



MEETING REPORT

31st MEETING OF THE NATIONAL

RCA REPRESENTATIVES

21-24 April 2009

Tokyo, Japan

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31st Meeting of National RCA Representatives

21-24 April 2009

Tokyo, Japan

Opening Ceremony

The 31st Meeting of National RCA Representatives was held at the Convention Center Goshiki, Grand Prince Hotel Akasaka, Tokyo, Japan, from 21 to 24 April 2009 and was attended by 43 participants from 14 RCA Member States and the RCA Regional Office (RCARO). The list of participants is given in Annex 1. The IAEA was represented by Mr Mokdad Maksoudi, Section Head, TACP1, Division Asia and the Pacific, Technical Cooperation Department and Mr. Prinath Dias, RCA Focal Person (RCA FP). Bangladesh, China and Mongolia were not represented.

The Outgoing Chair, Professor Vuong Tan, Chairman Vietnam Atomic Energy Commission, gave opening remarks. He noted that the Regional Meeting of the National RCA Representatives was an important event in the RCA Programmes' calendar. It was an opportunity to review progress of all the projects as well as an opportunity for the National RCA Representatives make decisions for fostering new projects that would be needed for the next programme cycle. He thanked the Japanese Government and the IAEA for the excellent preparations for the Meeting. He also expressed his thanks for the help he had received over the past year from the RCA FP, RCARO and NRs.

HE Mr Masahiko Shibayama, Vice Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Member, the House of Representatives, presented the opening address on behalf of the Japanese Government (Annex 2). In his presentation he said that he was pleased to welcome the RCA National Representatives to Japan. He noted that since its inception in 1972 RCA had been very effective in its role of promoting and developing peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the region and as a consequence the RCA had often served as model for other regional agreements. The RCA training courses and workshops had contributed to human capacity building and development of nuclear peaceful technology and in particular enhanced the wellbeing of mankind in the projects related to agriculture, industry and health.

He noted that Japan had made significant progress in the area of application of nuclear techniques in the field of medicine and as a consequence Japan had Lead Country Coordinators in the human health projects. Japan has undertaken to conduct workshops in this area every year. He mentioned that on the last day of the Meeting there would be a

technical tour to the National Institute for Radiological Sciences (NIRS) where presently an RCA Regional Training Course was being conducted involving 19 trainees from 11 MSs. NIRS was the location of the world's first heavy ion accelerator. He hoped that the delegates would find the field visit to the NIRS both stimulating and useful.

Mr Shibayama reminded the delegates that Japan was the only country to have suffered the effect of nuclear bombs but in spite of this, his Government still viewed the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology as being beneficial to mankind. He noted that Japan had consistently contributed extrabudgetary funds to the RCA over the years and hoped to continue this practice.

In conclusion he thanked the IAEA Secretariat, the RCA FP and RCARO for their efforts in supporting the RCA. He expressed the hope that the Meeting would produce fruitful outcomes and wished continued success for the RCA.

Mr. Maksoudi read out the welcome remarks on behalf of the IAEA, due to be presented by Mr. Yang Dazhu, Director, Division Asia and the Pacific, (Annex 3), who was not able to be present at the Meeting due to commitments to assist the Director General IAEA, Dr El Baradei. He thanked the Government of Japan for hosting the meeting and for the continuous support to RCA over the past decades. In the message it was mentioned that the Meeting was going to consider the preparation of a regional profile and that the Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance Cooperation (SAGTAC) had recommended the development of such profiles. The Secretariat offered to provide assistance with this task if required. It was noted that this was the third NRM since the Medium Term Strategy had been adopted and that this Meeting would be identifying further actions and initiatives to further enhance the MTS and to extend its scope beyond 2011. The reviewing of the technical aspects of the on-going RCA programme was seen to be important and an additional indicator of good governance practice by the Member States. The focus by the RCA to have fewer but higher impact projects in the programme had resulted in the NRs' decision to have only 15 projects in the 2009-2011 cycle. Such decisions could be usefully applied to guide the participation of RCA Member States in the RCA projects. The need for good communication between the participating MSs as well as with the Agency was emphasized and it was an essential and an important aspect that information and feedback are provided in a timely manner. In concluding there were assurances of the Agency's full support for the RCA in its endeavors.

Mr Maksoudi also added some personal remarks noting that this was his first time to participate in a National RCA Representatives Meeting and that he is looking forward to gaining more insights into RCA activities and initiatives. He recalled that in 1988 when some African countries

wanted to establish a regional cooperative undertaking, RCA provided substantial help and assistance, which enabled the African agreement-AFRA-to have its successful launch in 1990. The RCA is and has been an important example for IAEA Member States worldwide.

He endorsed the RCA decision to focus on a small number of projects, which had also had the consequences of providing both high chances of receiving funding as well as achieving outcomes of good sustainability. The new RCA programme for 2009-11 should contribute to advancing the self-reliance of national nuclear institutions.

There was also a need to look to the future and chart new directions and update strategies, including the attraction of additional external funds. In conclusion he looked forward to enhanced and fruitful cooperation with the RCA.

