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Statements of the Deputy Directors General

27 June 2005 | Bordeaux, France

[International Conference on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources](#)

Opening Remarks at the International Conference on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources

by Mr. Tomihoro Taniguchi
IAEA Deputy Director General, Head of the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security

On behalf of the Director General of the IAEA, I have the pleasure in welcoming you to this important international conference on the safety and security of radioactive sources.

Practically all countries use radioactive sources for peaceful purposes. The use of such sources continues to grow, particularly in developing countries where they contribute significantly to improving human health and providing social and economic benefits through many applications in medicine, industry agriculture, resource preservation and environment protection.

The vast majority of radioactive sources are controlled properly. However, radiological accidents have occurred in all regions of the world - which indicates that there is not always sufficient control of sources throughout their life cycle. Even advanced countries with developed regulatory systems lose track of sources each year resulting in orphan sources with the potential to cause incidents or accidents. Actually, an increasing number of cases of uncontrolled movement of sources are reported the Agency's Illicit Trafficking Database (ITDB).

The challenge is, therefore, to facilitate the continuous use of radioactive sources while ensuring they are used in a safe and secure manner to protect individuals, society and the environment.

The events of September 11, 2001 lead to an increased awareness of the possible use of radioactive sources for malicious purposes, such as by shrouding conventional explosives with radioactive sources to disperse the radioactive material in an urban environment. Although such radioactive dispersion devices (RDDs) could cause major socio-economic disruption, the effects would not be comparable to the detonation of a nuclear weapon, therefore, RDD's should not be considered the same as nuclear explosive devices. None-the-less radioactive sources are more easily accessible and their potential use by terrorist groups is a threat with higher probability that needs to be taken seriously and that requires a coordinated and international response. The *International Conference on Security of Radioactive Sources*, held in Vienna, Austria, in 2003, addressed these concerns and called for international initiatives, including the updating of the *IAEA Action Plan for the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources*. As a direct result of the updated Action Plan the *Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources* was revised and approved by the Board of Governors in 2003, its supporting *Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources* was developed and approved in 2004 and the *Safety Guide on Categorization of Radioactive Sources* was completed recently. All three documents were developed under the auspices of the IAEA to achieve international consensus and they play a central role in this Conference. It is worth noting that more than 70 countries have already expressed their intention to follow the guidance given in the *Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources* - and I would like to encourage more countries to do so.

The G-8 at its meeting in Evian in 2003 expressed its full political support to the IAEA actions and to the Code of Conduct and encouraged all States working towards increasing the safety and security of radioactive sources. At the Sea Island in 2004, the G-8 gave its support to guidance on the import and export of high-risk radioactive sources, which was developed under the auspices of IAEA and was subsequently endorsed by the General Conference in September 2004. The UN Security Council Resolution 1540, in its preamble recognized the recommendations given in the Code of Conduct.

The effects of radiation exposure are well documented and, as with all potentially hazardous materials, safety has always come first - as demonstrated by the comprehensive array of Safety Standards developed by IAEA. Although security requirements have been included in the International Basic Safety Standards since 1996, the emphasis was historically on prevention of unauthorized access without malice aforethought. The IAEA has actively promoted both the safety and security of radioactive sources by organizing several major international conferences, the first of which was held in Dijon, France in 1998 on the Safety of Radiation Sources and Security of Radioactive Materials, followed by the International Conference of National Regulatory Authorities with Competence in the Safety of Radiation Sources and the Security of Radioactive Materials held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2000. In addition to raising awareness and promoting information exchange, these conferences have given major direction to the Agency's activities - especially by way of the "Action Plan on the Safety and Security of Radiation Sources" that was first approved by the IAEA Board of Governors and endorsed by the General Conference in 1999 and subsequently updated in 2001, immediately before September 11. Other related conferences include the conferences on *Security of Material: Measures to Prevent, Intercept and Respond to Illicit Uses of Nuclear Material and Radioactive Sources*, Stockholm, 2001; and on *Nuclear Security: Global Directions for the Future*, held recently in London, 2005. The London conference considered the threat of malicious acts involving nuclear and other radioactive material; the experiences, achievements and shortcomings of national and international efforts to strengthen the prevention and detection of, and response to, malicious acts involving these materials; and the ways and means to achieve future improvements. The findings of the President of the London conference will be presented this afternoon.

