

Outgoing Chair's Speech

I
Professor Rohini Hewamanna, Chairperson of the Atomic Energy Authority of Sri Lanka, Mr. Manase P. Salema, Director of Division for Africa, Asia and the Pacific of the Agency, and distinguished Representatives from the RCA Member States, Ladies and Gentlemen !

Today, I have the honor to speak to you as the Outgoing Chair of the 25th Meeting of RCA National Representatives.

First of all, on behalf of the RCA Representatives I would like to take this opportunity to convey our deepest condolences to the Sri-Lankan residents who have suffered enormous losses as a result of the recent flooding in Sri Lanka. I hope that a full recovery will be completed as early as possible.

I would like to express my gratitude for the efforts of the Sri-Lankan Government in preparing the 25th Meeting of RCA National Representatives, despite the severe time constraints.

The RCA has made significant developments over the 30 years since its inauguration in 1972, which is the same period in time as that of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

With this in mind, I hope that both the RCA and Sri Lanka will enjoy continual development and will continue to contribute to the Technical Cooperation of Nuclear Energy among the RCA Member States.

Looking back over the past year, there has been some significant progress within the RCA.

Firstly, the Scientific Forum to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the RCA was held in Seoul and Daejeon, Korea in March 2002, On this occasion, five distinguished speakers from Member

States were invited. Also, the 30-year history of the RCA was reviewed and a new vision was proposed.

Secondly, the RCA Regional Office was inaugurated in Daejeon Korea in March 2002. The establishment of the RCA Regional Office was approved at the 23rd Meeting of RCA National Representatives held in Dhaka Bangladesh in March 2001. The Regional Office which is now in operation has endeavored to establish a firm legal basis, and developed two Academic Programmes for the Member states, which are the Post-doctoral Fellowship Training and Master's Degree Programmes, respectively.

Thirdly, the legal effectiveness of the RCA has been extended for another five years from June 2002 to June 2007. The 5-year extension of the RCA is very meaningful from the point that it confirms the RCA has been playing its essential role for the Member States, and therefore all the Member States expect this role to continue for the Technical Cooperation of nuclear energy within the Member States.

Finally, the 31st RCA General Conference was successfully held in Vienna in September 2002. It was attended by about 40 delegates from 17 Member States and the Agency. At this General Conference, the 26 RCA Projects for 2003/2004 were approved.

There have been some changes over the past year in major positions related to the RCA in the Department of Technical Cooperation of the Agency. Ms. Ana Maria Cetto has been appointed DDG-TC, Mr. Salema DIR-TCPA. And Mr. Dias, the former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Authority of Sri Lanka, will succeed Mr. Aleta as the RCA Coordinator.

I am confident that the RCA will step out for another 30 years with the distinguished Agency Staff it has.

With these words, I appreciate again the full support and collaboration extended over the past year by the RCA Member States and the Agency. Now I hope that this meeting will accomplish

its work successfully under the excellent leadership of the chair to be newly elected. Thank you