

Statements of the Director General

7 December 2009 | Kyoto, Japan

[International Conference on Fast Reactors and Related Fuel Cycles: Challenges and Opportunities \(FR09\)](#)

 [Read Story »](#) | [Watch Video »](#)

Statement to International Conference on Fast Reactors and Related Fuel Cycles: Challenges and Opportunities

by IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to address participants at this opening session of the *International Conference on Fast Reactors and Related Fuel Cycles: Challenges and Opportunities*, organized by the IAEA and hosted by the Japan Atomic Energy Agency.

Fast reactor technology has the potential to ensure that energy resources which would last hundreds of years with the technology we are using today will actually last several thousand years. In other words it can withstand enormous increases in demand.

This innovative technology also reduces the risk to the environment and helps to limit the burden that will be placed on future generations in the form of waste products.

The coming year will be an exciting one for the development of fast-spectrum nuclear reactors. We expect to reach many important milestones:

- the first criticality of the China Experimental Fast Reactor;
- the restart of the Monju prototype fast reactor in Japan; and
- the new insights we will gain through the end-of-life studies at the Phénix reactor in France.

In the near future, new fast reactors will be commissioned: the 500MW(e) Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor in India, the first in a series of five of the same type, and the BN-800 reactor in the Russian Federation. Moreover, France, Japan, India, China and the Republic of Korea are preparing advanced prototypes, demonstration or commercial reactors for the 2020-2030 period.

Nuclear power is set to be an increasingly important part of the global energy mix in the coming decades as demand for energy grows. Scores of countries in both the developed and developing world have told the IAEA that they are interested in introducing nuclear power. The 30 countries which already have nuclear power reactors are set to build more.

This trend is likely to be accompanied by accelerated deployment of fast reactors.

Continued advances in research and technology development are necessary to ensure improved economics and maintain high safety levels with increased simplification of fast reactors.

The number of countries with fast reactor development programs is increasing steadily. Emerging economies are joining the traditional fast reactor technology holders and pursuing important research and technology activities.

The IAEA is the unique collaboration framework for all these players to work together to ensure that innovative fast reactor technology progresses. We provide an umbrella for knowledge preservation, information exchange and collaborative R&D to pool resources and expertise.

Our Technical Working Group on Fast Reactors promotes the exchange of information on national and multi-national programs and new developments and experience. It aims to identify problems, help find solutions and facilitate practical application of fast neutron systems.

In the Programme and Budget Cycle for 2010–2011, IAEA projects on innovative fast neutron systems will continue to focus on issues addressing fast reactor economics, enhanced safety characteristics, sustainability and public acceptance.

As far as public acceptance is concerned, I believe there is a growing understanding throughout the world that clean, efficient and safe nuclear energy has a key role to play in meeting the growing demand for energy while minimising damage to the environment.

Fast reactor technology has a promising future. The IAEA will continue to work with all of you to help interested Member States to benefit from it and to establish, or further enhance, the necessary safety, security and safeguards infrastructure.

Let me conclude by expressing my gratitude to all of the dedicated colleagues in the International Advisory Committee, the International Scientific Committee and the Local Organizing Committee who have worked hard to organize this conference. I wish you every success in your deliberations over the next few days.

[More DG Statements »](#)