The Agency has been promoting for some time now the idea of a Global Nuclear Safety Regime. At the heart of this regime is a strong and effective national safety infrastructure where - as an overriding priority - safety issues are given the attention warranted by their significance. The need for sustainable regulatory infrastructure for the safety and security of radioactive sources was discussed at the *International Conference on National Infrastructures for Radiation Safety*, organized by the IAEA in Rabat, Morocco in 2003. Following that conference an IAEA Action Plan was developed and approved by the Board of Governors, which includes actions to assist Member States in establishing sustainable regulatory infrastructures.

Playing a leading role in the global efforts to improve the Global Nuclear Security Framework has been included in the IAEA's Medium Term Strategy. It will focus on enhancing the sustainability of nuclear security programmes in Member States, complementing their nuclear safety programmes.

The IAEA has also conducted practical activities to promote safety and security in a synergetic manner. The Tripartite Agreement between the Russian Federation, the United States of America, and the Agency has successfully improved the situation in several countries of the Former Soviet Union. An IAEA Technical Cooperation project, often called the "Model Project" has helped more than 80 Member States improve their regulatory infrastructures. Upon request from Member States, the Agency provided more than 100 expert missions to help:

- National strategy development;
- Upgrading the safety and security of sources;
- Management of disused sources;
- Searching and securing orphan sources;
- Transport of radioactive materials;
- Emergency preparedness;
- Appraisal of the regulatory infrastructure (RASSIA);
- Strengthen nuclear security (INSServ);
- Organizing workshops and training.

The IAEA's *International Catalogue of Sealed Sources and Devices* helps Member States' authorities identify orphan sources. The Regulatory Authority Information System (RAIS) helps regulatory authorities maintain up-to-date source inventories. The IAEA Illicit Trafficking Database (ITB) lists hundreds of incidents of the past decade. These incidents may not have a malicious origin, but they do indicate that all is not well with the control systems, as will all be explained on Thursday.

Recognizing that non-IAEA Member States also use radioactive sources, the Agency is helping some of those countries.

Looking to this week, I hope that the focus of the discussions and the outcome of this conference will include concrete measures to:

First - Encourage the wider implementation of the Code of Conduct and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources. The Conference devotes the whole of tomorrow to this topic.

Second - Enhance awareness and preparedness and a firmly rooted culture for safety and security at all levels - from senior officials and managers to those who work directly with radioactive sources.

Third - Promote improved continuity of control, so that there is no gap in control at any stage of the source life cycle and no lapse of security. Several sessions of this conference will address related topics, such as continuity of control, source manufacture, transport, import and export, and management of disused sources, including disposal.

Fourth - Consider what more might be done to ensure sustainability of the national system of control. Both the regulatory and the technical infrastructure must be sustained. In order to achieve sustainability, Governments must give safety and security a high priority and ensure that sufficient resources are made available - taking advantage of bi-lateral, regional or other co-operative agreements. I hope that the understanding derived from this conference will help countries give higher priority to sustainability of the infrastructures required for the safety and security of radioactive sources.

Fifth - In recognizing the international nature of the use of radioactive sources and being aware that malicious acts involving sources could occur anywhere in the world - promote the development of a global network of control systems and information sharing.

Sixth - lead to a fuller recognition that those primarily concerned with safety and those primarily concerned with security work cooperatively and seek to strengthen the synergies that exist. We should remember that the overall objective of our work is to protect people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation and from the malicious use of such threat without hindering the many beneficial uses of radiation. If we are to achieve this objective we must further utilize the synergy between safety and security.

I hope that this Conference will also generate new ideas and further initiatives to promote sustainable control of radioactive sources, to implement the Code of Conduct, and to enhance international cooperation. We gratefully acknowledge the participation of 69 countries and 11 international organizations in this Conference, which should help to strengthen such cooperation.

The IAEA is grateful to the Government of France for hosting this conference and to the cooperating organizations, whose representatives will speak to us this morning.

Now it is my pleasure to introduce Mr. Jean-Francois Lacronique, President of the Institut de Radioprotection et de Sûreté Nucléaire (IRSN), France, who kindly agreed to be the President of this Conference.