

31st RCA General Conference, Vienna, 18 September 2002**Comments of Thai Delegation on the Agenda Item VII****Working Paper on “Establishment of an RCA Regional Office in the Republic of Korea”**

- 1 The main purposes of having regional cooperative agreement such as RCA should be:
 - 1.1 To enhance effectiveness of technology transfer from the IAEA to the Member States in the region following the IAEA’s TC strategy, to the extent possible;
 - 1.2 To share resources among Member States to carry out activities for research, development and training in nuclear science and technology, as a first step to TCDC; and
 - 1.3 To share expertise incurred from the Technical Cooperation Programme of the IAEA among the developing Member States, i.e. Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), to the extent possible.

- 2 The RCA is established based on “spirit” of cooperation within the framework of the IAEA with the above main purposes, which are reflected in various Articles of the Agreement. It was established to cooperate with the IAEA as membership and partnership in development, but not to “own” RCA programme in any way or by any means. In this context, RCA programme should be implemented following the present IAEA TC Strategy in the same expectation as that for country TC projects and the other regional and inter-regional projects. That is to ensure government commitments (always existing), effective delivery to “end-users”, and possible self-reliance/sustainable. There are number of ways to achieving them through TC Strategy mechanisms of the IAEA and some other means suitable for each region. The common aim is to be effective and cooperative members and partners for the desired sustainable outcomes to be proud by all cooperative partners. “Ownership” is not the sustainable concept for RCA.

- 3 At present, the RCA member countries are committed to be responsible members and partners with the IAEA, which is the most that can be expected from most RCA countries as they are developing countries with limited resources. Therefore, many RCA member countries, including Thailand, are not in a position to own any of the RCA activities, including a Regional Office.

- 4 The RCA Regional Office can be effectively representing RCA only when it has the IAEA affiliation status. To be as such, IAEA should be responsible for its magement, including funding of the Regional Manager. A Supplementary Agreement and its associated MOUs will not establish the Regional Office as a legal entity of the IAEA. Hence, any negotiation of the Regional Manager in the region will not carry recognition to the level of an organization similar to the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum. Its activities will be like those of Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA). It requires a host country to carry forward its programme. Therefore, the IAEA involvement in management of the Regional Office is essential to undertake RCA activities officially and with the current status and significance.

- 5 As it is presented to us now, Thailand cannot enter into any agreement with new initiatives of RCA without having the IAEA as its official partner and technical support.