

**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF ENERGY OF SOUTH
AFRICA,
Ms. ELIZABETH DIPUO PETERS, MP,
AT THE 2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EFFECTIVE NUCLEAR
REGULATORY SYSTEMS,
CAPE TOWN, 14 – 18 DECEMBER 2009**

President of the Conference, Mr GB Jaczko

Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation, Mr Shmatko

Deputy Director General of the IAEA, Mr Taniguchi

Director-General of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency, Mr
Echavarri

Chairman of the Forum for Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa, Mr
Elegba

Distinguished Delegates

Mr President, thank you for affording me the opportunity to address this important international conference. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the African continent, to South Africa and to the beautiful city of Cape Town.

Nuclear Resurgence & Cooperation

Nuclear energy is seen by many countries as providing a sustainable solution to energy security challenges. In this context, many developing countries are considering the establishment of nuclear power build programmes whilst countries with mature nuclear programmes are considering the possibility of further expansion.

The challenges facing countries that are embarking on this new venture include inter alia the development of policies, legislation as well as the establishment of appropriate institutions such as regulatory bodies with effective independence to take regulatory decisions.

Regional and international cooperation and coordination is therefore of critical importance. Accordingly, the establishment of the Forum of Regulatory Bodies in Africa is a welcome initiative. We are pleased that national nuclear programme in post-apartheid South Africa place us in a position to become active global participants in the safe use of nuclear

energy for peaceful purposes

However, we all have an obligation to ensure that the presence of a plethora of cooperation mechanisms such as this body are as inclusive and as supportive as possible. This will help the global community of nations in reaping maximum benefits that surely should arise from these initiatives to ensure security of energy supply. We do not have the luxury to duplicate such bodies.

The role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in nuclear safety and security cannot be over-emphasised. That alone is the reason that drove the liberation movement of the people of our country, and now the ruling party, fully to conform to all the treaties and conventions that have been drafted by this reputable institution of the peoples of the world.

The same goes for the facilitation of cooperation and the sharing of knowledge and experience. The IAEA is invariably trusted to provide independent views and

advice in order to strengthen safety and security whilst preserving the sovereignty, authority and responsibilities of member states.

Pelindaba Treaty

We therefore call on the international community to support the legal instruments related to safety and security and the ratification of amendments where these exists. On the African continent, a milestone has been reached with the coming to force of the Pelindaba Treaty.

Parties to this Treaty remain convinced that the African weapons-free zone is an important step towards strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, promoting cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy as well as enhancing regional and international peace and security.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

The time for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference is upon us. In very much the same way that the eyes of the world are currently focusing on Copenhagen. We all have a contribution to make so that we emerge, out of the Copenhagen process, with a commitment to build a planet that our children can be happy live in.

We are indeed pleased that our head of state and government, President Zuma, will personally lead the South African contingent there. There can be no better testament to our leadership to the creation of an atmosphere free of greenhouse gas emissions, than the symbolism magnified by the presence of our President.

In the same vein, the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its Safeguards system, is the single most important instrument available to built confidence in the peaceful nature of national nuclear programmes. This is fundamental if we are to deliver the security that the

world seeks and which in fact has eluded us in the past few decades.

We therefore hope that at the May 2010 review conference consensus will be reached on measures needed further to strengthen peace and security in the world.

Safety Assurance

The assurance of Nuclear Safety and Security forms the basis and the vital cog upon which citizens will inevitably support nuclear energy programmes. It is against this background that there is need to continuously review and enhance framework governing the national and international nuclear safety and security framework.

Regulators and operators are confronted with the reality that they must find effective ways to deal with safety and security of facilities at different levels such as those that are planned, or those under construction, or

even those that have been commissioned. All of this should be done whilst we continue to pay attention to keep our eyes on the ball in so far as ageing facilities are concerned including decommissioning.

Illicit Trafficking

The prevention of illicit trafficking of nuclear materials and equipment requires us to be proactive in our approach to the usage, storage, transportation of these materials as well as the physical protection of associated facilities. South Africa and several other nations have benefited from the work of the IAEA in the area of nuclear security. The preparations for the 2010 FIFA World Cup incorporates a great deal of nuclear security planning. This is currently being undertaken in conjunction with the IAEA.

We have used the reservoir of experience gained during Major Public Events such as the 2006 FIFA World Cup as well as the recent Olympic games. This is being used in our preparation for the upcoming soccer World Cup

which will hit our shores in June next year.

Amano, DG

On behalf of the government and the people of South Africa, I would like to again congratulate and welcome Ambassador Amano who is the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency and express our country's commitment to working with him and supporting him and the Agency in ensuring that we create a world which will fully take advantages of using nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you fruitful deliberations and a successful conference.

I thank you.