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STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT TO THE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

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INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Our agenda for this meeting is focused on the report of the Technical Assistance and Cooperation Committee (TACC) and issues related to nuclear verification.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME

The TACC recommended that the Board approve a number of modifications to the Agency's proposed technical cooperation (TC) programme for 2006. The focus of TC programme management continues to be the achievement of meaningful and sustained benefits to recipient Member States, in line with national needs and priorities. Following a year long change initiative to enhance TC structures and processes, we are moving towards what we hope will be a period of stability, marked by the efficient delivery of a high quality programme.

I welcome the decision of the Committee to recommend that the Board synchronize the regular programme and TC programme cycles. I believe this recommendation is consistent with the 'one-house' approach to programmes and to management that I have been promoting. It will help with coordination among Departments in planning, formulating and assessing the performance of our programmes. It will ensure that all our programme activities reflect Member States' priorities — and as such, will help to improve our impact, effectiveness and efficiency. I recommend that the Board adopt the Committee's proposal.

VERIFICATION OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

Status of Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols

The Agency's role as an independent, objective verification body remains central to the effectiveness of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. However, as you are aware, the extent of the Agency's authority remains uneven from country to country. On the whole, 2005 has been a good year in terms of States concluding comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols. However, it is important that we continue and accelerate this trend.

Since the Board's last meeting, the safeguards agreement for Niger has entered into force, and additional protocols have been signed with Belarus and Malaysia.

Implementation of Safeguards in the DPRK

As I have noted before, the Agency has not performed any verification activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) since December 2002. Therefore, we cannot provide any assurance about DPRK's nuclear activities since that time. We continue to follow with interest the six-party talks, which aim to achieve a comprehensive settlement on the Korean Peninsula. I hope that these efforts will, inter alia, lead to the return of the DPRK to the non-proliferation regime, and that the Agency will be given the authority required to provide credible, comprehensive assurances regarding the nuclear programme in the DPRK. The Secretariat and I stand ready to contribute to that process.

Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran

The report before you provides an update on the implementation of Agency safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As the report makes clear, the Agency is continuing with its effort to clarify the nature and extent of Iran's nuclear programme. Iran has provided additional documentation, permitted interviews with relevant individuals, and allowed further access.

I welcome these actions on the part of Iran. The Agency is currently assessing the results of this additional information. However, I urge Iran to respond positively and without delay to the Agency's remaining questions related to uranium enrichment, and to the additional transparency measures we have requested. As I have stated before, these transparency measures are indispensable for the Agency to be able to clarify remaining outstanding issues — in particular, the scope and chronology of Iran's centrifuge enrichment programme. Clarification of these issues is overdue, after three years of intensive verification efforts.

The Agency will continue its investigation of these and other issues in order to be in a position to provide the required assurance about the peaceful nature of the programme. I will continue to report to the Board, as appropriate.

The Agency continues to monitor installations related to Iran's enrichment programmes, and has not observed any deviation from Iran's voluntary suspension of

enrichment activities. Iran has continued to conduct uranium conversion activities at its Esfahan facility. The Agency has been verifying this activity, and all UF₆ produced so far at this facility remains under Agency containment and surveillance.

I do hope also that, in parallel, every effort will be made so that the dialogue between Iran and all concerned parties can be resumed, with a view to achieving a comprehensive solution that addresses, inter alia, both Iran's concerns about its right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and the concerns of the international community about the peaceful nature of these activities. I still believe that robust verification by the Agency, combined with active dialogue among all concerned parties, is the best way to move forward.

Special Committee on Safeguards and Verification

The Special Committee on Safeguards and Verification held its first meeting earlier this month. The Secretariat presented to the Committee the areas in which, from our perspective, the safeguards system could be strengthened. I hope that the Committee, in time, will be able to consider all ways and means to strengthen the system, and will be in a position to recommend concrete measures to the Board.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management

In October 2005, the Russian Federation became the 36th country to ratify the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. The 2nd Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention will be held next May.

This Convention still has only a limited number of Parties, despite the fact that almost all States have radioactive waste, and therefore wide adherence to this Convention would be of clear benefit to the safety and security of all States. The Secretariat intends to organize a series of regional workshops to encourage more States to join this Convention.