

AFRA/ARASIA/ARCAL/RCA Quadripartite Forum Record
23 September 2004, IAEA Headquarters, Vienna

1. The annual AFRA/ARASIA/ARCAL/RCA Quadripartite Forum was held on 23 September 2004 at the IAEA Headquarters in Vienna. Representatives from the four regional co-operative agreements under the aegis of the IAEA attended at the Forum. IAEA Coordinators for the regional co-operative agreements and technical officers also attended at the Forum. The basic purpose of the Forum is to exchange information and experience amongst the four Agreements so that a further enhanced regional co-operation be achieved.

2. The out-going Chair (ARCAL) opened the Forum and welcomed the participants. The out-going Chair then invited the in-coming Chair (RCA) to lead the Forum. Mr Munim Awais (PAK), the current RCA Chair, thanked the out-going Chair for her leadership and interest in the quadripartite activities during her tenure. He invited Mr Byung Koo KIM, Director of the TCPB, to make an address on behalf of Ms Ana Maria Cetto, the DDG-TC.

3. The Director of the TCPB thanked the Forum for inviting him to participate. He apologized that the DDG-TC could not participate in the Forum because she should serve the IAEA 48th GC podium at the plenary. He conveyed the DDG-TC's best wishes for the success of the Forum. He informed the Forum that the IAEA Medium Term Strategy for 2006-2011 has begun and efforts are being undertaken to strengthen coherence between the Medium Term Strategy and the TC Strategy.

He further noted that Member States are key players in addressing many challenges and opportunities such as cross-border issues, emerging global issues, increased demand for co-operation among countries, project fund raising for sustainable development and partnership building, and so on.

He then questioned what the regional co-operative agreements want to achieve with this Forum every year. He also commented on the

expectations of each agreement from the Quadripartite Forum, the role of the IAEA secretariats, and how can the good success stories be more meaningful and applicable. In concluding, the Director of TCPB, on behalf of the DDG-TC, said that evaluation of the projects and activities supported by the Agency within the frameworks of the regional agreements have already been in line and the results of this exercise would contribute to gain further insights into the added values of TCDC arrangements.

Mr B K Kim's remarks are attached as Annex -1

4. The Chair reminded the Forum that the Agency's endeavors are underlined on the socio-economic development of the regions through TCDC. He appreciated the Agency for initiating the evaluation and is looking forward further improvement in the TCDC activities.

5. (Designation of the bureau) The Chair named three Vice Chairs, i.e. each from AFRA, ARASIA and ARCAL. The Chair also appointed representatives from Sri Lanka and the RCA Regional Office (RCARO) as the Forum rapporteurs. The Chair then requested self-introduction of the participants in the Forum.

A list of the participants is attached as Annex -2

6. The Chair proposed the Forum to adopt the revised Agenda that was consented by the three coordinators of the regional co-operative agreements. The Forum adopted the revised Agenda.

The Agenda is attached as Annex -3

7. (Matters for discussion) The Chair invited comments from the participants on the expectations from the Forum since there were some views on the usefulness and effectiveness of the Forum.

Representatives from AFRA said that the Forum is useful and important because the Forum provides opportunities for exchange of information and experience amongst the Agreements on matters of common interest

including procedures and best management practices, for sharing innovations and scientific information, for promoting joint ventures, and in particular, promoting inter-regional TCDC.

AFRA's comments are attached as Annex -4

A representative from ARASIA noted that they are just a beginner and viewed that they can learn from other Agreements about regional planning, implementation process, experiences from success stories and extra resources, using facilities, and training opportunities.

The Chair expressed wish that from next year ARASIA could enjoy regional co-operative projects and requested other Agreements and the IAEA Secretariat to help this new Agreement in fulfilling their goals.

Representatives from ARCAL reiterated that this Forum is an important tool for discussion among the four Agreements to help technical cooperation each other. ARCAL stated that they now entered into full maturity and analysis to identify areas of concerns is in progress. ARCAL viewed that there must be similar problems and strategies to solve by each Agreement. ARCAL suggested that analysis of successful achievements and share of the results would be commonly beneficial.

Representatives of RCA viewed that the Forum would focus on common theme that the four Agreements perceive as an immediate challenge to deal with. RCA explained the theme would cover such as how to develop further fund for regional co-operative projects, how to develop good success stories and how to make use of them, how to increase profiles of the regional co-operative agreements before other regional and international development communities, how to promote a better partnerships, and so on.

The Chair suggested the Forum sticks on one theme every year while continue to exchange information and success stories together with failure stories would be equally welcomed norm. The Chair then invited comments from the floor on this RCA's proposal.

