



DRAFT (Final)

**MEETING REPORT OF
THE 31st RCA GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**Meeting Room V, CO7,
IAEA Headquarters,
Vienna, Austria**

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ACRONYMS

AFRA African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology

ARCAL Regional Co-operative Agreement for the Advancement of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean

DDG Deputy Director General

DIR Director

ESCAP United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

FNCA Forum for Nuclear Co-operation in Asia

IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency

LC Lead Country

LDR/HDR Low Dose Rate/High Dose Rate

MS Member State

NA Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications

RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
RCARO	RCA Regional Office
RRU	Regional Resource Unit
TC	Technical Co-operation
TCAPS	East Asia and the Pacific Section
TCPA	Division for Africa, and East Asia and the Pacific
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

INTRODUCTION

The 31st RCA GC was attended by (39) delegates from 17 RCA Member States: AUL, BGD, CPR, IND, INS, JPN, ROK, MAL, MON, MYA, NZE, PAK, PHI, SIN, SRL, THA and VIE.

The IAEA was represented by DDG-TC (Mr. QIAN Jihui), Mr. H. Livingston (on behalf of DDG-NA), DIR-TCPA (Mr. B-K Kim), SH-TCAPS (Mr. M. N. Razley) and the RCA Co-ordinator (Mr. C. R. Aleta). Several Agency Technical Officers, Project/Country Officers and support staff were also present. The list of the participants and other attendees is attached in Annex 1.

I. OPENING

I.1 Remarks by outgoing chairpersons:

Mr. N. Choudhury (BDG), the outgoing Chairperson and National RCA Co-ordinator gave his welcoming remarks by thanking the MSs for their co-operation during his tenure. Before handing over the Chairmanship of the Meeting to Mr. In-soon Chang (ROK), he traced the brief history of rotating the Chairmanship of the RCA GCM. He noted that he was elected in March 2001 during the Dhaka Meeting and in March 2002 the Chairmanship was handed over to Republic of Korea at the Meeting in Seoul, Republic of Korea. He stated that the establishment of the RCA Regional Office has been realised at last and concluded by thanking the Member States for their support in the RCA programmes. The Meeting proceeded with the remarks from DDG-TC, Mr. QIAN Jihui and DDG-NA.

I.2 Message from IAEA:

The DDG-TC, Mr. QIAN Jihui, welcomed the participants and he spoke about the direction of the RCA and its success in establishing the RCA Regional Office in ROK. He stressed the need to bear in mind: the Central Criterion, while performing upstream programming work; the ability to grab opportunities for demonstrating to relevant/concerned authorities; and, the attractiveness of nuclear techniques in solving national problems (such as communicable diseases, food and mouth disease (FMD), coastal zone management) and other issues. He expressed his satisfaction with the RCA's initiative to collaborate with Asian Development Bank on an air pollution project and a future project with JICA on FMD projects. He advised the RCA to solicit ways to obtain other donors for its projects. In closing, he expressed his gratitude to MSs for their support, trust and friendship accorded him during his tenure as DDG-TC over the past decade and indicated his intention to serve the RCA programme in another capacity in the future.

The message of DDG-NA, Mr. Burkart, who was unable to participate at the Meeting, was delivered by Mr. H. Livingston. He briefed the Meeting on the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development. (Refer Annex 2 for the text of his remarks)

I.3 Remarks by incoming chairperson:

Mr. In-soon Chang (ROK) informed the Meeting that the elected Chairperson of the RCA (Mr. Chung Won Cho), was unable to participate and as a consequence he had been requested to function as the Chairperson instead. He thanked the outgoing Chairperson, Mr. N. Choudhury (BDG), for his outstanding leadership and excellent performance in handling the affairs of the RCA during his tenure. He commented that the RCA has performed remarkably well over the past 30 years. He also conveyed his thanks and gratitude to the RCA Secretariat for its effort in preparing the 31st RCA GCM. He urged MSs to rededicate their commitment to the founding principles of the RCA as well as to formulate new visions to jointly meet the challenges of the 21st Century. He then proceeded with the designation of rapporteur(s). He informed the Meeting that Mr. K. P. Kim (cost free expert from ROK) and Ms. M. Tan (RCA Office) had been designated as rapporteurs for the Meeting under the supervision of Mr. Aleta, the RCA Co-ordinator.

I.4 Adoption of Agenda:

Thailand proposed an additional item, a project proposal, be added to Agenda item X (Other Matters).

The Meeting adopted the Agenda of the Meeting as shown in Annex 3 with the above proposed amendment.

II MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 24TH NATIONAL RCA REPRESENTATIVES MEETING REPORT

Mr. Aleta, the RCA Co-ordinator informed the Meeting that prior to this Meeting a Table showing the status of follow-up actions from the 24th National RCA Representatives Meeting in March 2002 had been circulated to MSs for their information and feedback. He pointed out that several items listed in the Table (Annex 4) constitute part of the agenda of this Meeting and others would be taken up during the afternoon informal session. It was noted that the proposal on the disposal of non-power radioactive waste, submitted by the Philippines for consideration as a 2003-2004 project would be further explored for the next cycle.

Australia proposed that project evaluation might be possible using electronic means. In addition it was suggested that a follow-up of contact with other regional organisations should be taken up as part of the programme at the 25th National RCA Representatives Meeting scheduled to be held in Pakistan next March.

Mr. Aleta pointed out that the RCA projects had never been evaluated by an outside independent body and suggested that it would be good to subject the RCA programme to such an evaluation to ascertain that its objectives were being achieved and the needs of the RCA MSs. were being met.

The Meeting agreed to consider some of the issues listed in the follow-up actions from the 24th National RCA Representatives Meeting during the afternoon informal session and the remaining issues would be taken up at the next National RCA Representatives Meeting in Pakistan next March.

III. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE 24TH NATIONAL RCA REPRESENTATIVES MEETING

Mr. Aleta informed the Meeting that the report has been circulated to MSs for their comments and feedback. To date, the Secretariat has not received any feedback from MSs. In view of the foregoing, the Meeting adopted the above report.

The Meeting adopted the report as prepared.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE RCA ANNUAL REPORT 2001

Mr. Aleta briefed the Meeting on the composition of the RCA Annual Report 2001. It comprised three parts, namely: Part I, intended to be a stand-alone document describing the highlights of the RCA programme in 2001. This was also intended to be an anniversary issue to commemorate its 30 years of regional co-operation amongst the 17 RCA Member States and feature success stories achieved by MSs in the last 5 years, with a focus on the previous year; Part II described the activities and achievements under each active projects; and, Part III was submitted by the MSs detailing their participation in the various project activities. It was noted that MSs had been requested to provide their comments and inputs to all three parts of the report and the revised version of the report had been placed in the RCA Homepage. It was also noted that the secretariat had only received success stories for the 2001 RCA Annual Report from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Singapore and Sri Lanka. The Meeting having deliberated on the content of the success stories, concurred that respective Lead Country should provide details of achievements and/or success stories based on their respective sectors. India and Malaysia congratulated the RCA Regional Office in the Republic of Korea for doing an excellent job in printing Part I of the Annual Report.

MSs acknowledged the good work done by the RCA Regional Office and thanked the Office for printing and editing Part I of the RCA Annual Report. The Meeting adopted the 2001 RCA Annual Report.

V. PROGRAMME FOR 2003/2004

V.1 Agency Guidelines presented by Mr. B-K Kim, DIR-TCPA

Mr. B-K Kim spoke about enhancing the programming for 2005/06 and the sustainability of the RCA. He informed the Meeting that the 2003-2004 TC Programme

was being finalised and that it was time to embark on the 2005-2006 upstream work so as to assure higher quality programming for the new biennium as well to meet the requirements of the TC funding strategy focussed on the Central Criterion (one of the key of this Criterion was for projects to demonstrate strong government commitment). The challenges facing MSs for the next cycle were to formulate quality RCA projects with potential for socio-economic impact. There was also the challenge of demonstrating how the regional aspects could “add value” beyond what could be done within national or Agency programmes. He spoke about the need for nuclear institutions to be more self-reliant and sustainable. He proposed that the RCA should prepare a paper for tabling at the next National RCA Representatives Meeting in Pakistan next March, which would outline strategies to be adopted by the RCA Regional Office for marketing the capabilities of the RCA to major regional development and funding organisations, and thereby increase the revenue to MSs. He urged the RCA MSs not to be complacent about their past achievements but to seek to revive their past enthusiasm. (Refer Annex 5 for DIR-TCPA’s presentation).

In conclusion he informed the Meeting of the forthcoming changes in TC management staff, including the office of the RCA Co-ordinator.

