

Opening remarks by chair of RCA to the 42nd RCA National Representatives Meetings, 23 April 2020 by Video Conferencing using Microsoft Teams

Director General of Malaysian Nuclear Agency, Dr Mohd Abdul Wahab Yusof, Representative of host country

Representative of IAEA, Ms Jane Abaya, Director of TCAP

Section Head TCAP, Mr Gashaw Wolde, RCA Focal Person, Mr Sinh Van Hoang

Esteem RCA National Representatives, Director of RCARO, FNCA Adviser, secretariat from Malaysia, RCARO and all associates and assistants to the NRs.

Good morning or good afternoon, depending on your time zones and welcome to the 42nd RCA National Representatives Meeting which is being conducted using video conferencing platform Microsoft Teams, hosted by IAEA.

First and foremost, I would like to thank all of you for making time to join this meeting despite the different time zones and the difficult time we all are going through due to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. I would also like to put on record a big thank you to the previous chair Dr Tennakoon from Sri Lanka for chairing the previous session of 2019-2020 in a very excellent manner and to all the RCA National Representatives for endorsing the chairmanship of Malaysia for session 2020-21 through emails from 23rd of March 2020, owing to the inability of Malaysia to host the physical meetings due to the current pandemic and Movement Restriction Order. I am honored to be of service to the RCA for this coming session and will endeavor to do my best to bring RCA to a greater height.

The manner by which the transfer of chairmanship was being done is unprecedented in the history of RCA and so does this meeting as this is the first time such official meeting involving Government Parties is being conducted in this manner and we are proud that RCA has pioneered this new methodology of doing business despite the difficult situation and tight schedule and hope that this would be copied by other groupings or official meetings, so that in spite of the lockdowns, the social distancing etc, we should not lose sight of managing the organizations in an orderly and timely manner. Life would have to go on and human beings are known to be very innovative when pushed into a corner.

The NRM is an important event for RCA in which many decisions involving the management of projects (projects being the backbone activities), management of the organization and many other strategic decisions are being made, this is the highest decision-making body of RCA. This meeting which was usually a one-week affairs done through physical meetings was today to be concluded in just one day using an 'online' platform, cutting costs in terms of logistics, travels, and advanced planning. This is in itself an innovation as we, the secretariat and RCA FP and all, have to practically 'crack our heads' to come up with such a concise agenda and the methodology as to how to accomplish the objectives of the meetings in such a 'short and sweet' manner. We have to come up with new protocols for conducting our meetings without 'moving an inch' from our seats, practically.

On that note I would like to thank my secretariat, the RCA Focal Person, the RCARO, all NRs for their hard works and support to make this meeting possible and to our organization, Malaysian Nuclear Agency and IAEA-TCAP for all the support and encouragement and it is my pleasure to open up this meeting and as a start lets us here some words from the representatives of the host country and IAEA.

Administrative remarks, designation of rapporteurs and introduction to participants

As mentioned before, this meeting is unprecedented and therefore we do not have precedence to follow and many innovations have to be done. First of all, the 4-days agenda had to be shortened to 1 day and as such the meeting is only to focus on really substantive issues and items that need to have decisions by the NRs. All standard reports should have been deliberated through emails before the meeting.

I have circulated guidelines on the conduct of this meeting and open up platforms for online discussions such as Whatsapp group, chat facilities and not forgetting the good old emails. In order to facilitate our discussions and to give fair access to all despite the difficulties in managing online meetings (as compared to physical meetings), I would like to draw your attentions to the followings:

Please refer to the guidelines provided beforehand for conduct during the online meeting

1. Each session will be moderated by a moderator or the chair.
2. To avoid noises or glitches, only one person should speak at a time. Ensure your device is on mute at all the time and unmute it only after granted by the moderator to speak. However, you may unmute to indicate that you are requesting the floor and the secretariat will try to recognize this through the system.
3. Try not to interrupt. You may also use the chat facility to request the floor or for any intervention i.e. 'asking for the floor'. The moderator will ask if there are any questions /comments/voting and will invite the participants to speak.
4. You may identify yourself each time you begin to speak. It is also advisable to speak at a good pace, be concise and stick to the topics on the agenda.
5. During presentation session, only the presenter is allowed to speak. You may reach out to the speaker or moderator after the presentation if you need more insights and clarifications.
6. There is a very slight audio delay. Give participants a chance to respond to questions and comments before interrupting.
7. In the event of voting, you may use chat to respond, whether you agree or disagree. The secretariat will take note and the moderator will announce the result of the voting.
8. Follow agenda and time allotments for the conference.
9. You may hang up when the online video conference is finished.
10. For items (marked yellow) that are deliberated and finalized by emails before the meetings, all comments will be reflected in the final report and documents as made available in the RCARO website.

Finally I would like to mention that this is still a learning process and we are still trying to find out the best way of conducting online meetings and any comments and suggestions on how to improve the methodology and the system is welcomed and I would like to apologize for any shortcomings that may arise and thank you for bearing with us in this difficult and trying time. I wish you all a good meeting.

As for the rapporteurs, it has been selected on needs and convenience basis, consisting of the host (chair) GP, RCARO and Thailand (as future chairs), the following are the rapporteurs designated by the respective GPs : (discussions has been made through emails)

- 1.) Ms Kyungeun Shon keshon@rcaro.org from RCARO
- 2.) Dr Hazmimi Kasim from Malaysia

- 3.) Ms Siti Syarina Mat Sali from Malaysia
- 4.) Ms Chatchawan Mansaithong from Thailand

Introduction to participants

Since the online meetings does not have seating arrangement and videos and pictures of participants appear in a completely random fashion, the introduction session will be done by roll call via alphabetical order of the GPs and associated organization. Each GPs will be called by chair in turns to verify their presence in the system and thus confirm their connectivity and readiness to participate in the meeting via the designated platform.