



MEETING REPORT

32nd MEETING OF THE NATIONAL

RCA REPRESENTATIVES

27-30 April 2010

Manila, The Philippines

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32nd Meeting of National RCA Representatives

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Opening Ceremony

The 32nd Meeting of National RCA Representatives was held at the New World Hotel, Makita City, Manila, The Philippines, from 27 to 30 April 2010 and was attended by 45 participants from all 17 RCA Member States and the RCA Regional Office (RCARO). The list of participants is given in Annex 1. The IAEA was represented by Mr Dazhu Yang, Director, Division for Asia and the Pacific, Department of Technical Cooperation and Mr. Prinath Dias, RCA Focal Person (RCA FP). Nepal attended their first RCA meeting as an observer whilst Palau's foreshadowed attendance as an observer at their first RCA meeting did not eventuate. Dr Sueo Machi, a member of the delegation of Japan, also represented the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA).

Dr Alumanda dela Rosa, Director, Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) delivered the welcome remarks. She specifically welcomed the Hon. Undersecretary, Department of Science and Technology, Prof Fortunato dela Pena, the IAEA delegates Mr Dazhu Yang and Mr Prinath Dias, and the FNCA representative, Dr Sueo Machi.

With respect to the IAEA representatives, Dr dela Rosa noted that previously Mr Yang had been the National RCA Representative (NR) China and that the RCA Focal Person, Prinath Dias, attended his first NRM as NR Sri Lanka in the Philippines in 1993. Coincidentally this current meeting would be his last as Mr Dias would leave the FP post at the end of 2010.

She welcomed the FNCA Coordinator for Japan, Dr Machi, as a scientist of outstanding stature in Nuclear Technology in the Asian region and also the representative of Nepal as an observer to the Meeting, the first time of attendance for Nepal.

Dr dela Rosa remarked on the importance of regional cooperation as embodied in the RCA spirit of cooperation where opportunities to exchange views benefitted all MSs. She encouraged everyone to participate and share their ideas at the Meeting and wished them all every success.

Mr Yang, Director, Division for Asia and the Pacific, expressed his appreciation for being invited to represent the IAEA Department of Technical Cooperation (TC) at the Meeting. On behalf of the Director General, IAEA, and Deputy Director General TC, Mr Yang joined the host country in welcoming all NRs and delegations and expressed his best wishes for a successful Meeting.

Mr Yang thanked the government of the Philippines through the PNRI for hosting the 32nd NRM and for their contributions to the program over many years. He expressed his appreciation to Nepal for accepting the invitation to attend the Meeting. He regretted that he could not attend the 31st Meeting in Japan in 2009 due to other commitments but advised that he had been following progress.

In reaffirming the IAEA's continued support to the RCA program, Mr Yang, remarked specifically on the priorities for the RCA Programme for 2012-2013 that were to be discussed at the Meeting as well as noting that the RCA Strategic Priorities for 2012-2017 were to be ratified and adopted. The TC Department had been engaged in development of the TC program for the 2012-13 cycle and Guidelines for this TC cycle had been circulated to MSs and relevant stakeholders. He observed that the RCA continued to evaluate progress of projects at the NRMs and the business of the Meeting was not limited to policy issues. Mr Yang reaffirmed that the NRs involvement in project development and evaluation was of vital importance to the success of the RCA. He referred to the project audit in 2009 where the implementation of seven RCA projects in three MSs had been assessed. Mr Yang noted that some issues were identified as requiring some attention and hoped that discussions at this Meeting would lead to proposals that would further improve the RCA program.

Mr Yang referred to the revision of the Guidelines and Operating Rules (GOR), agenda item 6 and the intention for it to include elements related to the Medium Term Strategy (MTS). He suggested that the GOR should be sufficiently detailed for RCA stakeholders to understand but should not be too complex or cumbersome. His aspirations were that deliberations on the GOR would result in proposals that would lead to meeting these requirements. To this end, he emphasised that good communication were essential and that the RCA Secretariat would be making every effort to facilitate this. He also commented that NRs could assist the Secretariat by providing required information in a timely manner.

He noted that the RCA implementation rate of 76.6 % in 2009 was a sign that good progress was being made, and would not have been possible without cooperation and support from NRs. However, he cautioned that the high implementation rate alone did not necessarily mean that the projects were meeting fully their objectives.

Mr Yang congratulated the RCARO in establishing useful partnerships with other regional organisations over the past years. He observed that plans were in place to strengthen already established cooperation with FNCA, in line with TC strategy. He gave special mention to the imminent publication of four more RCA success stories, with one in a booklet format for the first time.

Mr Yang closed his address by wishing all delegations success with this Meeting. He noted that many participants had attended past NRMs and had established strong relationships with each other, but that there were also fresh faces amongst the delegations. The Mr. Yang's address is given as Annex 2.

Dr dela Rosa, introduced the 32nd NRM guest speaker, Professor Fortunato de la Peña, a professor of Industrial Engineering and the Undersecretary for Science and Technology Services, Department of Science of Technology (DOST). His keynote speech was delivered on behalf of the Hon. Secretary of DOST.

On behalf of The Philippines, Prof de la Pena said that it was an honour to host the RCA NRM for the second time, the first being in 1993. He reasoned that the serious challenges to the global environment in terms of climate change, drought, water level rises, drastically changing weather patterns etc underscored the increasing relevance of nuclear science and technology in society. More than ever the increase in uptake of nuclear technology was being appreciated by more sectors of society.

The Undersecretary noted the importance of developing and maintaining links, collaborations and partnerships with other regional entities. Effective linkages with

other regional bodies were one way of ensuring prudent and optimal use of the limited project resources in the region.

Professor de la Pena noted that the review of strategic priorities and the regional profile formed a part of the Meeting's agenda. This would help develop a better perspective on existing and emerging trends in the region and would lead to optimal use of the limited financial resources available to the MSs.

The Undersecretary closed his address with wishes for a successful Meeting and that all the necessary decisions that needed to be agreed upon would be arrived at harmoniously. He requested that all delegates take advantage of the Filipino hospitality and expressed the hope that they would complete the Meeting with a sense of accomplishment. He thanked all PNRI staff for the efforts in the lead up to and during the Meeting. He declared the Meeting formally open. The Prof. Pena's address is given as Annex 3.

1.

