

Opening Remarks by DDG-TC
Ms Ana Maria Cetto

At the 33rd RCA General Conference Meeting

22nd September 2004, 0900– 1330 hrs

1. I wish to welcome the RCA National Representatives to Vienna, especially those who attend such a meeting for the first time, and thank you for inviting me to participate in this meeting on occasion of the GC.
2. My regrets for not being able to attend the 26th Meeting of the National RCA Representatives. I should in principle join you at the 27th meeting in 2005 in Malaysia, and sincerely hope that nothing will prevent me from doing so. Keeping abreast of recent developments in the RCA, I wish to briefly share with you some views.
3. You have the important responsibility of making sure that the RCA programme reflects the real needs of the Member States and that the projects are aimed at bringing tangible benefits to your countries. This will occur when there is a process to ensure that projects are linked to national development plans and have the financial commitments of the respective Governments. I note with interest that you have decided to revise the procedure for selection and development of RCA projects at the 26th Meeting of the National RCA Representatives, and trust that the new procedure will enable you to achieve this objective.
4. Member States have also discussed new procedures for project implementation and monitoring at national and regional levels in order to ensure the achievement of the project objectives within the stipulated time. I wish to congratulate you for this initiative. The revised RCA Guidelines and Operating Rules incorporating the new procedures will hopefully be adopted at this meeting, so that they can be applied from next year for the new project cycle. These revised Guidelines would make it possible to overcome shortcomings in the current programme, resulting in enhancing the benefits to the Member States. They would also make it possible to

attract more donor funds for the programme through the new mechanisms adopted for publicising achievements.

5. I note that action has been taken to recruit a Director for the RCA Regional Office from the Member States, and hope that this step will further enhance the capability of this RO to implement its mandate of improving the visibility and the viability of the RCA Programme. I take this opportunity to thank all Member States, and especially the Republic of Korea, for support to this office.
6. Our staffs have worked hard during the past several months to develop the TC Programme for the next programming cycle. There have been extensive consultations with Member States and the Technical Divisions during this process. RCA Lead Country Coordinators were given an opportunity to discuss the proposed programme with the RCA Coordinator and other members of the Secretariat to further refine it. As stated at the last GC meeting, Member States will get the maximum benefits out of the TC Programme when the optimal combination of modalities the Agency has to assist the Member States is applied. The national and regional programmes for East Asia and Pacific Region have been developed on this basis, and I hope that it meets the expectations of all Member States.
7. The RCA Member States will have to initiate action with regard to the Programme in 2006/2007 within the next few months, so as to submit the project requests to the Agency before the end of 2005. I invite you to consider giving priority to projects that would enhance TCDC in the region and benefit from the unique advantages of regional cooperation. There is a good potential for enhancing TCDC in the East Asia and Pacific Region, on account of the high degree of diversity among the RCA Member States with regard to economic development and the national capabilities for utilizing nuclear technology. Regional programmes serve the Member States best when the projects implemented under these programmes have a “regional nature”, that is, when they respond to shared interests that bring the countries together, rather than being simply a collection of individual national projects in the same area.

8. As you are aware, the Agency has a well-established mechanism for delivering the components of both national and regional Technical Cooperation projects, i.e. for awarding fellowships, recruiting experts and organizing workshops, meetings and training courses. We would like members of the regional agreements to be creative and introduce modalities that would make use of the specific advantages of the agreements, without limiting the activities to those the Agency can undertake without such agreements.

~~10.9.~~ I wish to express my appreciation for the support given by all of you to the TC programme in your region, and to assure you that we shall continue to provide managerial and administrative support to the RCA to the fullest possible extent.

~~11.10.~~ I wish you every success in this meeting and trust that decisions taken by you will further strengthen the TC programme, according to the vision you have developed along the years of joint undertaking.