1. Opening Session

1.1 Welcome Remarks of the Outgoing Chair

The Outgoing Chair, Professor Vuong Tan thanked the participants for the support they had provided to the Chair over the past year and noted the good progress made by RCA during the past year. He thanked the Government of Japan and the IAEA for their efforts in organising this Meeting and offered his congratulations on the excellent preparations. He called for nomination for the new Chair.

1.2 Election of the New Chair and Rapporteurs

PHI proposed Mr. Tsutomu Arai, Director, International Nuclear Energy Cooperation Division, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be the new Chair of the RCA. IND seconded the proposal. Mr. Tsutomu Arai was unanimously elected by the National RCA Representatives.

Dr Frank Bruhn of NZL and Dr John Easey of AUL agreed to be rapporteurs for the Meeting.

PHI proposed Mr. Tsutomu Arai, Director, International Nuclear Energy Cooperation Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, to be the new Chair of the RCA. IND seconded the proposal. Mr. Tsutomu Arai was unanimously elected by the National Representatives.

Dr Frank Bruhn of NZL and Dr John Easey of AUL agreed to be rapporteurs for the Meeting.

1.3 Remarks of the New Chair

Mr Arai thanked the Meeting for electing him and acknowledged the efforts of the outgoing Chair during the past year. He also thanked the RCA FP for the assistance provided to him in the lead up to the Meeting. He said that he had no doubts about the positive contribution that the RCA activities could make to the development of nuclear science and technology in the region. He noted with regret the absence of some Member States.

In conclusion he reviewed the programme and arrangements for the three days of meetings and the technical tour to NIRS.

2. Adoption of the Agenda - RCANRM(31)/1

No new items were proposed for the draft agenda.

The Meeting agreed to adopt the draft Agenda, Revision 5

The adopted Agenda is given in Annex 4.

3. 30th RCANRM and 37th RCA GCM reports - Matters arising and follow-up action – RCANRM(31)/2

RCA FP reviewed the items listed in the briefing paper (Annex 5) and reported on the actions taken.

AUL enquired about the term “logistical reasons” cited in the status of the item 5. The RCA FP explained that there was the potential for conflicts of interest to affect the decisions on who was best suited and qualified to undertake the expert missions and in additions there were sometimes timing constraints which required urgent action. In addition, it was the Agency that had the responsibility for the technical integrity of the projects implemented under the TC programme. AUL thanked the RCA FP for the explanation and agreed that these reasons had prevented implementation of this recommendation and suggested to delete this item from the action list. IND supported this suggestion. PHI asked whether the absence of the PLCC in the decision making for expert recruitment would affect the RCA target of 70% use of regional experts. The RCA FP responded that it had been policy for some time to look to the region’s experts first. He encouraged MSs to have their experts complete the Agency Expert Personal History Forms and submit them to the Agency to increase the pool of regional experts able to take on assignments.

It was agreed that this item would be removed from the future listing of follow up actions.

The Meeting agreed that the item in the follow up actions concerning the involvement of PLCCs in the process for the recruitment of experts should be deleted in future reports.

AUL asked whether the actions under item 5 concerning extrabudgetary contributions were on-going. The RCA FP gave some background about the estimation of extrabudgetary contributions in the budget preparation process for the new projects. RCA had a small extrabudgetary component but two projects still required additional funds. He added that it was still possible for additional extrabudgetary funds to be received for these two RCA projects. PHI stated that their extrabudgetary donation could be used to contribute to the extrabudgetary needs of these two projects.

THA referred to item 8 in the follow up actions for the 37th RCA GCM, which was concerned with the RCARO being involved in developing a database of end-users, and enquired what would be the RCARO's future activities in this context. The Chair recommended that the matter should be taken up under the agenda items on RCARO matters.

The Meeting agreed that discussion of the matter raised by THA would be covered under agenda item 11 (Report of the Director RCARO).

4. Progress of the Implementation of RCA Medium Term Strategy – RCANRM(31)/3 – Rev.1

The RCA FP was invited to provide further information on the agenda item. He noted that the performance indicators have been achieved to a large extent but current indications were that some, such as the increase in non-IAEA funding, would not seem to be able to be met. Commenting on the indicator related to achieving more active involvement of the NRs, he stated that the receipt of information on time was still a significant problem and sought the cooperation of the NRs to rectify this. Most of the action plan had either been achieved or was being implemented.

RCARO reminded that some of the performance indicators related to RCARO and these would be reported under the appropriate agenda item.

NZL noted that there had been positive feedback from the Agency regarding more active involvement of the NRs, and questioned whether feedback was being sought from other sources and other stakeholders. The RCA FP responded that feedback had not been sought from others such as ministries but it could be undertaken if the Meeting thought it worthwhile.

THA said that the reduction in the number of projects was appropriate but wanted advice on what indicators were appropriate to measure “higher impact”. PHI suggested that securing extrabudgetary funding might be an indicator as other stakeholders would appreciate “higher impact” of a project.