Welcome Remarks of the Current Chairperson

On behalf of the Outgoing Chair, Mr. Tsutomu Arai, Director, International Nuclear Energy Cooperation Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, Mr Otsuka, Ministry's Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, made a few remarks. He expressed appreciation to The Philippines, and PNRI, for hosting the Meeting. On behalf of all NRs he thanked the IAEA for its continued support of the RCA program. A special welcome was conveyed to Nepal.

Mr Otsuka passed on some personal remarks from Mr Arai. He specifically mentioned the progress made in recent years on the MTS and the great importance of developing the next important phase - 2012-2017. He also mentioned the role of publication of the RCA success stories in promoting the RCA. He wished the next RCA Chair great success in steering the RCA into its next phase.

Designation of Chairperson/ Rapporteurs

Mr Otsuka called for nominations for the new Chair.

INS proposed Dr Alumanda dela Rosa as the next chair, taking account of her seniority and experience.

IND supported the proposal to nominate Dr dela Rosa as Chair, pointing out that her experience and eminent qualifications will ensure the RCA meeting a success.

All delegates agreed with the nomination.

Frank Bruhn (NZE) and Peter McGlinn (AUL) were designated as rapporteurs for the meeting.

Remarks of the new Chairperson

Dr dela Rosa thanked all MSs for the honour to be elected RCA Chair. She reiterated that PHI has come full circle, having hosted the RCA NRM firstly in 1993, and now for the second time in 2010.

INS proposed Dr Alumanda dela Rosa, Director, Philippine Nuclear Research Institute, to be the new Chair of the RCA. IND seconded the proposal. Dr dela Rosa was unanimously elected by the National Representatives.

Dr Frank Bruhn of NZE and Mr Peter McGlinn of AUL agreed to be rapporteurs for the Meeting.

2. Adoption of the Agenda - RCANRM(32)/1

Dr Easey (AUL) suggested the inclusion of two further items based on the following:

- The Agency, through TC-Asia Pacific, had had discussions concerning the important issue of developing a Regional Cooperative Framework (RCF). The concern raised by AUL was that not all RCA delegates might be aware of the details of the RCF proposal and its potential impact on the RCA, and that there had been no formal request for the RCA nominate a representative and participate in the process. Dr Easey suggested that the Meeting could benefit from an additional briefing by Mr Yang on this important matter, especially as to whether the discussions on RCF would have any implications on RCA priorities for 2012-13.
- The timetable for the planning and design of the 2012-13 TC program would clash with the schedule for approval of concept papers. There needed to be a consideration of the respective timelines to be sure that all deliberations on the concept papers were taken into account and that the RCA was not left outside timelines set by the Agency in planning the 2012-13 TC program cycle.

It was suggested that these additional items would better inform the discussion on RCA strategic priorities so that it was imperative to deal with these matters before or during agenda items 9 and 10 otherwise it would be too late and revisiting the issues would not be productive. Mr Yang accepted this reasoning and agreed to provide a briefing on the additional topics during those agenda items, and that if more discussion were necessary, then to follow up could be undertaken under Any Other Business.

The Meeting agreed to adopt the draft Agenda, Revision 1, with the inclusion of the above two items for discussion in Agenda items 9 and 10.

The adopted Agenda is given in Annex 4.

3. 31st RCA NRM and 38th RCA GCM reports - Matters arising and follow-up actions – RCANRM(32)/2

INS enquired as to when the strategic paper on the future of the air particulate matter project, featured in the annex, was going to be discussed. The RCA FP suggested that this would be covered ideally under Agenda Item 8, together with the progress report on this project.

AUL remarked on the inclusion of the phrase ‘sustainable pollution’ in the title of the strategic paper on the air particulate matter project and suggested that it be re-worded.

The Meeting took note of the report and agreed that the annexed strategic paper on the future of the air particulate matter programme would be discussed under Agenda Item 8, together with the progress report from NZE on this project.

4. RCA Annual Report for 2009 – RCANRM(32)/3

AUL and ROK advised that they had sent comments to the RCA FP after reviewing the draft report and would have liked to have had acknowledgement of receipt of their comments. The RCA FP agreed to provide acknowledgement in the future.

The RCA FP noted that the past practice for finalizing the Annual Report had been to provide a period of two weeks from the RCA NRM for comments from the MSs. If no comments had been submitted then the RCA FP would finalise the report. For this year it had been agreed to extend the deadline for comments on the report to four weeks from the NRM, and for submission of the MSs reports to two weeks later.

AUL congratulated the contributors to the report and commented that the report had improved in appearance every year. However, it was noted that there was a difference in styles between the various contributions which detracted from the overall quality of the report. It was suggested that a style guide be written and followed to improve the degree of professionalism of the report.

The RCA FP sought the views of the Meeting regarding the submission of Annual Reports by the Member States, and stated that this was a requirement according to the RCA Agreement. He said that it had been decided not to make the Member States' Annual Reports a part of the RCA Annual Report, due to inconsistency of format, but to table them at the RCA NRMs. He noted that no reports had been tabled at the last NRM. He advised that he had received an Annual Report from PAK for 2009.

AUL reminded the Meeting that the Articles of the Agreement made it mandatory for MSs to submit their individual annual reports. It was noted that the PLCCs' Reports provided detailed information on the activities so it was suggested that a brief summary for the individual MSs' Annual Report would be all that was necessary to be submitted by the NRs. It was proposed that a tabular format would be the most effective way of doing this without impinging too much on the time of NRs. The RCA FP was requested to provide the format for this type of Annual Report.

PAK sought an extension of time to the end of January each year for the submission of MS reports so they could meet the timeline. The RCA FP pointed out that there was a subsequent deadline to submit the draft progress reports to the NRM one month beforehand, therefore the 15 January deadline was decided on the basis to provide all stakeholders with sufficient time. If the deadline for MSs to submit their reports were delayed then this would affect the whole process.

AUL noted that as the FP had received only one country report, 16 MSs had failed to lodge the report mandated under the Agreement and suggested that the issue of obligation to provide this report had to be addressed.

PAK queried the statement that no applications had been received by RCARO for the Post Doctoral Programme and stated that it had submitted two applications.

RCARO reaffirmed that, to date, there were no applications received but that they would check and communicate their findings on the matter.

It was agreed that PAK and RCARO would discuss this further and report to the NRs later.

The Meeting agreed that Member States would provide feedback on the 2009 Annual Report to the RCA Focal Person by 27 May 2010 and submit their country reports by 11 June 2010.