V.2 East Asia and the Pacific Programme presented by Mr. M.N. Razley, SH-TCAPS

Mr. Razley talked about the importance of designing projects that met the Central Criterion so as to ensure sustainability of the project as well as to ensure funding from TC and other donors. He cited two examples. One was a non-RCA project and the other was a potential RCA project. These two examples showed how linkages could be established between MSs, IAEA and donors in jointly achieving the objectives of the projects (i.e. reducing micronutrient malnutrition in the non-RCA project and curbing Livestock Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) for the RCA project). It was noted that JICA has shown interest in supporting the FMD project that was linked to a national project and where IAEA, FAO and ASEAN have each a significant role to play. He thanked MSs for their pledges and payment to TCF. He informed them of East Asia and Pacific’s region share in the 2003-2004 TC programme which was being finalised and the proposed budget for the coming biennium was about US\$26 million which account for 19% of the total TC fund for that cycle. He emphasized that the TC Department would continue to reduce the number of projects over the years with the focus of having fewer but better projects (i.e., projects that meet the Central Criterion); [Refer Annex 6]

V.3 The RCA Programme-presented by Mr. C. Aleta, RCA Co-ordinator

Mr. Aleta presented an overview of the RCA programme for 2003/2004 biennium, including the budget for each thematic sector project. He informed the Meeting that the Agency appraised the project proposals based on the TC Guidelines for finalizing projects for the 2003/2004 cycle, with emphasis on the Central Criterion as the basis for approving projects for TC funding. A Lead Country Meeting held from 29 July - 2 August 2002 reviewed/amended the proposals and project prioritisation and applied further budgetary adjustments within the ceiling allocated to the RCA programme. Following instructions from the TC Management, the hardcore funding from TC funds for the radiation protection related project was removed and redistributed to other RCA projects because there were other non-RCA radiation protection projects in-house.

There was much contention from MSs on this issue and the Meeting agreed to request that the amount allocated to the hardcore funding of the radiation protection related project be reinstated, with a corresponding reduction in the funding for the other RCA projects.

The Meeting agreed to request that the hardcore funding of the radiation protection related project be restored, with a corresponding reduction in the funding for the other RCA projects for the 2003/2004 biennium.

Japan expressed its intention to collaborate with the Government of Thailand through JICA, Japan, to create a new partnership in the use of radiation in the field of agriculture to treat Foot and Mouth Disease. Thailand thanked Japan for this initiative and promised to collaborate with JICA on this promising project.

Australia confirmed their intention to support the RCA programme with extrabudgetary funding totalling A\$1.3 million over the next 3 years (Jan. 2003 to Dec. 2005) to support the project “Improving regional capabilities for assessment, planning and response to environmental and radiological emergencies”. [Refer Annex 7] The Meeting signalled its supported for this proposal from Australia.

VI. MANAGEMENT ISSUES

VI.1 Lead Country

The Meeting recalled that at the Meeting in Seoul, it was agreed that Indonesia should continue to serve as the Lead Country for the health thematic sector with the assistance from Australia for implementation of the 2002 and finalization of the 2003/2004 RCA Programme. Japan would commence as the Lead Country for the health thematic sector for the formulation of the 2005-2006 programme. It was also agreed at that Meeting that the industry and environment thematic sector should be split into two separate thematic sectors with separate Lead Countries. All the above considerations had been taken into account while drawing up the new list of Lead Countries.

MSs were requested to review the list and identify projects that they would like to be Lead Country for the 2003/2004 biennium and inform the Secretariat accordingly.

India pointed out that ideally the above task of identifying a Lead Country should be undertaken by the respective Project Co-ordinators because they were supposed to meet annually to discuss management issues but due to financial constraints such meetings had ceased. Nevertheless, Project Co-ordinators should discuss the projects amongst themselves using electronic communication.

Japan informed the Meeting that they had also been involved in the formulation of health thematic sector projects for the 2003-2004 biennium. Japan requested MSs to note

the action plan on the Management of Lead Country, which they had prepared and had been endorsed by MSs at the Meeting in Korea.

VI.2 Regional Resource Units (RRUs)

The RCA Co-ordinator requested National RCA Representatives with designated RRUs in their country to review the list of RRUs and questionnaire attached in the handouts for the Meeting and to resubmit the questionnaire with updated information. For Member States who wished to volunteer RRUs for an on-going or new project, they were requested to submit a completed questionnaire to the Secretariat.

VI.3 Extension of the RCA Agreement

It was noted that 13 countries (Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam) had already signified their acceptance to extend the 1987 Regional Co-operative Agreement for another five years, i.e, until 11 June 2007.

MSs that had yet to notify the Agency of their acceptance were requested to pursue this matter with their competent authorities.