AUL commented that it was clear that the RCA MSs wanted to be more focused and achieve more impact with the projects but there was a wider issue of concern. He noted that the Agency's financial support of the RCA projects appeared to continue to decline but this did not appear to be the case for non-RCA regional projects and other regional cooperative agreements. There was therefore an apparent contradiction in the Agency's support of the RCA. On one hand the RCA was taking on significant initiatives that met the approval of the Agency but on the other hand the RCA then received decreased funding. Under such conditions there was no incentive to change; rather it was a disincentive. This issue aside, MSs had to consider what was the relationship between the needs and what was being carried out under the projects to address these needs. Criteria should be set to measure when a MS gained benefit and when more impact was achieved. AUL held the opinion that so far an increased impact had not been achieved in the projects and opportunity had been missed for improving impact in the projects introduced for the 2009/11 cycle. However this could and should be done for the next cycle. AUL said that recognition of impact needed to be captured and listed some suggestions, e.g. outputs in relation to the project plan and long term performance, sustainability, establishment of greater capability, end user adoption of protocols, standards, etc. Feedback was required from external stakeholders on such matters as: whether outputs were delivered; long-term outcomes; was value being delivered after project closure; and, sustainability. Although projects had created capability in MSs, it was important to question whether this increase was really addressing areas of important need in the MS. AUL concluded with the observation that although the RCA had decided to have fewer projects in the programme it had not followed up with bigger and greater impact projects, rather the RCA was just creating the same type of projects it had in the past as evidenced by the number of projects that have just one RTC and one or two meetings a year. Identification of criteria should be a key aspect for the next cycle and especially there should be written criteria for impact. Without any aim to achieve impact there would be no achievement of impact.

JPN agreed that this question was important for MSs although it was not easy to measure impact quantitatively. Careful project design was required so that the projects met national demand and thus get impact but there needed to be recognition that there would be variations from country to country. Good projects would only result if there was good design. He noted that the nuclear community was not always best placed with linkages to some end users, citing agriculture and health care as examples. He mentioned that there were two kinds of impact to be considered: socio-economic and infrastructure development.

THA agreed with the comments of JPN. PHI agreed that the concept design phase was when the high impact components should be considered. She also suggested that the PLCC base needed to be extended to provide some extra potential for developing new projects. AUL commented that since the RCA programme did not have any projects on nuclear power, infrastructure development was not so important.

MAL referred to the recent meeting in Hanoi under non-RCA project, “Support towards Self-Reliance and Sustainability of National Nuclear Institutions”, RAS/ 0/046, and commented that the needs of the RCA MSs were different because of their different levels of development. The issues were not just restricted to nuclear power. National Nuclear Institutes needed also to generate income.

RCA FP commented that the issues raised by the various delegations need to be taken into consideration when the extension of the RCA Medium Term Strategy is being formulated and it is being used for the preparation of the projects for the next cycle. Concerning project budgets, he said these are based on the activities in the project designs. He recommended that the PLCCs be instructed on what actions are required to enable a bigger impact to be made to enable them to take this to consideration in project design. He advised that despite the reduction in the number of RCA projects in the present programme, there had been no reduction of the number of regional events. He suggested that MSs should avoid participating in projects when they do not have the required resources. He reported that some MSs continue to participate in an excessive number of projects with respect to their resources. However the Secretariat was unable to take any action to deal with this because there were no criteria currently developed covering this matter. He suggested that participation criteria should be framed to guide MS on this issue either now or at subsequent meetings.

AUL agreed with the RCA FP comments and suggested that self-assessment criteria might be established to enable MSs to estimate the benefits from direct participation as well as other options that might provide benefits without direct participation or participation at different levels.

SH TCAP1 agreed that conceptual design was important and suggested that it ought to also contain the participation criteria. He had observed that for some projects, the counterpart institutes were not the correct ones and this situation needs to be addressed. He informed the Meeting that the Agency is currently defining the performance indicators of the programmes and this will certainly has some implications on project impacts.

IND indicated its support for the views expressed by the RCA FP and AUL, and suggested that these might be considered as items to be

covered when the RCA undertook deliberations on the extension of MTS. INS agreed that the matter should be considered in the context of the extension of the MTS and agreed with the other speakers that higher impact depended on the quality of the conceptual design but suggested that the current practice of only considering this at one meeting was a limiting factor. It was recognized that it would be difficult to organize more meetings and so INS suggested that more use of electronic networking could be helpful in providing additional inputs. JPN agreed with the various comments from other delegations and the Agency that participation of MSs in projects should be examined to ensure that only relevant MSs were included.

SH TCAP1 commented that the discussions on this agenda item had been very useful. He said that the Meeting might like to consider what differentiated a regional project from a national project and said that regional projects were not intended to establish basic infrastructure and expertise because this was a prerequisite for MSs joining a regional project. National projects were intended to assist with establishing basic infrastructure with the Agency's assistance.

The Meeting decided that the development of criteria relating to impact, self-assessment on benefit of participation and other options for MSs to get benefits without full participation in the project should be developed. These items were referred to the Working Group discussed under the next agenda item.

5. Extension of the RCA Medium Term Strategy – RCANRM(31)/4

The Chair invited the RCA FP to comment on the agenda item. The RCA FP noted that while the current MTS covered the period 2006 to 2011, the issue of the MTS for the future needed to be addressed soon because in 2010 the MSs had to identify priorities for next cycle, 2012-13. He suggested that one option for formulating the extension of the RCA Medium Term Strategy would be to set up a Working Group and a timeframe for its deliberations. Meeting in the July-August period would enable the Working Group to report to the 38th RCA GCM and have any new strategies in place in time for the 31st NRM, when initial consideration of the 2012-13 programme and its priorities would take place.