5. Appointment of RCA Chair - RCANRM(32)/4

The RCA FP provided an outline of the details contained in the background paper on the appointment of an RCA Chair. He noted that the MTS WG meeting had recommended a change to the process by which the RCA Chair was selected. It was

considered that there was merit in having the term of the RCA Chair for a longer period and assigned to a person who had the time and experience to provide better guidance to the Programme. The person would be drawn from nominations by the NRs. This proposal had been presented to the last GCM. The Working Group on RCA Medium Term Strategy was requested by the GCM to develop the role description of the RCA Chair and present proposals on the procedure for appointment of the RCA Chair for the consideration and approval of the next NRM and this proposal along with the comments of one of the Working Group members (PAK) had been circulated with the Background Paper on this Agenda Item.

After an outline of the matter by the RCA FP, the Chair sought comments from all MSs. She advised that there were two primary issues to consider before moving on to the modality of appointment, qualifications and responsibilities of the role. Firstly, MSs had to accept or reject the decision made at the last GCM on the appointment of the RCA Chair. Secondly, the MSs needed to agree whether any such an appointment could/ should be open to an NR carrying out both functions.

ROK, JPN and IND questioned the need to move away from the current chairing system, remarking that the current system worked well.

AUL highlighted the need to separate the role of the IAEA (through the RCA Secretariat) which assisted through secretarial duties, from those of the Chair who represented the MSs – at times the duties might align, but at others there could be differences.

At this point the RCA FP shared his personal experiences on the issue with the delegates. He explained that the RCA FP, as an Agency employee was obliged to follow Agency rules. He/she was also responsible to the MSs. Generally there was no conflict arising out of this relationship, but occasionally there was. Decision making was not taken lightly, with most important decisions being taken at NRMs, but a number of issues could arise between meetings which needed addressing. He added that the quality of support that he had received from the incumbent Chair varied from year to year. He suggested that ideally the Chair needed to be a person who had a solid understanding of the RCA, and was able to communicate well with other NRs, always acting in the interests of the MSs. This formed the basis for the proposal of the appointment of a longer term RCA Chair.

The intervention by the RCA FP allowed the MSs to reflect on the original decision made at the GCM last year and it was agreed to continue to support that decision.

The second primary issue in relation to the appointment of an RCA Chair was the proposed restriction on the Chair having the role also of NR. To simplify matters, it was suggested to remove the ‘personal’ tag from the role description and refer to applicants as either NR or non-NR entities.

ROK was of the view that roles and responsibilities of NRs should be respected and that it objected to the transfer of authority to a Chair that was filled on a personal basis rather than as a representative of a MS. Furthermore, it was their view that the Chair should not operate simultaneously as NR as this could create conflict.

PAK agreed to the notion of the appointment of an RCA Chair, but suggested that it should be by an NR. PAK argued that this had been the procedure for many years and it had been shown that they were impartial. PAK later clarified their stance by stating that an NR should also be able to be considered for the Chair position but that it should not be mandatory for an NR to fill the role.

NZE suggested that if an NR were chosen as the RCA Chair then that person should automatically step down from their NR role. Accordingly, being an NR would be neither a qualification nor a disqualification for applying for the role of RCA Chair. If selected as Chair, then the NR would relinquish their role of NR.

AUL further commented that if the selected RCA Chair remained as an NR and did not fulfill the requirements of the Chair's role, then that would reflect poorly on the MS represented by that NR, which would not be a desirable situation for the RCA as a whole.

IND raised the issue of how to evaluate the performance of the RCA Chair and the consequences if performance were not satisfactory. AUL suggested that if performance were to be found to be sub-standard then the incumbent would be subject to the same course of action as for any other position i.e. the contract would be terminated.

Financing the role was raised by several MSs. PAK recognized the advantage for the RCA Chair to be an NR because they would have all the administrative support required, including travel costs to attend meetings. If the RCA Chair were not an NR, there was the question of who would finance the travel to meetings, including meetings with other non-RCA bodies.

It was suggested by AUL that this would be the prerogative of the respective government. SRL questioned as to how government support could be sought if the person were not an NR. AUL suggested that if the NRs were nominating suitable candidates then this would be a government nomination since the NRs were government representatives. He added that the RCA Chair would be viewed as a prestigious position that governments would want to support, including financial backing.

THA commented that it saw not only financial issues with the role, but also the availability of time, with NRs not having time for chairmanship duties.

Because of time constraints the Chair, Dr dela Rosa, suggested the formation of a small working group of volunteer NRs to go over the details of the proposals and report to the Meeting either Wednesday or Thursday of the NRM. The Chair recommended the group comprise ROK, JPN, AUL, PAK, and MAL, with JPN as convener. The objective of the group was not to discuss any further the earlier GCM decision but to focus on the:

- proposed modality of appointment;
- qualifications required; and,
- roles and responsibilities of the RCA Chair.

The Working Group reported back to the Meeting that it could not come to an agreement on the issues. It was therefore decided to defer the matter to the next General Conference Meeting.

The National Representatives agreed that the Meeting should adhere to the agreement made at the last GCM, to revise the way how the RCA Chair was appointed.

It was decided that a Working Group consisting of ROK, JPN, AUL, PAK and MAL, with JPN as convener, would look into the specific details of the appointment procedure and their potential implications on the management of the RCA.

The Working Group could not come to an agreement on these issues and therefore the Meeting decided to defer the matter to the next General Conference Meeting.

6. The External Audit of the RCA Programme – RCANRM(32)/5

Prior to the NRM the RCA FP distributed a summary of the recommendations from the outcomes of the external audit that required the attention of the NRs. He introduced the item and presented six specific issues for deliberation. The implementation of seven RCA projects in three MSs had been audited. The audit findings had been communicated officially to the RCA Chair. Their recommendations were in draft form as they would be submitted to the May IAEA Board of Governors (BOG) Meeting. For more information on the auditing process it was recommended that the NRs refer to the IAEA document GOV/INF/2010/6.

AUL suggested that all six topics appeared to have an underlying issue of communications and therefore the Regional Office should be involved as part of their role in effective transmission of information to MSs.

Prior to discussion of the six topics, the Chair had invited general comments from those MSs where the audits had taken place.

MAL noted, with concurrence from INS, that some issues raised in the evaluation report had not discussed with them, despite them requesting discussions with the auditors on those issues.

On a specific issue of NPCs' understanding of the GOR, the INS delegate stated that as NR he could not guarantee that the GOR were well understood by the respective NPCs and that more support by the Secretariat is needed to make them clearer.

