

31st RCA General Conference, Vienna, 18 September 2002-09-23

Comments of Thai Delegation on the Agenda Item X

Other Matters

My delegation would like to propose to all members here including the Secretariat a new project initiative relating to radiation safety on upgrading of radiation protection infrastructure, occupational safety and radiation protection of patients. The conceptual thinking is as follows:

1. RCA has history of good achievements in all aspect of technical cooperation programme of the IAEA with close cooperation and coordination of both Department of Technical Cooperation and Department of Research and Isotopes (now Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications). We are grateful to the IAEA and its good and competent staff. We, in the regional, value the achievements up to today and are confident that we can be as effective again, provided there are number of adjustments in RCA management, from both sides – the Department of Technical Cooperation and RCA management among member countries to implement the IAEA TC Strategy, as mentioned in previous Agenda item.
2. The major achievement in recent memory has been the achievements in the UNDP/IAEA Regional Project on Industrial applications of Radioisotopes and Radiation Technologies in Asia and the Pacific (RAS/79/061 and RAS/86/073). The impact of the Project stays with us up to now. There are many lessons we can learn from the achievement in all aspects of the project implementation leading to the success. The major lesson can be learnt are project formulation and funding mobilization with UNDP, implementation arrangements within the Secretariat and with RCA member countries, regional management of the project and national management of the Project. Those lessons are there in memory of some of us and awaiting for us to make good use of them for the betterment of RCA programme and RCA impact to the region. I am confident that current RCA management can manage a project of the scale after key adjustments.
3. The Board of Governors has recognized (advised by number of assessments of Secretariat) the urgent need of the IAEA developing Member States to upgrade national capability on nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety. The Board is also mindful of the urgency of implementing the programme on protection against nuclear terrorism. The concerns are so much so that there are General Conference Resolutions on both issues – safety of nuclear technology. RCA member countries are those to benefit from such important policy and strategy of the IAEA, provided they are able to develop and establish key infrastructure and technical capability. Most of us need help and funding from the IAEA to meet the needs which is likely to be inadequate. Hence, there is a common need for technical assistance organization and technical capability.

4. The key elements of a project formulation are in place. There are common needs; IAEA being the technical partner to implement the project; all RCA member countries committed to cooperate among themselves (potential TCDC) and being the strategic partners with the IAEA (membership and partnership, and joint management); and joint investment with UNDP being in place (IAEA's current programmes, cash contribution of regional donors, and in-kind contribution of all RCA member countries) and beneficiaries (radiation officers, workers and patients) being clearly identified with measurable success indicators (number of upgraded and strengthened legislation and facilities, and persons being protected).
5. There are organizational arrangements to implement the project successfully. At IAEA, close cooperation and coordination of the Department of Technical Cooperation and the Department of Nuclear Safety is essential. There are number of possible arrangements with the RCA member countries for implementation organization at regional and national levels including regional management. There are regional donors including some of the regional international organizations operating in the region on health and safety issues. There is an organization at the IAEA to coordinate with UNDP and other international organizations. Hence, the project is likely to be considered and eventually accepted, provided that it is accepted by the IAEA to work with RCA member countries.
6. This proposal is a conceptual one. All RCA member countries need time to digest and express their views, comments and suggestions. We can draw some conclusive objectives and implementation arrangements of such project at the next meeting of the National RCA Representatives in Pakistan next year. The project is for everyone to work together as members and partners of the IAEA for common goal. RCA is only the host for the project implementation.