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Director General Reports to the Board on Nuclear Issues

Staff Report

15 June 2009

During today's opening of the Board of Governors, IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei reported on the successes of the Agency's Technical Cooperation programme, on nuclear power, nuclear applications, security and safety as well as non-proliferation.

He also made the case for the proposed IAEA low enriched uranium (LEU) fuel bank and focused on critical budgetary issues for 2010-2011.

Technical Cooperation. Human health, food and agriculture, and safety were the three largest areas of activity for Technical Cooperation last year. The Director General said he was pleased that the FAO/IAEA Joint Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture is no longer under threat of termination and that the WHO/IAEA Joint Programme on Cancer Control was launched last month.

Nuclear Power. He also reported that the Agency should expect continued high demand for its assistance from Member States exploring the nuclear power option, despite the global financial crisis.

Nuclear Security. Dr. ElBaradei emphasised the central role nuclear security plays in enabling further development of nuclear technologies. "At a time when security risks are growing, it would be irresponsible for the Agency - and incomprehensible to the public - not to have a robust, well funded and independent nuclear security programme," he said.

Budget. In proposing the Programming Budget for 2010-2011, the Director General called for the Board to invest in the IAEA's programmes which are important for enriching the lives of millions worldwide, instead of implementing cost-cutting measures.


He said the consequences of continued inadequate funding include gaps in the nuclear verification system, inability to respond effectively to another Chernobyl-type disaster, and limp responses to the pressing human needs in developing countries. He said that despite the financial crisis, "the



Chair of the Board of Governors, Ambassador and Resident Representative of Algeria, Ms. Taous Feroukhi (centre) speaks during the opening session of the Board's June meeting. (Photo: D. Calma/IAEA)

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increase we propose is dwarfed by the magnitude and range of the risks the Agency has to address."

LEU Fuel Bank. Dr. ElBaradei said the proposed LEU bank would be a last resort available to countries facing a shut-down of their nuclear power programmes for reasons unrelated to market activity. "The purpose of the IAEA LEU bank and of the Russian proposal is to provide assurance of supply over and above countries' existing rights. It is intended to avoid a repeat of the type of disruption for political reasons seen in the past."

Verification of Non-Proliferation. During today's opening session, the Director General also spoke about the lingering difficulties faced with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic.

He said diplomacy is the only viable means of bringing the DPRK back to the NPT, and commended the US initiative to engage Iran in direct dialogue "without preconditions and on the basis of mutual respect." He however reiterated how necessary it is for Iran to implement the measures called for by the UN Security Council and by the IAEA's Board of Governors.

Dr. ElBaradei once again called on Syria to be fully cooperative and transparent, allowing IAEA inspectors access to the destroyed building on the Dair Alzour site.

See Story Resources for more information.