The six issues were discussed one by one:

1. The Audit Team found no difference between the RCA Projects and other Regional Projects.

The MSs audited stated that they were not well briefed on due process before the audit and that there was little debriefing after the audits. MAL argued that basically the auditing did not follow the standard methodology and that it would have been more effective if they had been given more information on what the Auditors expected and had received a checklist prior to the audit. This would have enabled a more meaningful interaction during the audits and provided optimal outcomes. Mr Yang suggested that if the affected MSs had concerns then these should be raised, firstly at the Programme and Budget Committee Meeting (the following week), followed by the BOG Meeting in June.

The MSs were unanimous that there were many differences between the projects and therefore could not agree with the auditors' observation. The RCA FP agreed that there was very little duplication between projects. JPN suggested emphasising the synergy and complementary aspects of RCA and other regional projects. AUL recommended that when NRs consulted with NPCs, they should seek their opinions on the differences they perceived between RCA and non-RCA projects. These questions and responses could be included on the RCARO website under FAQs.

The NRs of the three audited MSs were requested to provide specific information on their particular audits to the FP within two weeks. Mr Yang remarked that, whilst the Secretariat could facilitate the collection of the information, the MSs needed to raise these matters at the BOG meeting. The RCA FP recommended that each MS brief

their delegates on these issues prior to the BOG Meeting so that they would be in a position to be able to undertake discussions should the matters be raised.

AUL suggested that initially the issues should be raised by the three MSs that have been audited and then the other MSs should be able to discuss it further as a global RCA issue. They would need to provide their inputs to the RCA FP and to their respective Permanent Missions.

The Meeting was of the opinion that significantly more specific information should have been provided by the auditors both before and after the audit to the countries that were audited. There are many differences between RCA Projects and other Regional Projects and therefore the Meeting agreed to rebut this observation made by the auditors.

The three Member States in which the audit took place were asked to provide additional opinions and comments on the procedure and conclusions of the audit after discussion with the relevant National Project Coordinators to the RCA-Focal Person by 11 May 2010. It was also suggested that this issue should be raised with the respective Missions so that it could be brought up by them with the Board of Governors if necessary. They should also name the relevant National Project Coordinators in their response.

2. Counterpart institutions felt uncomfortable because of lack of information on funds.

The MSs were unanimous that this finding was not an RCA issue but one that needed resolving between the auditors and the head of the counterpart institutions involved. MAL believed that there was a misunderstanding in the meaning of the word “fund”.

The RCA FP suggested it would help if the NRs provided some background to the NPCs on the mechanism by which funds were allocated to RCA projects.

The National Representatives felt that this was not an overall RCA issue but a matter between the institutions and the auditors. The Heads of Institutions were invited to provide the supporting information. All National Representatives should make an increased effort in briefing the Heads of Institutions and National Project Coordinators on how funds are allocated to RCA projects.

3. The cooperation between the four Regional Agreements in place needs to be intensified.

The RCA FP mentioned that the Focal Persons of the Regional Agreements had been meeting informally to look into the ways in which the Agreements could benefit from each other’s experiences. All four bodies had meetings in the margins of the GCM so it could be informative to send someone e.g RCA Chair, to attend these meetings as an observer.

It was agreed that the Focal Persons should continue to meet and in an informal way exchange views.

The Meeting agreed that in order to intensify the cooperation between the four Agreements the RCA Focal Person should continue having informal meetings with the IAEA staff responsible for the other Agreements. Furthermore, the brochures on RCA Success Stories were considered an effective mechanism for information sharing.

4. RCA projects audited cover basically the same issue.

AUL agreed that this observation was correct. It was suggested that NRs need to have a broader view and inform NPCs that projects have to be terminated at some time. In examining all 119 RCA projects that have been undertaken since the RCA programme commenced, it was notable that the successful ones, which provide the more tangible and compelling outcomes, were the longer running (7 -10 year) projects. This was contradictory to the TC decision that no project will be longer than four years in duration.

The National Representatives took note of the auditors' comments and agreed that this would be taken into account when deciding on future projects. However, they also noted that historically the long-running projects provide the most tangible and significantly beneficial outcomes.

5. The utilization of RRUs needs to be improved.

AUL remarked that RRUs responded to project needs. Some projects required the use of a number of RRUs while some require none.

The RCA FP agreed that there was apparent under utilisation of RRUs but noted a specific problem that there was insufficient information about RRU facilities. The MSs needed to make known the facilities available from their RRUs.

AUL further commented that RRUs should be identified as part of the project planning process.

The Meeting agreed that information on the need and potential utilization of Regional Resource Units should be provided at the project planning stage, including acknowledgement of those countries that have RRUs.

6. The 'Guidelines and Operating Rules for the RCA Programme' (GOR) are difficult to understand.

AUL agreed that the GOR were voluminous and required significant time to be read and understood but it was agreed that the full documentation was necessary. As NPCs were not significantly involved directly with the GOR it was suggested that it would be useful to create a distilled version to which they could refer more readily. As this was another case of providing good, clear communications it was suggested that the RCARO could help and be involved in its preparation.

The Chair noted that the following agenda item was concerned with the GOR and so more detailed discussion could be undertaken there.

The Meeting decided that this issue would be further discussed in the next Agenda Item - Adoption of Revised RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules.

7. Adoption of Revised RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules - RCANRM(32)/6

The RCA FP introduced the topic of the GOR and said that the last major revision of the GOR was done in 2004, and since then decisions taken at the NRMs relevant to the operational aspects of the programme had been added annually, as decided. He said that this had made the GOR rather voluminous and difficult to understand. He also said that he had previously proposed the creation of a simplified version of the GOR for the use of the NPCs and project teams. The Chair suggested that the RCA FP review the GOR and submit a revised version, engaging the assistance of the RCARO.

IND suggested that in revising the GOR the statement regarding the need to “satisfy the other requirements for participation in TC projects, in order to receive support under the Technical Cooperation Programme of the IAEA” in Section 2.3 should be removed since it was not a recommendation of the MTS. The RCA FP remarked that RCA Projects like all TC projects should conform to established criteria for TC projects, and even though it was not a recommendation of the MTS it was a requirement of the IAEA. He also said that it would not be possible to achieve the outcomes of the RCA Projects unless national support and resources were available.

JPN commented that the issue of criteria for participation of non-RCA Member States in RCA Projects requires more time for careful consideration.