The proposal was supported by PHI, AUL, MAL, IND, PAK, NZL and JPN, who all volunteered to participate in the Working Group. It was agreed that a July meeting date would be preferable to August so that there would be sufficient time to circulate the report before the 38th RCA GCM. AUL accepted the invitation to again chair the Working Group

and volunteered to produce a scoping document within one month so that it could be circulated to all MSs for their comments.

The Meeting agreed to set up a Working Group, comprising representatives from MAL, INS, NZL, PAK, AUL, JPN, and IND, chaired by AUL, to meet in Vienna. They will be guided by a scoping document for the Working Group which will be prepared within one month and circulated to all MSs for comments and feedback. It was agreed that the funding for this meeting would be provided from the RCA-TCDC project.

6. Proposal for the Development of a Regional Profile for the RCA Technical Programme RCANRM(31)/5

AUL was invited to speak to the proposal. AUL reviewed the action by the RCA to adopt the MTS for 2006 to 2011, the recommendations by SAGTAG in 2007 for the development of regional strategies and the substantial task that the NRs undertook in designing and formulating the 2009-2011 programme. The task next year would be to begin considering the 2012-2013 RCA Programme. It was mentioned that TCPRIDE listed 29 active and 92 completed RCA projects and that the majority of these were grouped around addressing needs of the MSs in a specific technology area over a number of TC cycles. It was proposed that if a regional technical profile was prepared from an analysis of TCPRIDE data supported by MSs input in the form of a simple questionnaire, it could facilitate the task of the NRs in establishing priorities for the 2012-13 programme. A two phased approach was recommended, firstly a pilot survey to be carried out and reported to the 38th RCA GCM and then if approved by that Meeting the full survey would be undertaken from October to December 2009, so that a report could be prepared and reported to the NRs well in advance of the 32nd RCA NRM.

PAK commented that this proposal was potentially useful but sought clarification from AUL on a number of points, which were provided. SIN indicated its support for the proposal. PHI also supported the initiative and commented that the key document would be the questionnaire, which could also serve as a self-assessment tool. Since the Agency had self-assessment in other areas, it might be able to help in the formulation of the questionnaire but the initiative would have to come from the MSs.

MAL expressed reservations about the proposal and suggested that the information was probably already available in the CPFs.

SH TAPC1 commented that while there was information in country overviews and country programme frameworks (CPFes), only 5 CPFes in

the region were valid and the remaining CPFs need to be developed. He suggested that the preparation of a regional profile would be the first step towards the establishment of a Regional Programme Framework (RPF), which could then provide a planning mechanism for the next 5-10 years. This had been done in AFRA, which had approved their RPF in 2006. They had focussed on the 5-7 major projects areas. The Agency assisted the various working groups established by AFRA to compile the available information/data and to prepare analytical reports on the major areas of concentration which were selected by AFRA countries (4 African consultants and six areas of concentration). All of them met in Vienna at the same time and collectively prepared the Regional Strategic Framework.

MAL suggested that the decision be deferred to the next NRM but the RCA FP explained that such a delay would then prevent the information being used for its intended task, namely the preparation of the 2012-13 programme. AUL and the RCA FP agreed to prepare additional information to be presented later in the Meeting.

The additional documentation (Annex 6) was presented by AUL. It was emphasised by the RCA FP that participation by the MSs in this exercise would be voluntary. IND, THA, SIN and PHI congratulated AUL and the RCA FP on the presentation and expressed support for the proposal.

The Meeting discussed the merits of developing a regional profile and decided to initiate a pilot programme involving a survey of a few project areas, to which MSs contribute on a voluntary basis.

The results will be reported to the next GCM.

All MSs were encouraged to provide comments on the proposed questionnaire within 4 weeks.

7. RCA Annual Report for 2008 – RCANRM(31)/6

The RCA FP reminded the Meeting that the decision of the 30th NRM to revise the format of the RCA Annual Report to make it more user-friendly and that the 2008 report had been prepared in accordance with agreed new format. The draft report had been circulated to all MSs. He suggested that if there were no pressing issues to be discussed at this Meeting, all MSs were requested to submit any revisions within 1 month from the present date.

The Meeting agreed that MSs would provide feedback on the 2008 Annual Report to the RCA FP by 21 May 2009.

8. Progress of the RCA Programme in 2008 – RCANRM(31)/7

The RCA FP reported that he was continuing to have problems caused by some late submission and poor quality of documentation from the MSs. Citing project reporting and participant nomination forms for regional training events and regional meetings as examples, he highlighted how the disregard for the reporting requirements impacted adversely on the programme. He explained that late 6 monthly project reporting delayed the preparation of the Progress Reports by the PLCCs which were to be submitted to the consideration of the NRM, at least one month before the Meeting and to be used in the preparation of the RCA Annual Report. He said that some reports were received as late as mid-April, while the deadline was 31st of December. There had been a slight improvement of the number of reports received this year against last year but the quality was very variable and many gave no information about national activities, just providing details of the regional activities. . He said that there was still room for significant improvement and he needed the support of the NRs to raise the standards. He advised that the IAEA External Auditor had requested copies of the six monthly progress reports and only a limited number could be provided since all MSs had not submitted the reports. On the subject of participant nomination forms for regional training events and regional meetings he mentioned that some nomination forms did not have sufficient information to enable such assessments to be made and some nominations were clearly for inappropriately qualified and experienced individuals. He requested greater cooperation from the NRs in adhering to deadlines and the screening of participant nomination forms to ensure that they provided sufficient information to enable him and the Agency TOs to make informed judgements on the suitability of the nominees to meet the qualification criteria outlined in the prospecti. The NRs were reminded that they were expected to certify that appropriate participants had been nominated. He also noted that in some projects there were examples of a lack of continuity in the individuals being nominated to go to meetings. This indicated a lack of commitment of the participating MS to the project.