VI.4 Outsourcing of Activities

Mr. Aleta informed the Meeting that, since the year 2000, the Agency had been encouraging the RCA MSs to take on the implementation of project activities under an outsourcing arrangement. At the 24th National RCA Representatives Meeting held in Korea in March 2002, MSs were again reminded of the need for some of the RCA Regional events to be outsourced. The Agency was still in the process of drawing up a policy on outsourcing, but there was already an existing procedure that could enable activities to be outsourced. Examples of past outsourcing were the subcontracting of the analysis of water samples to one institute and the development of distance training materials by another. The outsourcing of regional training events had yet to be carried out and it was hoped that two RCA events could be outsourced by the end of this year using existing mechanisms for outsourcing. Mr Aleta pointed out that two MSs had expressed their interest in implementing RCA events on an outsourcing basis.

Japan stated its intention to outsource training events and requested more details including the nature of the contract, the real merit to Japan and the TCDC component.

The Agency also encouraged the RCA Regional Office to undertake outsourcing of the RCA regional events to the extent possible in the nearest future.

To help the Agency prepare for implementation of regional events using outsourcing arrangements, MSs were requested to submit to the Agency duly completed questionnaires, indicating the events that they would like to implement under this mechanism.

VII PROGRESS IN THE RCA REGIONAL OFFICE:

Mr. Jin-Kyoung Kim, Director of the RCA Regional Office (RCARO), Korea gave a brief summary of the achievements of the RCARO since its inauguration in March 2002. The RCARO had prepared a Working Paper on the establishment of an RCA Regional Office in the Republic of Korea for endorsement by MSs at this Meeting, published the 30th anniversary Scientific Forum Report and the RCA Annual Report (Part 1), initiated two new projects to assist national programmes of MSs, obtained an increase in the operational budget for the RCARO and established the Homepage with site name of www.rcaro.org. He requested MSs to endorse the adoption of the Working Paper that had been basically agreed in principle at the 30th RCA General Conference Meeting in Vienna in September 2001. The Meeting was also requested to endorse the adoption of several Guidelines that were reviewed and adopted by the Advisory Committee. He noted that an endorsed Working Paper would meet the needs of the Regional Office to have a basis for preparing the necessary supporting or back-up legal measures that would enable the Regional Office to enter into its designated function, including requesting for operational funds from the Government of the Republic of Korea.

The Meeting proceeded with a presentation by Mr. J. Chung (ROK), on the status and issues of the RCA Regional Office. (Refer Annex 8).

Thailand expressed its reservations about the RCA having an independent RCA Regional Office without a linkage with IAEA. The comments from Thailand are in Annex 9.

Japan expressed its appreciation of the Korean Government's support for the Regional Office and suggested that there might be no need for a legal document but perhaps a resolution within RCA Representatives, or statement of unanimous support and endorsement by MSs to the Office might suffice. It was mentioned that the RCARO would consult with the relevant Korean Government Ministries to determine which format would be acceptable to enable continuation of the present government financial support for the Regional Office.

The Meeting, having considered the proposed Working Paper and particularly the legal aspects, agreed to adopt it on the basis that any comments from MSs might still be considered after its adoption. The Meeting proposed that the RCARO should formulate a Work Plan which would be tabled at the next National RCA Representatives Meeting in Pakistan, scheduled to be held in March 2003. The Korean National Representative indicated that there would be consultations with the Korean Government on an appropriate format that would be acceptable to them for completion of the necessary legal provisions for the running of the Office.

VIII REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

VIII.1 Tripartite Meeting

Mr. Aleta informed the Meeting that the RCA would present two success stories at the Tripartite Meeting, one to be submitted by India and based on a Project Meeting Report, on “The use of RIA to diagnose micro-albumin” and the other by Japan on “LDR and HDR treatment for brachytherapy cancer”. The RCA representation at the Tripartite Meeting scheduled to be held on 19 September 2002 will comprise of the three Chairpersons (Bangladesh, Republic of Korea and Pakistan), TCDC contact point (i.e., Malaysia) and the country representing health sector (i.e., Australia).

VIII.2 Forum for Nuclear Co-operation in Asia (FNCA)

Mr. Aleta informed the Meeting that, during the visit of the Japanese FNCA Co-ordinator to the Agency in January and June 2002, there was an exchange of information with the RCA as to possible areas for co-operation. Since the FNCA had already developed a protocol for treating cervical cancer using radiation sources and this protocol had been circulated for adoption or use by the RCA MS, it was thought to be a good activity to be undertaken by both the FNCA and the RCA. This proposed co-operation between the FNCA and the RCA had also been mentioned at the Project Committee Meeting held in Bangkok in July 2002.