The Meeting decided that the RCA FP would be tasked with preparing a fully revised version of the GOR, taking the above into account. NRs should make their comments for suggested revisions within two months from the NRM.

The NRs should also provide comments to the RCA FP, in the same timeframe, on the simplified, distilled version of the GOR. The RCARO would be engaged in this process and would be assisted by the RCA FP as required. The simplified version of the GOR would be tabled at the next GCM.

The National Representatives tasked the RCA Focal Person, to be assisted by the RCA Regional Office, with preparing a fully revised version of the GOR. The RCA Focal Person will also provide a simplified version of the GOR, specifically for the benefit of National Project Coordinators. Both versions will be submitted for approval to the GCM.

National Representatives were requested to make specific suggestions for revision of the full version of the GOR by 27 June 2010.

8. Review of the Progress of the RCA Programme in 2009.

a) Implementation of the RCA programme in 2009 – RCANRM(32)/7

A briefing paper on the status of implementing the RCA Programme in 2009 was distributed to the NRs prior to the NRM. The RCA FP summarized the main issues contained in this paper as follows:

- timely submission of progress reports was still an issue and sought the assistance of the NRs to ensure that the NPCs submitted their reports in time.

- assistance of the NRs was sought to ensure that nominations for regional events were submitted in time, and the persons nominated had the required qualifications.
- the Expert component of the programme remained underutilized in 2009. Several requests had been received for expert missions in 2010.
- there had been a reduction in the Approved Budget for 2009, as a result of the reduction in the number of projects, and even though the budget allocation per project had increased, it was not in proportion to the reduction in the number of projects. This needed to be taken into consideration in developing the RCA Programme for 2012-2013.

AUL noted that there were indications that MSs had a greater need for more research rather than technology transfer. These observations were supported by the very low use of expert services in 2009 – only 8 field missions. The overall number of field experts had dropped from 81 to 8 in just 5 years.

NZE suggested that historic implementation rates for individual projects may be a good measure of progress. On this point AUL mentioned that a number of graphs of historic information had been assembled in preparation for the meeting and offered to share them with the Meeting.

AUL congratulated the RCA FP on the high financial implementation rate he had achieved for the RCA programme and added that the RCA FP had been able to minimize consistently the carry over of funds from year to year which gave more credibility to the RCA. The MSs concurred with these comments by AUL and thanked the RCA FP for the continued significant and invaluable contributions he made to the Programme.

The National Representatives noted the report provided by the RCA Focal Person and thanked him for the significant and invaluable contributions he has made to improve the management of the programme over the past years. This includes ensuring the optimal utilization of the budgetary funds each year, thereby reducing carry-over funds. This in turn has maintained the credibility of the RCA project planning process and the effectiveness of the implementation of the RCA programme.

AUL shared with the other Member States a more detailed analysis of the current projects, at the thematic area and project levels.

Since RCA has reduced the number of projects it has become possible to increase the TC budget per project. This needs to be conveyed to the Project Lead Country Coordinators to be taken into consideration during project design. The Focal Person reminded the Member States that the TC budget is determined totally on project design requirements.

b) Progress of the RCA Programme in 2009 – RCANRM(32)/8

The progress of the implementation of the projects was presented by each Project Lead Country. The specific projects presented and discussed were:

RAS/5/045 (PLC – CPR) – Annex 5

RAS/5/046 (PLC – CPR) – Annex 6
RAS/8/111 (PLC – CPR) – Annex 7
RAS/5/050 (PLC – AUL) – Annex 8
RAS/6/038 (PLC – AUL) – Annex 9
RAS/7/016 (PLC – AUL) – Annex 10
RAS/6/048 (PLC – JPN) – Annex 11
RAS/9/042 (PLC – JPN) – Annex 12
RAS/7/015 (PLC – NZE) – Annex 13
RAS/7/019 (PLC – PHI) – Annex 14
RAS/8/108 (PLC – PAK) – Annex 15
RAS/8/109 (PLC – MAL) – Annex 16
RAS/6/049 (PLC – IND) – Annex 17
RAS/8/110 (PLC – IND) – Annex 18

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

INS requested that NRs should receive copies of all communications from PLCCs and NPCs so that NRs could be better informed on project progress.

Overall, the meeting observed that the outcomes of all the projects have been very satisfactory and are the result of a great deal of commitment by the project participants and Member States. The presenting PLCCs were commended on their efforts to distil the important elements of the project year.

The reports supported the observations that significantly beneficial outcomes from projects are more likely from those projects of longer duration (7-10 years).

Importantly, the PLCCs reported challenges and constraints within the projects which should be addressed as these are likely to affect the implementation and even sustainability of the projects.

Interrelationships and synergies of several projects were noted. An integrated or holistic approach should be pursued, particularly in the environment and agricultural thematic areas.

Regarding project RAS/6/038 (Medical Physics), the meeting expressed concern at the lack of communication and consultation from the IAEA Secretariat regarding the possible curtailment of this project, which had Board approval and allocation of funds until the end of 2012.

9. Review and Adoption of RCA Regional Strategic Priorities for 2012-2017 - RCANRM(32)/9

The RCA FP introduced the agenda item. A review of RCA Regional Strategic Priorities had been proposed at the last NRM in Japan. The Chair invited comments on individual priority areas in the four sectors Agriculture, Environment, Human Health and Industry. She also asked the NRs for confirmation or otherwise of the recommended priority areas and suggest additional ones, if deemed necessary.

The following summarizes the key points of discussion related to each sector.

Agriculture Sector

There was considerable discussion regarding the proposed priority area 5 (Sterile Insect Technique). IND stated that there had been a project using this technique, however this was not an RCA project. INS pointed out that SIT-activities previously developed at the laboratory scale had been successful; however, the challenge was implementation of these on the field scale. This would be the pre-requisite for INS's support. THA supported this view and suggested to combine this area with Food Irradiation as there were a number of synergies. PHI shared their experience in working both at the in laboratory and field scale. It had been effective in controlling fruit flies in isolated areas, such as islands. Implementation on a large scale was extremely expensive and therefore end-users would have to ensure sustainability of the technology. At the moment, in PHI, only work at the laboratory scale was ongoing. JPN pointed out that SIT had been very successful in eradicating and controlling the Melon Fly in Okinawa Island. SIT selectively controls specific insect pests, and was less harmful to the environment than using of pesticides. Therefore, the proposed project area should be seriously considered by the NRs. The RCA FP pointed out that NRs would have to consider what could reasonably be done through regional projects. These projects would not be able to provide facilities. Only training and development of protocols and guidelines could be provided through project activities and, in any case, there would have to be well developed national programmes to support the regional activities and projects.