In his final comments he noted that there were still three RCA MSs that had not notified the Agency of their acceptance of the extension of the Agreement. The Meeting urged those Member States that have not yet extended the present RCA to do so without delay.

9. Review of the RCA Programme in 2008. – RCANRM(31)/8

The progress of the implementation of the projects was presented by each Project Lead Country:

RAS/0/045 (PLC – Korea) – Annex 7

RAS/4/026 (PLC – Korea) - Annex 8

RAS/5/043 (PLC – China) – Annex 9

RAS/5/045 (PLC – China) – Annex 10
RAS/5/046 (PLC – China) – Annex 11
RAS/6/041 (PLC – China) – Annex 12
RAS/7/015 (PLC – New Zealand) – Annex 13
RAS/6/029 (PLC – Australia) – Annex 14
RAS/6/038 (PLC – Australia) – Annex 15
RAS/7/016 (PLC – Australia) – Annex 16
RAS/9/042 (PLC – Australia) – Annex 17
RAS/8/107 (PLC – Australia) – Annex 18
RAS/8/104 (PLC – Pakistan) – Annex 19
RAS/6/040 (PLC – Japan) – Annex 20
RAS/6/042 (PLC – Japan) – Annex 21
RAS/6/048 (PLC – Japan) – Annex 22
RAS/6/049 (PLC – India) – Annex 23
RAS/8/105 (PLC – India) – Annex 24
RAS/8/106 (PLC – Philippines) – Annex 25

After each presentation there was a discussion on implementation issues and especially constraints that were affecting the smooth delivery of the project.

With regard to the project RAS/7/015 on air pollution, the Meeting noted the significant progress of the project and its potential contribution to significant environmental problems in the region. The Meeting recommended that the PLCC should prepare a strategic paper on how the project might be taken forward with respect to strengthening sustainability and increasing interaction with and adoption by end-users.

10. Implementation Plan of the RCA Programme for 2009 - RCANRM(31)/9

The RCA FP introduced this item referring to the background document. He advised that some of the projects did not have sufficient budget even though the overall RCA budget was in surplus.

The Chair enquired whether the programme had been approved at a previous NRM and whether there was a need to cancel some of the planned activities where there were no extrabudgetary contributions. The RCA FP responded that cancellations had not happened so far and if there were savings in some projects, these could be re-allocated. He said that the management of funds was a dynamic process and allocation of Extra Budgetary funds will provide more flexibility in the management of the budget.

SH TCAP1 commented that there would be a review of the project funding in a few weeks to identify savings and this should enable some

footnote a/ contributions in projects to be upgraded in a few weeks. He also appealed to the donor countries of RCA including JPN, AUL and NZL to consider making more extrabudgetary contributions.

RCA FP added that if possible extrabudgetary donations should not come with conditions attached to their use as this made practical difficulties in utilizing these funds for implementation of project activities. In addition, he said it would be helpful if the Agency could be informed in advance what extrabudgetary donations were being planned to be made by the MSs. AUL agreed that RCA Secretariat should find out in advance which projects the MSs proposed supporting with extrabudgetary funds and use this information when preparing the future budget. AUL also suggested that industry should contribute to those RCA projects from which it would benefit.

PHI suggested allocation of its extrabudgetary contribution to events no. 3 and 4 in the tabled programme and the RCA FP informed PHI that this had been already allocated to RAS/0/048 as previously agreed.

ROK stated that it provided US\$90,000 to the TC Programme through the RCARO in 2008, and US\$50,000 of this contribution was for the RCA Project RAS/0/045.

AUL noted that the RCA extrabudgetary contributions in the period 2004-2008 were higher than other Agreements and in addition there were significant “in-kind” contributions from MSs.

Member States recommended that the Secretariat make available funds to support all planned activities scheduled for the 2009 programme, to ensure full implementation of the agreed programme.

11. Report of the Director RCARO - RCANRM(31)/10

The Chair suggested that the discussion on the Agenda Items 11 and 12 could be taken together. This suggestion was accepted by the Meeting. Mr. Jae-Sol Lee, Programme Officer of the RCARO presented the Director's Report on behalf of the Director of the RCARO. (Annex 26)

The Meeting agreed to discuss the Report of the Director of the RCARO together with the following agenda item 12 (Report of the Chairman of the RCARO-SAC).

12. Report of the Chairman of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee

The Chair said that he would highlight the matters that were in the SAC report that had been distributed to the Meeting (Annex 27).

AUL commented that the NRs were at a disadvantage as they had not received copies of the SAC papers and requested that the NRs should also have access to them and particularly the work plan for 2009, on which the SAC made its recommendations. He noted that these had been available in previous years.

