situation regarding Iraq’s nuclear activities and capabilities has changed in any material way since December 1998.”

The Director General added that the IAEA has, “no additional information that can be directly linked without inspection to Iraq’s nuclear activities. Resumption of inspections is therefore a crucial step towards providing assurance to the international community that Iraq’s nuclear weapons programme has been neutralized and is not being revived.”

Regarding the status of IAEA’s Safeguards Agreement with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) the Director General said, “The Agency continues to be unable to verify ... that the DPRK has declared all the nuclear material that is subject to Agency safeguards measures under its NPT safeguards agreement.” He noted that the work required to verify the correctness and completeness of the DPRK’s initial declaration could take three or four years. “Further delays in the start of the IAEA’s verification activities in the DPRK could lead to a substantial delay in the KEDO light water reactor project,” Mr. ElBaradei said.

On the issue of nuclear non-proliferation, the Director General said, “The universalization, consolidation and strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, including concrete steps to reduce the number of and dependence on nuclear weapons, are more important than ever for the continuing sustainability and credibility of the regime.” He lamented that only 27 countries had brought into force Additional Protocols agreements with the Agency, which gives the Agency increased authority to provide assurances that countries were using their nuclear actives for peaceful civilian purposes only. He urged all countries to do so.

33 / 42

Also in his speech, Mr. ElBaradei pointed out that major challenges still exist in ensuring security around the world against the threat of nuclear terrorism. "One year after the terrorist attacks in the United States," he said, "we have moved rapidly to respond with a plan of enhanced and new activities to upgrade nuclear security worldwide," he said. "Much more, however, clearly needs to be done."

Mr. ElBaradei said an expanded effort was needed including threat assessments to protect nuclear facilities against attack, sabotage or theft. "The focus of these efforts must be expanded to cover other nuclear facilities, including research installations that also have nuclear and other radioactive material", he said. "We also have a significant short-term priority in working to bring radioactive sources under appropriate control, whether in use, storage, orphaned or in transport."

On global nuclear safety the Director General said that, "It is satisfying to note that nuclear safety continues to improve at power plants worldwide". However, looking to the future he noted that, "More work needs to be done, and public demands are widely voiced in many countries for greater transparency and accountability on safety issues. The need for a more effective and transparent international nuclear safety regime, therefore, continues to be a high priority". Mr ElBaradei emphasized that, "The newest IAEA standards are of the highest caliber, represent the current international best practice and should be viewed as universally applicable."

Commenting on the future of nuclear power, Mr. ElBaradei said that much depends on maintaining a strong safety record, improving economic competitiveness, and demonstrating waste management solutions. He cited progress in waste management, notably in Finland and the United States, that were important steps in gaining public confidence in technologically and environmentally sound waste disposal solutions.

In his address, the Director General also pointed out that a major portion of the IAEA's worldwide activities focus on using nuclear technology to help serve human needs in developing countries. These applications include controlling and eradicating disease-bearing insects, developing more productive plant strains, managing precious water supplies, tracking soil erosion, sanitizing medical supplies, screening children for diseases, treating cancer patients, and exploratory work such as supporting HIV/AIDS vaccine trials and developing better instruments for detecting landmines left over from military conflicts.

"At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg," he explained, "the Agency was able to demonstrate its commitment and support to all five areas of sustainable development identified by the Secretary General as those where the Summit could make a difference: water; energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity."

On the important question of resources, the Director General stressed that the Agency's levels of financing are "inadequate" for many high priority activities. He mentioned the area of nuclear safeguards as a significant example, and warned that the Agency's legal obligations can no longer be met within the existing level of funding. An increase in the level of Agency resources for the next biennium is "a must", he said.