The Chair pointed out that the IAEA had a regional project in which interested MSs could participate. Therefore, there was no need to establish a specific RCA project. This view was endorsed by all NRs.

All other proposed priority areas were endorsed by the NRs. With respect to the priority area "Soils and Land use" it was pointed out that there were many potential synergies with those priority areas in the Environment Sector.

VIE suggested veterinary drug use in aquaculture as one further potential priority area. This was accepted by the Meeting and VIE was invited to provide the supporting information by 30 June 2010 to be included in the strategic document.

Agricultural Sector

The National Representatives endorsed the following recommended Priority Areas:

- **Plant Mutation Breeding**
- **Animal Production and Health**
- **Food Irradiation**
- **Soils and Landuse**

"Insect and Pest Control – Sterile Insect Technique (SIT)" was not endorsed as a specific RCA priority area because an IAEA programme outside RCA on this technique already exists, which provides the opportunity for interested Member States to participate.

In addition, the National Representatives approved

- **Veterinary drug use in aquaculture**

as one further potential priority area, and invited VIE to provide the supporting information according to the format of the strategic document for inclusion by 30 June 2010.

Environment Sector:

There was only very short discussion of the Environment Sector. All suggested priority areas were endorsed by the Meeting.

Environment Sector

The Meeting endorsed all three recommended priority areas:

- **Sustainable air particulate matter monitoring**
- **Sustainable water resource management**
- **Sustainable marine coastal resources development**

Human Health Sector:

THA referred to the issue with RAS/6/038 that had been discussed under Agenda Item 8. and suggested that this priority area should be included under the Human Health Sector. AUL agreed with THA and reiterated its surprise that a project which had Board approval until 2012 was at risk of being unilaterally terminated by the Secretariat, without further consultation. Concern was also expressed that this could be precedence for the future. The project had raised expectations in MSs, but these could now not be satisfied as the project had been curtailed.

The DIR-TCAP noted that the project had started many years ago and there had been implementation issues some time ago. No final decision had been made and he wanted to use this RCA Meeting as an opportunity to share the Secretariat's proposal for closure. If MSs insisted the project should continue, he would make an effort to re-justify the importance of this project.

INS commented that cancer was increasingly a globally problem, particularly in developing countries. Four of the five suggested priority areas were about cancer, and they should also include actions into reducing the costs of cancer treatment. In this context, AUL mentioned that a symposium was being planned to be held in Vienna in November 2010 which was planning to focus on the use of Co-60 as a more affordable treatment option for less well resourced countries.

The Meeting approved all five recommended priority areas. In addition, ROK suggested that "Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy – SBRT" be a priority area. JPN stated that SBRT is a part of image-based radiotherapy, which is the topic of an on-going RCA project, and not a part of IMRT. THA recommended "Nutrition" as a priority area.

The Meeting endorsed all five recommended priority areas:

- **Development of intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT)**
- **Improving the decision-making process in cancer management with hybrid nuclear medicine imaging (PET/CT and SPECT/CT)**
- **Practice of image Guided brachytherapy for predominant cancers in the RCA region**

- **Development of agreed clinical protocols and guidelines for the management of common cancers in the RCA region by radiation therapy (RT)**
- **Strengthening the application of nuclear medicine in the management of cardiovascular diseases**

In addition, the National Representatives approved

- **Nutrition**
- **Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT)**

as further potential priority areas in this Sector and invited THA and ROK, respectively, to provide the supporting information according to the format of the strategic document for inclusion by 30 June 2010.

Industry Sector:

CPR suggested the inclusion of “Sealed Sources” in the “Radiotracer” priority area. SRL suggested an additional priority area in “Maintenance of Nuclear Instrumentation”.

ROK suggested that priority areas of “Nuclear Energy” and “Research Reactor” needed to be included. They noted potential overlap with non-RCA TC projects but stated that these aspects were of regional interest. This was supported by THA and BGD who stated that this would provide a mechanism for newcomers to learn and get good advice. Public outreach would have to be integral part of such a project. JPN stated that they could not agree with this suggestion. The RCA FP commented that the RCA had previously been implementing aspects of energy planning and research reactors but questioned whether there were new developments to be considered. AUL commented that all aspects regarding “Nuclear Energy” were taken into account in other Agency programmes, hence established mechanisms already existed to provide such support. In an environment of limited resources, it was suggested that duplication should be avoided and therefore an additional RCA project could not be justified.

The Meeting reached consensus that the RCA would not establish “Nuclear Energy” as a priority area because this had been covered in other TC and IAEA areas. However, a project on “Research Reactors” could be added and ROK was invited to develop a concept paper and to provide the supporting information according to the format of the strategic document.

Industry Sector

The Meeting endorsed all three recommended priority areas:

- **Non-destructive testing**
- **Radiation processing**
- **Industrial radiotracer and sealed sources applications**

In addition, the National Representatives approved

- **Maintenance of nuclear instrumentation**

- **Research reactors**

as further potential priority areas in the Industry Sector and invited SRL and ROK, respectively, to provide the supporting information according to the format of the strategic document for inclusion by 30 June 2010.

10. Priorities for the RCA Programme in 2012-2013 - RCANRM(32)/10

The question of prioritization of projects within sectors arose during these discussions. NZE observed that the number of recommended priority areas was very close to the number of possible projects and therefore concept papers for all priority areas could be developed and priorities be established at the next GCM on the basis of these papers. This was supported by AUL who suggested that they would see three different cycles for the 2012-17 period, i.e. (a) patch and repair (b) patch and repair and move forward (c) move forward. While the strategic discussions were mainly about moving forward, one would also have to look at what stabilization was required for recently completed or existing projects. Furthermore, some new priority areas as approved by this Meeting would require additional lead-time so it might be reasonable for some concept papers only to be developed starting with the 2014/2015 cycle.

The National Representatives decided that RCA concept papers for all endorsed priority areas should be developed according to the agreed time frame and that the prioritisation of priority areas should be based on evaluation of these concept papers by the National Representatives. The Secretariat will advise on the prioritisation scheme to be used.