RCA FP said that the report of Dir-RCARO had been circulated in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. The RCARO confirmed that the presentation did not contain the RCARO work plan and that documents prepared for SAC had not been circulated to all NRs.

The Meeting agreed that the progress report for the previous year and the work plan for the following year should be circulated to the NRs along with the other background documents.

The Meeting requested that from 2010 the RCARO progress report for the previous year and the work plan for the current year be circulated to all NRs in advance, as specified in the RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules.

The Meeting agreed to review the SAC report item by item to ensure that all the decisions of the NRs were based on a full knowledge of the content of the report.

The Meeting accepted the SAC report and approved the 2009 work plan subject to the agreed text changes as follows.

SAC #3. RCARO 2008 Work Plan Performance

The Meeting evaluated the performance of the RCARO during 2008 based on the Report of the Dir-RCARO as satisfactory.

The Meeting appreciated the efforts of the RCARO to enhance partnerships with other organizations and the other activities undertaken to fulfill its mandate.

SAC #4. RCARO 2009 Work Plan

4.1 Publication of RCA Success Stories

The Meeting approved the publication of the 3rd batch of success stories in the agreed areas.

4.2 Presentations on RCA/RCARO Programme to Targeted Audience

The Meeting endorsed RCARO's participation in the Asian Congress of Radiation Research to be held 17-20 May 2009 in Seoul, ROK, and in the PEMSEA East Asian Seas Congress 2009 to be held

23-27 November 2009 in Manila, PHI.

With regard to future presentations, the RCARO should circulate the proposed presentation materials for additional refinement and/or information to NRs and the RCA Secretariat.

4.3 Development of a Database of Contacts to Increase the RCA's Awareness

As regards the database development, the Meeting took note of the progress and commended the RCARO's efforts in establishing the database.

The Meeting agreed that the NRs and NPCs may consider providing the information on their country's end-users to the RCARO, considering that "end-users" are those responsible for transferring benefits of the RCA projects to the final beneficiaries, such as industry sectors or hospitals and that the main purpose of the database is to publicize the RCA's activities and seek potential partners in each MS.

4.4 RCA Partnership with Other Regional Organizations

4.4.1 Development of an AQM Database with the CAI-Asia

The Meeting took note of the progress report pertaining to the collaboration with CAI-Asia.

The RCA FP agreed to consult the OLA to determine the extent of concerns with respect to consensus agreement in RCA decision making.

4.4.2 Participation of RCA in the EAS Congress

The Meeting took note of the report on progress regarding the RCA's participation in the EAS Congress 2009, and noted the additional proposal for a presentation by the RCARO and the PLCC of the RCA/UNDP project.

4.4.3. Joint Training Programme with the ARCCNM

Concerning the joint training programme with the ARCCNM, the Meeting was of the view that duplication should be avoided with the

existing RCA projects.

The Meeting requested that the prospectus for the training course be sent to the Agency so that it could be reviewed and also that the qualifications of participants be sent to the Agency, which would assist in minimizing duplication and providing the maximum opportunities for training in the region.

4.4.4 Cooperation with FNCA

Regarding the cooperation with FNCA, the Meeting noted that an item increasing the scope of collaboration to mutation breeding would be discussed under agenda item 16.

The Meeting took note of the need to exactly define the scope of cooperation to avoid any confusion.

4.5 Progress of the RCA/UNDP Project

The Meeting took note of the progress of the RCA/UNDP project, and asked the RCARO to make further efforts for the successful completion of the project at the end of this year.

The RCARO was requested to provide a copy of the Final Report of the Project to the NRs and RCA Secretariat.

4.6 Development of a Follow-up Programme of the RCA/UNDP Project

The Meeting recommended that a work plan for formulation of new RCARO projects be implemented as follows:

- **May:** Submission of additional concepts by MSs to the RCARO if any
- **July:** A workshop of interested stakeholders including SAC members to develop 1-2 new follow-up project(s), including the concept papers
- **August:** Decision by the SAC on the use of the fast-track mechanism
- **September-October:** Preparation of the project proposal by the Dir-RCARO and the SAC members and communication with NRs

- **November: Submission of the project proposal to funding agencies**
- **2010: Report to the 32nd NRM on the results**

4.7 Application for the UNESCOAP Tsunami Trust Fund

Regarding the application for the UNESCOAP Tsunami Trust Fund, the Meeting was of the opinion that action should be deferred until the UNESCOAP announcement advised that further funds are available.

4.8 Workshop on partnership promotion and sustainable development of RCARO

The Meeting noted that topics of the workshop planned for the development of project concepts will also include the development of strategy for promotion of partnership with international organizations and the setting-up of the future direction of the RCARO activities.

The Meeting welcomed the RCARO's proposal for a workshop as timely. It was recommended that the full prospectus and participation for the workshop needed to be planned in detail.

4.9 Proposed attachment of a non-RCA person to the RCARO for training

The Meeting recommended that an attachment of a non-RCA person to the IAEA would be more beneficial than an attachment to the RCARO.

5. Appointment of the RCARO Director

As to the selection and appointment of the new Dir-RCARO, the Meeting approved the appointment of Dr Mun-Ki Lee as the new Dir-RCARO.

