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## SESSION 1:

### Sustaining Nuclear

Monday, February 4, 2002, 9:00 - 10:00

*Moderator: Karen Daifuku*

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*Monday, 4-Feb-2002 09:00*

## Winning the sustainable development debate

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This year – in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September – the world will witness what is expected to be the largest environmental gathering yet: the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Some 60,000 participants, including Heads of State, government officials, intergovernmental organizations, and environmental, business and scientific lobbies, will debate the world's progress in implementing 'Agenda 21' – the sustainable development principles agreed in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Some kind of deal, perhaps in the form of a declaration, will emerge from Johannesburg, reasserting international commitment to sustainable development. At this stage the content cannot be predicted.

Experience warns us to expect a strong and virulent anti-nuclear lobby, not only as part of the 'environmental community', but within some of the governments themselves. Their role will be to achieve a text declaring nuclear an unsustainable energy source.

The nuclear industry has six months to make its case, in the preparatory fora and elsewhere, that nuclear energy must be recognized – and at a minimum, not excluded – as a sustainable development technology.

Twin goals of sustainable development: meeting human need and achieving environmental security.

The principle of sustainable development aims at the long-term environmental protection of the planet – sparing our children and their children from living on a planet irredeemably spoilt through human action.

An equally pressing issue is that of bridging the wealth gap between the North and South. In this vein, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan recently published his priorities for attention at the World Summit.

These include:

- Poverty eradication and achieving sustainable livelihoods
- Promoting health through sustainable development
- Access to energy and energy efficiency
- Managing the world's freshwater resources
- Sustainable development initiatives for Africa

The central element of sustainable development: clean energy on a vast scale Access to energy – and in particular, electricity – will be critical if the world is to achieve these human goals. Access to clean electricity – and on a vast scale – will be necessary if the world is to meet the twin challenges of human need and environmental security.

Anti-nuclear forces, which have held sway in the Kyoto process thus far, argue that nuclear energy is a dying technology and assert passionately that it has no place in tomorrow's sustainable development agenda. These ideologically driven arguments ignore underlying realities both as to what is feasible and what is actually occurring.

Today, nuclear power plants are operational in countries comprising 64 % of the world's population, and new power reactors are in the planning or construction stage in countries representing no less than 50 % of the world's population. Among the latter are the world's two largest developing countries, China and India, which alone represent 40 % of humankind and about half the developing world. With active nuclear reactor construction under way as we speak, these leading nations have already made nuclear power a part of their sustainable development strategies for the 21st century.

### **Winning the sustainable development debate**

This presentation will share information materials about sustainable development. It will describe the work of the World Nuclear Association Sustainable Development Strategy Group, its preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and how participants to PIME can get involved.