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Press Releases

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China Boosts Support for IAEA Development and Security Initiatives

20 September 2004 | Marking 20 years of cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), China announced today that it would donate US\$1 million to IAEA's special funds for technical cooperation and enhanced nuclear security.

Welcoming the contribution, IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei said, "The IAEA is grateful for China's continuing generosity in supporting our technical cooperation and security programmes in the nuclear field. The IAEA has forged an excellent partnership with China over the past two decades - one of the most far-reaching partnerships we have with any Member State, extending across the spectrum of IAEA work from safety and security, to safeguards and verification, to technical cooperation in food, energy, water and health."

China has been both a major recipient and contributor to IAEA special funds since it joined the IAEA in 1984. China has been an active participant in the IAEA Technical Cooperation (TC) programme, receiving more than US\$22 million in assistance through 103 TC projects, in particular in the fields of nuclear safety, engineering and technology. China has also been a major contributor to the TC Fund, with some \$11 million in cash and \$400,000 of in-kind support.

The IAEA's TC Programme disburses more than US\$75 million worth of expert services, fellowships, equipment and training workshops per year in approximately 110 countries and territories. The Agency works in partnership with project counterparts in the recipient Member States, typically in the government's atomic energy authority as well as with health, food and agriculture, environment and water authorities. In addition, The Agency collaborates with the World Bank and other UN organizations to plan and execute projects in harmony with Member States' needs.

In March 2002, the IAEA launched a "Plan of Activities to Protect Against Nuclear Terrorism," which enhanced and integrated the Agency's existing nuclear security-related activities. These activities contribute to the prevention and detection of, and response to, nuclear terrorism and threats thereof. A Nuclear Security Fund has been established by the Director General to receive voluntary contributions from Member States to implement the Plan. Since then, the fund has received contributions in the order of \$10 million on an annual basis.

Member States receive support in their efforts to establish the necessary infrastructure to protect nuclear and other radioactive materials from theft and diversion, protect nuclear installations and transport against sabotage and other malicious acts, and to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials. The Nuclear Security Office also seeks also to assist States in their efforts to detect and respond to such activities should they occur and helps to identify weaknesses and vulnerabilities related to security of nuclear material and other radioactive material.

China employs nuclear technologies throughout its fast-growing economy and in almost every major economic sector:

Energy. China has become the world's second largest consumer of energy. Today, it is one of the fastest growing producers of nuclear electric power in the world. Eight new large reactors are currently under construction, which will almost double the existing nuclear generating capacity.

Health. Ionizing radiation is increasingly applied in medicine and is firmly established as an essential tool for diagnosis and therapy of major diseases. China now has 43,000 departments of diagnostic radiology in hospitals across the country, with 120,000 radiation technicians. Nuclear medicine has been applied in 2,500 hospitals. To date, China operates 500 linear accelerators, 600 teletherapy and 400 brachytherapy machines for the treatment of cancer.

Agriculture. China is home to fully one-fifth of the world's 6 billion-plus people, which it manages to feed on just 7 percent of the world's arable land. It has achieved this by harnessing science and technology and modern soil and water management to maximize use of its relatively scarce resource base for food production. Nuclear science and technology – including mutation breeding, tracer techniques, and food irradiation – continue to play a vital role in these achievements.

The planning, regulation, safety and operation of China's large new nuclear energy complex have received sizeable assistance at every stage from the IAEA. The widespread use of electron accelerators and non-destructive testing techniques for numerous industrial applications has also been promoted with help from the IAEA. Surveys for improved water management using isotope hydrology and the use of nuclear technology for environmental monitoring and control have likewise become practical and beneficial with the cooperation of the IAEA. China has also been major contributing partner in the IAEA's Asian regional cooperation program.

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About the IAEA

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) serves as the world's foremost intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Established as an autonomous organization under the United Nations (UN) in 1957, the IAEA carries out programmes to maximize the useful contribution of nuclear technology to society while verifying its peaceful use.

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