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MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN NUCLEAR, RADIATION AND WASTE SAFETY

PROGRESS OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE JOINT CONVENTION ON THE SAFETY OF SPENT FUEL MANAGEMENT AND ON THE SAFETY OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

1. The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management (the Joint Convention), for which the Director General is the Depository, was adopted on 5 September 1997 - by a Diplomatic Conference convened by the Director General - and opened for signature on 29 September 1997 in conjunction with the forty-first regular session of the Agency's General Conference.
2. Article 29 of the Joint Convention provides that a preparatory meeting of the Contracting Parties shall be held not later than six months after the date of the Joint Convention's entry into force and that, at the preparatory meeting, the Contracting Parties shall - inter alia - adopt Rules of Procedure and Financial Rules and establish guidelines regarding the form and structure of the reports to be submitted to the review meetings of Contracting Parties and the process for reviewing such reports. The first review meeting of Contracting Parties is to be held as soon as possible, but not later than thirty months, after the entry into force of the Joint Convention. Article 37 of the Joint Convention provides that the Agency shall provide the secretariat for the meetings of the Contracting Parties.
3. In order to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made and the necessary materials are prepared in good time before the preparatory meeting of the Contracting Parties, the Secretariat has convened informal meetings of signatories and other interested States; two such meetings have been held - one in May 1998 and one in November 1998. At the second meeting, three documents prepared by the Secretariat - one containing draft rules of procedure and financial rules, one containing draft guidelines regarding the review process and one containing draft guidelines regarding the format of national reports - were reviewed. On the basis of comments made and advice given at that meeting, the Secretariat has revised the three documents, the revised versions of which will be reviewed at a third informal meeting of signatories and other interested States, to be held in October 1999.

For reasons of economy, this document has been printed in a limited number.
Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies of documents to meetings.

4. Throughout the preparatory process, account is being taken of the progress made in connection with the “sister” Convention on Nuclear Safety. In particular, the lessons learned from the first review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety (held in April 1999) concerning the effectiveness of the review procedures will be discussed at the aforementioned third informal meeting and changes will - if that is considered necessary - be made to the draft rules and guidelines relating to the review meetings of Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention.

5. It is expected that agreement will be reached on the draft rules of procedure and financial rules, the draft guidelines regarding the review process and draft guidelines regarding the format of national reports at the third informal meeting and that a state of readiness for the entry into force of the Joint Convention will then exist.

6. As of 30 July, 39 States had signed the Joint Convention and 11 States (eight of them with operational nuclear power plants) had ratified it. The States which had ratified by 30 July 1999 were: Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Morocco, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. Pursuant to its Article 40, the Joint Convention will enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit with the Depositary of the twenty-fifth instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, including the instruments of 15 States each having an operational nuclear power plant.