13. External Audit of the RCA programme – RCANRM(31) /11

At the invitation of the Chair the RCA FP provided some background information on the agenda item and sought suggestions on how the RCA might be presented to the auditors.

AUL requested some further background on whether there had been consultations between the External Auditor and the Secretariat in terms of the projects that were selected, since these might not be the most representative of the RCA programme. AUL was concerned that as three of the projects were on management of TCDC and not technical projects representative of the RCA programme. AUL was of the view that this will not give a fair assessment of the overall achievements of RCA Programme and suggested that consideration might be given to the Meeting conveying its concerns to the External Auditors by way of a letter from the RCA Chair, which would suggest that the presently nominated projects did not provide a good representation of the RCA's programme and recommend that they focus more on the technical projects.

The RCA FP informed the Meeting that he had already taken up this point with the Auditors but they had not changed the list of projects to be evaluated.

JPN requested clarification of the procedure the External Auditor adopted for such evaluations and whether this included the NRs being contacted and also if the NRs had been asked to identify the suitable persons to meet with the auditors.

MAL advised that this audit was different to OIOS audits and that the External Auditors liaised directly with the NPC and did not go through the NRs. SH TCAP1 advised that the External Auditors worked directly with the IAEA Board of Governors and that the Secretariat had no influence on them. He noted that even OIOS's role was just facilitation and that the External Auditor could not be ordered about what to audit.

AUL commented that if the purpose of the audit was to assess how well the RCA was functioning, then it was important for the auditors to choose projects that were typical of how the RCA functioned.

NZL noted that the audit was to be conducted by the Federal Court of Auditors of Germany. Being originally from Germany, he offered assistance to the MSs in preparing for the audit if requested.

PHI requested the Secretariat to provide MSs with all information relating to the projects that were to be audited. The RCA FP replied that this could be done and advised that these materials had already been provided to the auditors.

AUL commented that one of the reports for the forthcoming IAEA Board of Governors Programme and Budget Meeting (GOV/2009/18 Agency Accounts for 2008) was concerned with the External Auditors field

mission to evaluate TC projects implemented under the AFRA programme. In addition OIOS had reported on their evaluations of projects carried out under the IAEA regular budget (GOV/INF/2009/3 2008 Programme Evaluation Report) and the technical cooperation projects (GOV/2008/56 Evaluation of Technical Cooperation Activities in 2008). These documents should be essential reading for those being audited since they provided a very clear picture of the issues covered in such audits. It was further suggested that the NRs and especially those scheduled to receive field missions needed to be briefed on specific issues relating to the individual projects that had been selected for audit so that they could adequately respond to questions on all aspects of the project implementation.

The Meeting agreed that the Chair would write a letter to the External Auditor, expressing concern that three out of the seven projects indicated for evaluation were non-technical and involved TCDC. Such a choice did not properly reflect the typical technical project that is the substantial component of the RCA programme.

14. Request of a non-RCA IAEA Member State to participate in an RCA Project - RCANRM(31)/12 – Rev.1

The Chair invited comments from the Meeting on this agenda item.

AUL commented that, although the accepted protocol for dealing with requests from non-RCA Member States to participate in RCA project activities was: (1) it should be at no cost to the RCA, (2) it should not prevent any RCA MSs from participating, (3) the host country had to agree; he was not aware of any document recording this as an NRs' formal decision. This protocol had been in place for more than 20 years and had probably originated at a time when the RCA was the only regional agreement.

JPN expressed concern that if this were the case then there was no established agreement on how to deal with this request and added that once the RCA opened its projects to non-RCA MSs this would create a precedent. RCA had to consider its position especially since there were now four cooperative agreements being conducted under the aegis of the Agency.

There was general agreement by the Meeting that there needed to be in-depth discussion by the NRs before any decision could be taken concerning the participation of non-RCA Member States in either RCA activities or RCA projects. It was suggested that the Working Group on the extension of the Medium Term Strategy should consider this matter as it directly related to issues related to future cooperation and partnerships.

On the specific request related to the RCA project on polymers, PHI commented that the project had been active since 1997 and was now at such an advanced state that countries outside of the RCA would probably get no technical benefit from participation. PHI suggested that the provision of experts from the region would provide more relevant level of assistance to countries just setting up its programme in this area.

AUL expressed surprise about the mechanism being used that would have resulted in such an approach to participate in an RCA project. He suggested that the usual procedure should have been for an IAEA MS to approach the Agency to have this polymer project as a national project or alternatively a cooperative agreement project of which they were a member. He agreed with PHI that RCA should be open to providing expert advice through the established procedures if requested.

JPN commented that since the activity of “super water absorbent hydro-gel polymer”, which the non-RCA member state wants to participate in is the outcome from collaboration of RCA and FNCA, this issue is related not only with RCA but also with FNCA.

JPN requested the secretariat to inform Member States of the information to be transferred to the non-RCA Member State by RCA experts on the projects area of natural polymers before the final agreement with the non-RCA member state.

AUL said that we need to understand the nature of the RCA. Information produced from RCA activities belongs to the Member State and the Agency as there is no confidentiality agreement on such activities.