It was noted that the 3rd FNCA Ministerial Meeting would be held in Seoul from 30 to 31 October 2002 and further co-operation between the RCA and the FNCA on a complementary basis would be discussed.

Other fields of possible co-operation mentioned were in agriculture and research reactor utilization, particularly on production of Tc-99m generators.

VIII.3 UN ESCAP

Mr. Aleta recapped that, at the Consultative Meeting to Enhance Awareness among Regional and International Organizations held in Dhaka in March 2001, a paper by UN ESCAP identified air, water and marine pollution as possible areas for co-operation with the RCA/IAEA. In May 2002, on behalf of the RCA/IAEA, the National RCA Representative of Thailand participated in the UN ESCAP meeting and he was able to exchange information with UN ESCAP on the RCA/IAEA activities, particularly in the above mentioned areas. UN ESCAP was invited to the Lead Country Meeting held in Vienna in July/August 2002 but could not send a Representative. However they had written to the Agency expressing interest in continuing to explore possible collaboration with the RCA activities in the above mentioned areas.

The Meeting noted the progress made with regards to establishing contacts with other international organizations and requested the Agency to assist MSs to pursue these.

IX 25th NATIONAL RCA REPRESENTATIVES MEETING, PAKISTAN, 2003

Pakistan confirmed the hosting of the 25th National RCA Representative Meeting in Islamabad scheduled from 24 to 28 March 2003. The first three days were planned for the National RCA Representatives Meeting, the fourth day would be a tour of Pakistan's nuclear institute. On the last day there would be a forum to highlight achievements of the RCA programmes over the past 30 years and respective RCA MSs would be expected to present papers on the RCA achievements in the past 30 years. Other International Organizations, such as UNDP in Islamabad, would be invited to the Forum. Proceedings of the Meeting and achievements of the RCA over the past 30 years would be compiled into a report and this would serve as an excellent document in creating awareness of the RCA profile and programmes.

The Secretariat will continue to communicate with Pakistan for the preparation of the above Meeting.

X OTHER MATTERS

X.1 30th RCA Anniversary Celebration

It was noted that the 30th Anniversary of the RCA was celebrated in Korea last March in conjunction with the 24th RCA National Representatives Meeting. Mr. Chung informed the Meeting that the present Chairperson, Mr. Cho and Mr. J-K Kim, the Director of the RCA Regional Office, would be jointly hosting a reception at the VIC restaurant (Mozart Room) in the evening and representatives from the RCA, AFRA and ARCAL were invited to the reception to celebrate the RCA 30th Anniversary.

X.2 RCA Vision

Mr. Djaloeis presented his Working Paper on "RCA in the 21st Century". (Annex 10). It was noted that the paper was tabled at the 24th National RCA Representatives Meeting in Korea in March 2002 and was supposed to be presented at the said Meeting in Seoul and again during the LC Meeting in July/August 2002, but the author was unable to attend. The paper was presented at this Meeting to solicit comments and discuss on the future direction of the RCA. The Meeting deliberated on the recommendations put forth in the paper and acknowledged the good work done by the author. Some of the recommendations proposed were not agreeable to most MSs. The Meeting took note of the recommendations and thanked the author for his work.

The Meeting took note of the recommendations and thanked the author for his good work.

X.3 Advisory Bodies

The RCA Co-ordinator recalled the experience in the RCA on the use of Advisory Bodies in the formulation of projects in some thematic sectors such as agriculture, health and industry for previous programme cycles. It was noted at the LC Meeting in July/August

2002, the LC Co-ordinator for Agriculture, China, expressed the need for an Advisory Body.

The Meeting agreed that Advisory Bodies could play an important role in formulating the RCA projects but noted it was important to that those participating in the Advisory Body should have broader view.

X.4 Project Proposal From Thailand

Mr. Manoon (THA), presented a conceptual proposal on “Radiation safety on upgrading of radiation protection infrastructures, occupational safety and radiation protection of patients”. (Annex 11)

Mr. Manoon requested MSs to peruse the proposal and suggested that have further discussions on the modality of implementation and of funding such a project could be taken up at the next National RCA Representatives Meeting in Pakistan scheduled to be held in March 2003.

XI CLOSING

The Chairperson expressed his thanks to the Secretariat for organising the Meeting and MSs for their participation and co-operation.

XII ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Meeting acknowledged the good work done by Mr. Aleta during his tenure as the RCA Co-ordinator and expressed its gratitude and thanks for the services he rendered to the RCA MSs over the past five years.