The meeting agreed on the following Priority Areas for 2012/2013 and 204/2015 Programmes and Project Lead Countries responsible for the development of concept papers:

- **Plant Mutation Breeding – China**
- **Animal Production and Health – to be developed for the 2014/15 cycle**
- **Food Irradiation – China**
- **Soils and Land use – New Zealand**
- **Veterinary drug use in aquaculture – Vietnam, to be developed for the 2014/15 cycle**

- **Sustainable air particulate matter monitoring – New Zealand**
- **Sustainable water resource management – Pakistan**
- **Sustainable marine coastal resources development – Philippines**

- **Intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) – Japan, to be developed for the 2014/15 cycle**
- **Hybrid nuclear medicine imaging (PET/CT and SPECT/CT) – India**
- **Image guided brachytherapy for predominant cancers – Japan, could be developed for the 2014/15 cycle**
- **Management of common cancers by radiation therapy (RT) – China, to be developed for the 2014/15 cycle**
- **Nuclear medicine in the management of cardiovascular diseases – Philippines**
- **Stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT) – Korea**
- **Nutrition – Thailand**

- **Distance assisted training for nuclear medicine technologists – supplementary project, Australia**
- **Distance learning on applied sciences of oncology – supplementary project, Australia**
- **Medical Physics – supplementary project, Australia**
- **Non-destructive testing – India**
- **Radiation processing – Malaysia**
- **Industrial radiotracer and sealed sources applications –Pakistan**
- **Maintenance of nuclear instrumentation – Sri Lanka**
- **Research reactors – Korea**

As agreed with the adoption of the Agenda, the Meeting discussed recent developments of the Regional Cooperative Framework (RCF) and how these may impact on the RCA strategic priorities endorsed at this Meeting. AUL expressed concern at the lack of communication related to this issue so that not all delegates might be aware of details. This was in part due to the fact that there had been no formal invitation from the Secretariat to the RCA to nominate a representative to participate in the RCF development process.

The DIR-TCAP provided the following further information on this issue. He said that in the Asia and Pacific Region, **31** MSs currently received TC assistance from the Agency, of which **16** were in the Eastern part and **15** in the Western part. As such, the Region was more heterogeneous than other regions, which was also reflected in the fact that there were two Agreements. However some IAEA MSs were neither Members of RCA nor ARASIA.

A meeting of National Liaisons Officers (NLOs) was held in December 2009, which included some RCA NRs and for some MSs these were the same persons. The need for a Regional Cooperative Framework was agreed at this Meeting.

The DIR-TCAP highlighted the importance of developing a RCF, and therefore a Working Group had been established. The Terms of Reference had been prepared and circulated to NLOs. Since no comments had been received, the Secretariat had assumed that they were agreed by all MS. The Terms of Reference stipulated that the members of the Working Group should be individuals who have broad experience and knowledge about national and regional priorities. This should also include representatives from RCA and ARASIA, as well as from other non-Agreement MSs. The Working Group was tasked with identifying priority areas for the region, including development of a vision, mission, and strategic objectives.

The Working Group had its first meeting in Vienna in February 2010. One of the recommendations of the Working Group was the establishment of an Expert Group that would be tasked with further drafting of the strategic document. A meeting of the Expert Group had been organized to take place in the week before this NRM but some members were unable to attend due to airport closure as a result of the Icelandic volcanic ash cloud. As two experts had been present in Vienna, it was decided to still go ahead with the meeting and develop a draft of the RCF which would now be circulated to those experts who were not able to attend. They had been invited to comment and the next step would be circulation of the draft to members of the Working Group and inviting these to comment. The resulting final draft would then be circulated to all NLOs for approval.

AUL thanked the DIR-TCAP for providing a detailed description of process. However it was noted that there was still uncertainty about the potential impact the RCF could have on the RCA. In particular, could the RCF overrule some RCA priorities and would therefore some decisions made at this Meeting be at risk of being subjected to further review? AUL requested that the process should be more inclusive because in contrast to NRs the NLOs had no formal status with respect to policy matters. Although they were a conduit and not decision-makers, their opinions appeared to be taken as the opinion of the whole Region. Furthermore, although some RCA National Representatives were members of the Working Group, they did not represent the RCA officially. AUL doubted that this was a robust process and emphasized that there were other countries in the Region that participated strongly but did not receive TC assistance.

The DIR-TCAP responded that the TC Programme had the policy to request MSs who receive TC assistance to prepare and sign a Country Programme Framework. The RCF was a similar document for the whole region. The IAEA had MSs, who were members of one of the Agreements or no members of any Agreement. The RCF was designed for the benefit of all MSs who receive TC assistance by representing their common interests. Regarding the role of the NLOs, he commented that these were the IAEA's counterparts for TC. As guidelines for NLOs had been circulated, they should have the knowledge and authority to deal with the TC programme on behalf of their countries. They should also have been provided with the necessary information and instructions by their respective Governments.

The DIR-TCAP agreed that the members of the Working Group were not representatives for the Regional Agreements but it was specified in the Terms of Reference that members should have the broad knowledge of regional priorities. This was ensured through the mix of members from ARASIA, RCA, and non-Agreement countries.

AUL insisted that unfortunately the responses from the DIR-TCAP did not clarify what the potential impact of the RCF might be on the decisions made at this meeting and whether these might be at risk of being overridden by the RCF. The current understanding was that the RCA was going to submit priority areas to the Agency but, since the RCF appeared to be the standard by which they were judged, there was no guarantee that they would be accepted. In addition AUL noted that the documentation for RCA strategic priorities was exceedingly comprehensive, whereas the RCF documentation was quite superficial and it was only being further developed by just two out of the planned five experts. It was again emphasized that a robust process would require full inclusion of all stakeholders, including developed countries.

At this point, the Chair summarized the discussion by stating that RCA MSs would like to be assured that their prioritization would not be disregarded by the IAEA's RCF. The RCA Strategic Priorities 2012-2017 was the result of long work and good outputs and outcomes.

As a result of the above discussions the Meeting shared the concerns expressed by AUL and decided to relay these concerns to the Agency by requesting that the priorities decided at this Meeting should not be changed as a result of the RCF.

The National Representatives noted and shared the concerns expressed by AUL regarding communication relating to, and potential impact of, the Regional Cooperative Framework on the RCA strategic priorities endorsed at this meeting. They expressed the view that RCA project concepts should not be rejected based on the criteria in the Regional Cooperative Framework.

11. Report of the Director of the RCARO

The meeting noted the report of the Director of the RCARO and the work plan for 2010. The presentation of Director of the RCARO is given as Annex 19.