JPN commented we have cooperative projects of RCA with FNCA that have achieved important outcome. Since FNCA is mostly founded by the Japanese government and not by the Agency, Japan wishes to be informed about the content of the IAEA expert service to the non-RCA IAEA Member State before the Agency dispatches such experts.

The Meeting agreed that because there had been no identifiable agreement by the NRs on the conditions applying to the participation of non-RCA countries in the RCA programme, this issue needed to be given consideration and discussed at the next NRM. Further development of the issue should be undertaken as part of the forthcoming deliberations on the extension of the Medium Term Strategy.

With regard to the request from a non-RCA Member State to participate in the RCA project RAS/8/109 it was pointed out that the RCA has been involved in this project area since 1997. It has now reached a very advanced stage of development and it would not be

feasible or productive to include a country that has only a limited exposure to this technology.

The Meeting requested the Secretariat to inform the requesting country about the NRs decision. The Meeting also noted that there were experts in the RCA Member States who could provide assistance in this project area, if such a request for assistance was made to the Agency.

15. Presentation on FNCA

At the invitation of the Chair, Dr. Sueo Machi, the FNCA Coordinator of Japan, who attended the Meeting as a Member of the Japanese delegation, gave a presentation on the activities of FNCA. (Annex 28). The Chair thanked Dr. Machi for his contribution.

16. A Proposal for Collaboration between FNCA and RCA in Mutation Breeding – to be presented by China

The RCA FP said that according to previous decisions, the basis for collaboration between RCA and FNCA is exchange of information, but the modality of this exchange of information is not clearly defined. He requested guidance from the Meeting as to whether this could include participation in each other's Meetings.

The Chair invited comments of the delegates.

AUL commented that there were two substantial reasons for collaboration. Firstly, it could avoid duplication between the RCA and FNCA programmes and secondly it could facilitate information exchange within the RCA for those MSs that were not members of FNCA. He said that joint attendance of each others meetings was useful but funding this was a potential issue. One model, which could address this would be when each activity had its annual workshop, the national coordinator of the respective host country could attend the event. He also suggested that within each particular country there should be regular meetings of the RCA and FNCA teams. Ideally, they should involve the same people.

The RCA FP advised that funding one or two persons might not be too difficult. However, the Secretariat could not fund completely new events.

THA advised that their RCA NR and FNCA Coordinator were different people but they maintained good communication with each other. INS advised that they had the same situation.

It was agreed that the best situation at present was for RCA and FNCA collaboration to be agreed on a project by project basis.

The Meeting agreed that the current cooperation with FNCA through the sharing of information was at an appropriate level and should be maintained.

RCA FP said that the area of mutation breeding had been identified last year as a potential additional area for collaboration between RCA and FNCA and at the last GCM, China as the PLC of this project was requested project to submit a proposal for the consideration of the 31st NRM. He said he had received this proposal and had the approval of China to present it to the NRM, in the absence of the Chinese delegation. He asked the Meeting to decide whether the proposal made by China was acceptable as presented or in a modified form

AUL commented that the Chinese proposal went beyond what had previously been agreed by the MSs. In particular point 3 dealt with the provision of expert missions but at this stage such activities cannot be carried out under the project. Similarly point 5 proposed to take on activities outside of those approved for the project.

It was agreed by the Meeting to delete the second part of last sentence in point 3 to now read:

“The Contact persons of the projects convey the information on the assistance required to their respective Programme Contact Persons who will arrange for provision of the requested assistance.”

and to delete the last sentence in point 5 to now read:

“Further areas for collaboration may arise during discussions that would follow these presentations but should avoid duplication of activities.”

The approved proposal is given in (Annex 29).

With respect to the specific proposal from China for collaboration to be extended to mutation breeding, the Meeting agreed to the proposal, subject to the agreed amendments.

17. Arrangements for 38th RCA GCM and 32nd RCA NRM

The Meeting agreed with the proposal to hold the 38th RCA GCM on Friday, 11 September 2009. PHI agreed to host the 32nd RCA NRM in 2010, with the exact timing to be advised later.

18. Any other Business

The Chair presented certificates of appreciation to Dr John Easey (AUL) and to Dr Kun-Mo Choi (former Director, RCARO) for their contributions to the RCA programme.

19. Adoption of the Report of the 31st RCA NRM

At the suggestion of the Chair, the Meeting reviewed and revised the recorded decisions and decided to inform the changes to be made to the rest of the report to the RCA FP within two weeks of receipt. The RCA FP was requested to circulate the report to the delegates.

20. Closure

IND on behalf of the delegates thanked JPN for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

SH TCAP1 expressed his appreciation of the excellent arrangements made by the host government and wished the delegates a safe journey back to their home countries.

The RCA FP thanked the Chair for his guidance during the Meeting and for bringing the Meeting to a successful conclusion. The RCA FP expressed his appreciation for the cooperative way in which the Meeting had worked to address and resolve the various issues raised and thanked the delegates for their cooperation and contribution to the success of the Meeting.

In closing the Meeting the RCA Chair, Mr. Tsutomu Arai, thanked Mr. Mokdad Maksoudi, SH TCAP1, Mr. Prinath Dias, RCA FP, the NRs and all delegates for their cooperation and valuable contribution to the success of the Meeting. He looked forward to coming year and the cooperation and support from all NRs in the implementation of RCA programme.