

**SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT FOR THE SPECIAL BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING
TO CONSIDER THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL ON HIS VISIT TO JAPAN, 21
MARCH 2011.**

Chairperson,

At the outset we would like to associate ourselves with the statements of the G77 + China and the African Group.

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of South Africa, my delegation extends its deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Japan following the massive earthquake and Tsunami that struck parts of Japan. We share the pain and loss of loved ones, their homes and property and our thoughts and prayers go to the affected families. In addition to the rescue and recovery team that we have deployed to Japan last week, South Africa stands ready to assist in whatever manner possible within our limited resources.

Chairperson,

My delegation wishes to thank the Director General for his report regarding his visit to Japan. In the same vein, we wish to thank the Director General and the Secretariat for the daily technical briefings, as well as updates from the Incident and Emergency Centre, on the situation at Fukushima nuclear plants. It is the view of my delegation that such dissemination of information by the Secretariat is vital given the magnitude of the nuclear situation at the Fukushima Daichi Nuclear Power Plant.

Chairperson,

Given the unique statutory mandate, capabilities and expertise of the Agency in the nuclear field, my delegation is of the view that the Agency has a leading role to play in any nuclear related incident or emergency. In this regard, the Agency's on-site involvement and visibility in addressing the nuclear situation at Fukushima plant is vital.

Chairperson,

Whilst my delegation takes note of the efforts undertaken so far by the Agency, including the latest visit of the Director General to Japan, and the deployment of radiation monitoring teams, we are of the view that more could be done by the Agency to intensify its efforts in assisting Japan to overcome this nuclear situation. Indeed the Agency should always appear to be ready to assist should such incidents occur anywhere in the world.

In this context, we welcome the cooperation between the Agency and organizations such as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), as well as the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). We believe that such concerted efforts could be enhanced to improve the Agency's assessment capabilities of the situation and to disseminate accurate information to the international community.

We all recognize that the recent developments in Japan have resulted in wide spread concern about the safety of nuclear power plants worldwide and even created doubt and fear about the use of nuclear energy for power generation in some quarters. It is important to share information

in a transparent manner and prevent panic so that decisions are taken on a rational basis. It is also incumbent on Member States to share their own assessments and conclusions with the Agency when incidents like this occur.

Chairperson, South Africa has reviewed the situation and considers nuclear energy as a viable option for power generation. Hence the South African cabinet last week on 17 March approved the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) 2010 as the basis for South Africa's power generation programme for the next 20 years. The IRP 2010 makes provision for nuclear energy as one of various options identified to diversify our energy mix.

Chairperson, we have often emphasized the importance of nuclear safety and the need to guard against complacency in order to adhere to the highest standards.

With these remarks Chairperson, my delegation looks forward to further Agency updates on the situation in the Fukushima nuclear plant.