The Meeting noted the report provided by the Director of the RCARO. The National Representatives appreciated the efforts of the RCARO in 2009 to enhance partnerships with other organizations and the other activities undertaken to fulfill its mandate and was looking forward to a successful 2010.

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

The Chair read the report of the meeting of the RCARO Standing Advisory Committee, held on 26 April 2010, which was attended by PHI, JAP, INS, ROK, and the RCA FP. A copy of the report is attached as Annex 20.

Based on the RCARO's accomplishment in 2009, the Standing Advisory Committed appreciated the work done by the RCARO as satisfactory.

AUL commended the DIR-RCARO and the SAC Chair for the very good reports that had been produced. The Meeting was advised that a promotional video that had been produced in 1996-1998 and could provide a historic basis and input to the story line for the planned new video.

a) Publication of Success Stories

The RCARO SAC Chair stated that the SAC had recommended the Success Stories on Animal Production, Energy Planning, Soil Erosion Studies, and Tracer Applications in leaflet form and the Success Story on Soil Erosion Studies in booklet form for the approval of the NRM. The SAC Chair also informed that the SAC had proposed the publication of a success story on RCA activities in Radiotherapy, in booklet form, and a success story on the Tsunami Project, in leaflet form, as the next batch of Success Stories. She also stated that the SAC had recommended a proposal by the RCARO for production of the promotional video for the consideration of the NRM.

During the discussion on this issue, PAK suggested some improvements to the booklet and stated that they would provide a full list of suggested changes to the RCARO in writing. Likewise, NZE suggested some minor changes to the Success Story on "Energy Planning" which they would pass to the RCARO.

The Meeting approved the publication of the 3rd batch of success stories in leaflet form and one success story in booklet form in the agreed areas, subject to consideration of the corrections proposed by PAK and NZE. These suggestions

for corrections should be submitted to the RCARO who will further consult with the respective stakeholders.

The Meeting endorsed the SAC's recommendation to publish the next success story on radiotherapy in booklet form and the RCARO's proposal to publish the Tsunami success story in leaflet form.

The National Representatives supported the RCARO's plans for production of a promotional video on RCA activities, at RCARO's expense. The storyline should be submitted to the next GCM for approval.

b) Other matters related to RCARO

The Meeting noted the RCARO Work Plan for 2010 and made the following decisions on specific aspects:

- **The Meeting endorsed the RCARO's participation in the suggested meetings.**
- **The RCARO was invited to attend future PLCC meetings in Vienna during the design of future projects.**
- **RCARO to refine its publicity strategy and submit for consideration to the next GCM.**
- **RCA Members Only Homepage: RCARO to make a proposal for consideration at the next GCM regarding the degree of public access.**

13. Presentation on FNCA

At the invitation of the Chair, Dr. Suelo 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. The Meeting noted the presentation and the Chair thanked Dr. Machi for his contribution.

The RCA Focal Person inquired whether the Atlas and the Guidelines on PET prepared under the FNCA project could be made available for the use of the RCA Member States. Dr. Machi agreed to look into this request.

14. Collaboration between RCA and FNCA

The RCA FP stated that the current collaboration between RCA and FNCA were in the areas of Radiotherapy, Radiation Processing and Mutation Breeding. The collaboration in mutation breeding commenced last year, and the 38th GCM had requested a report on the established collaboration to be presented to the 32nd NRM.

The Meeting noted the report provided on the progress of collaboration between RCA and FNCA in mutation breeding.

15. Arrangements for the 39th RCA GCM and the 33rd and 34th RCA NRMs

The Meeting agreed with the proposal to hold the 39th RCA GCM on the Friday before the IAEA General Conference.

INS had previously agreed to host the 33rd RCA NRM in 2011, which is planned to be held in Bali, 25-29 April 2011.

CPR has agreed to host the 34th RCA NRM in 2012.

16. Activities for the 40th Anniversary of the RCA

NZE commented that the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the RCA was also an opportunity to celebrate 10 years since the establishment of the RCARO. Furthermore, a booth at the General Conference was suggested.

The Chair invited suggestions to be submitted to the RCA Focal Person.

17. Any other business

The representative of Nepal, who attended the Meeting as an observer, thanked the Secretariat for the invitation. He remarked that Nepal, as a new Member State of the IAEA, also was contemplating membership in the RCA. He said this had been approved by his Ministry and the next step was now a proposal to be made to the Parliament of Nepal and Cabinet. This Meeting had provided him with a very good background for this proposal. Nepal was planning to establish a nuclear science centre with specific focus on benefits to agriculture. This would need to be endorsed by the Minister of Finance and again this Meeting had provided extremely useful information for making this case. He asked the NRs to consider including Nepal in ongoing projects once it became a formal member, which was anticipated by the end of this year. The Chair responded that the MSs would welcome Nepal's participation.

AUL commented that the departure of the current RCA FP was imminent. MSs had to look into the future and ensure continuation of the effective way in which the RCA had been managed currently. It was suggested that there should be a formal recommendation to the Agency that the RCA FP position should remain at an appropriate level of seniority, i.e. P5, and that the RCA should be solely administered by the incumbent. The Meeting unanimously supported these recommendations.

With the imminent departure of the present RCA Focal Person, the National Representatives hereby request the TC Department to ensure that the position remains unchanged, at an appropriate level of seniority (P5) and to be solely responsible for the administration of the RCA, and promptly advertise the position according to these criteria.

Member States should encourage suitably qualified and experienced candidates to apply for the position when it is advertised.

18. Adoption of the Meeting Report of the 32nd Regional Meeting of the National RCA Representatives

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.

19. Closure

IND, on behalf of all delegates, thanked PHI for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

The RCA FP took the opportunity to thank all NRs and stakeholders for their support over the past seven years. He thanked all NRs for their active participation in the Meeting. The RCA FP specifically thanked Dr John Easey for his excellent support, as well as the DIR-TCAP, SH and their predecessors. He thanked the Chair for conducting the meeting so well and all colleagues from PHI who had worked so hard in organizing this successful event.

The Chair, on behalf of all MSs, expressed appreciation and gratitude to the RCA FP for his excellent work for the RCA over the past seven years. She thanked all NRs for their attendance and shared the RCA FP's observation that all NRs actively participated in the meeting. This was a very good sign for the RCA as it reflected maturity of the agreement and the high level of ownership that MSs felt for the Agreement. She wished all participants a safe journey back to their home countries.