The RCA Coordinator commented that in addition the four Agreements to meet once a year, necessary information can be exchanged through the coordinators since they have opportunities to meet each other quite frequently. He further noted that in the past the Coordinators exchanged not only necessary information but also concerns and considerations they would underline. So he suggested that the Coordinators would be the focal point to exchange information amongst the Agreements.

A representative from RCA (MAL) emphasized that now is the time for the regional co-operative agreements to move one step forward and expressed the need to conduct the Forum with themes. However, regarding the management issues, he also expressed reservation on what the RCA Coordinator mentioned that the coordinators of the Agreements would serve as the window for information exchange. He questioned about the expectations from the secretariat on successful information exchange.

The ARCAL Coordinator reminded the Forum that this Forum is not the secretariat's meeting but Member States' meeting like the meeting of the Group of 77. Therefore, she urged that this Forum should be prepared and done by the four Agreements

The AFRA Coordinator commented on the RCA's proposal to have thematic discussion while explaining that during the past coordinators' meeting, they also tried to identify constraints of the Forum and the roles and responsibilities of the secretariat. He recalled that the first Forum in 1996 was organized by the secretariat and the report of the first Forum was also what would be the expectations from the Forum. He viewed that the thematic meeting would be one of the important issues that the Agreements would consider. But he also expressed concerns that this Forum may lose opportunity to exchange information if we only stick on the thematic topics.

The Chair requested the RCA Coordinator to reflect all the comments from each Agreement when preparing the Forum Report and circulate.

The representatives from AFRA requested the Chair to clearly define the characteristics of this Forum. They viewed that this Forum should be

supposed to deal with TCDC. AFRA also asked the participants what this Forum exactly expects from Agency secretariat.

The Chair reiterated that the basic function of this Forum is to exchange information and experiences. The Chair added that basically it is technical forum and not political meetings like Group of 77. He further requested three coordinators to arrange this Forum on behalf of the Agreements.

8. (Exchange information and experiences) The Chair invited each Agreement to make presentation on good achievements and experiences that would be mutually useful.

AFRA introduced their endeavors on NDT programme that is one of the success stories developed this year within AFRA framework. AFRA explained that the NDT contributed to the self-reliance of nuclear institutions. They further explained that two centers of excellence for NDT are well functioned in the region and the number of certified personnel on Level III has increased.

AFRA's presentation on NDT is attached as Annex -5

ARASIA said at present they do not have significant activities but hoped next year to present a good success story. The Chair requested other Agreements to co-operate and coordinate with ARASIA in providing necessary information and experiences.

ARCAL presented on the successful use of nuclear techniques in early diagnosis of helicobacter pylori infection in the region. ARCAL underlined that the helicobacter pylori is becoming serious worldwide concern, particularly in most developing countries. To this end, the impact of this project will provide policy makers to make necessary measures to prevent the helicobacter pylori infection. ARCAL further urged the need to develop and strengthen inter-regional networking.

ARCAL's presentation on helicobacter pylori is attached at Annex -6

The Chair, as National RCA Representative of PAK, said he will send Pakistan's experience to ARCAL. The ARCAL Coordinator added that a new step is being taken to joining helicobacter pylori issues on nutritional aspect and hoped to continue exchange of information in this area.

RCA presented on the success stories in agriculture project. RCA's Lead Country for Agriculture (CPR) introduced various achievements in animal production, plant breeding and genetics, soil sciences, food irradiation to help infrastructure for commercialization and other areas of endeavors.

RCA's presentation on the achievements in agricultural programme is attached as Annex -7

RCARO presented on the experiences of promoting RCA visibility and viability through awareness increasing activities and partnership promoting programme. RCARO mentioned that RCA achievements are not properly recognized by the regional and international development communities and it is imperative than ever to increase awareness of RCA so that good partnerships can be established between RCA and other development organizations. RCARO viewed that there are a wide range of possible and potential partners not only in the region but also worldwide that more orchestrated and dedicated efforts should be made with those development organizations so that RCA's viability can be attained.

RCARO's presentation on promoting RCA visibility and viability is attached as Annex -9

ARCAL wanted to learn RCA's effort to promote partnerships. ARASIA also wished to learn other Agreements' rich experience.

9. (Major Conclusions and Recommendation) The Chair finally invited comments on the major conclusions from the Forum and requested recommendations, if any. Since there were no particular comments and recommendations from the Agreements, the Chair suggested that all Agreements would look into the Meeting Report and express their additional views or missing points, if any, to the RCA Coordinator so that

major recommendations would be made thereof. The RCA Coordinator requested other Agreements to provide texts of presentations and a list of participants.

10. (Closing) The Chair thanked all participants for their active and useful discussions and presentations during the Forum.