

# **The International Framework for Nuclear Energy Cooperation**

## **Joint Statement**

### **7<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee Meeting**

**Buenos Aires, Argentina**

**October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

The Executive Committee of the International Framework for Nuclear Energy Cooperation (IFNEC) held its annual meeting on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Ministers and other senior representative from IFNEC Participant and Observer countries and international organizations met to discuss IFNEC-related matters and expressed to the Republic of Argentina their sincere appreciation for graciously hosting and chairing this year's Executive Committee Meeting as well as for hosting the IFNEC Steering Group Meeting and the IFNEC Latin America Nuclear Energy Stakeholders Conference.

The mission of IFNEC is to provide a forum for cooperation among participating states to explore mutually beneficial approaches to ensure the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes proceeds in a manner that is efficient and meets the highest standards of safety, security and non-proliferation. Participating states would not give up any rights and voluntarily engage to share the effort and gain the benefits of economical, peaceful nuclear energy.

The Executive Committee recognized the continued key role nuclear energy is playing for many countries throughout the world as a reliable, non-carbon emitting, and long-term source of electricity production. It also noted with satisfaction the results of the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21), which was held November 30 – December 12 2015 in Paris, in particular recognition of nuclear energy as a source of energy contributing to the reduction of the emission of CO<sub>2</sub>.

The Executive Committee encouraged 34 Participant Countries comprising IFNEC as well as 31 Observer Countries and 4 International Observer Organizations (IAEA, OECD/NEA, Euratom, GEN IV International Forum) to continue working together in mutually beneficial ways including information sharing, lessons-learned, and synergistic non-duplicative ways to work with the IAEA and OECD/NEA.

The Executive Committee supports IFNEC's current areas of focus, including financing of nuclear power projects; optimizing electricity market structures; establishing the necessary infrastructure including the requisite skilled workforce; broadening the choice of reactors designs to include for instance small modular reactors; examination of multinational spent nuclear fuel disposal solutions; and enhancing stakeholder engagement to collectively and more effectively address common global nuclear supplier and customer challenges.

The Executive Committee takes positive note of the following recent activities intended to address the above-described challenges and opportunities:

- IAEA-IFNEC Special Workshop on Listening and Learning from Stakeholders, February 2016
- A Joint IFNEC-Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) Nuclear Finance Conference, May 2016
- Steering Group Meeting, May 2016
- Infrastructure Development Working Group (IDWG) Meeting, May 2016
- Reliable Nuclear Fuel Services Working Group (RNFSWG) Meeting, May 2016
- Conference on the Prospects for Nuclear Power in the Asia Pacific Region, August 2016

- IFNEC Organized Interactive Exercise at INPRO Dialogue Forum on Small Modular Reactors, October 2016
- IFNEC Latin American Nuclear Energy Stakeholders Conference, October 2016
- Steering Group Meeting, October 2016

The Executive Committee took positive note of the Steering Group Chair and the Co-chairs of the Reliable Nuclear Fuel Services Working Group and the Infrastructure Development Working Group Reports presenting a broad array of beneficial activities the during last period. The Executive Committee commends the Steering Group and Working Groups for their excellent work and expressed its particular appreciation for their accomplishments. The Executive Committee also received a report from the NEA on the successful transition of the IFNEC Technical Secretariat. In connection with this, the Executive Committee extended its sincere appreciation:

- To the IFNEC Technical Secretariat at the NEA for successfully organising and hosting the Steering Group and Working Groups meetings in May 2016. To the NEA Director-General William D. Magwood, IV, for co-sponsoring and hosting the highly successful Finance Conference in that same week.
- To the Technical Secretariat for having conducted a survey of IFNEC participant countries to collect their views on the future activities that IFNEC should undertake, which will help IFNEC consolidate its annual programme of work;
- To the Infrastructure Development Working Group and the IAEA for co-organizing and the Government of the Philippines for hosting, the Conference on the Prospects for Nuclear Power in the Asia Pacific Region in August 2016.
- To the departing leadership for their service to IFNEC: Frederic Journes (France) as Vice-Chair, Hironori Nakanishi (Japan) as Vice Chair, Daniel Iracane (France) as RNFSWG Co-chair and Ambassador Hamad Al Kabbi (UAE) as RNFSWG Co-chair.
- To the incoming leadership for their willingness to serve: Anne Lazar-Sury (France), Hideo Shindo (Japan) as Vice Chair, Alan Brownstein (United States) and Tomaž Žagar (Slovenia) as RNFSWG Co-chairs.
- To those Participant Countries that have provided voluntary contributions to the NEA to allow the IFNEC Technical Secretariat to operate successfully and support IFNEC activities.

In particular, the Executive Committee noted with satisfaction the following:

- A multi-year effort to examine the challenges and opportunities facing IFNEC Participant Countries regarding financing nuclear energy projects via stakeholder-wide workshops and Conferences;
- A Report on “Nuclear Energy’s Role in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Addressing the Challenge of Financing”, based on the jointly sponsored IFNEC/NEA Nuclear Finance Conference in France with government and industry experts;
- A “Report on Practical Considerations to Begin Resolving the Final Spent Fuel Disposal Pathway for Countries with Small Nuclear Programs,” which evolved from the Reliable Nuclear Fuel Services Working Group’s multi-year exploration of the development of a multinational repository as part of the “dual track approach.”

The Executive Committee also laid out its priorities for IFNEC activities and issued guidance for the Steering Group and Working Groups to pursue through 2017:

- The Steering Group is to coordinate the formation of a new Ad Hoc Nuclear Supplier and Customer Engagement Group including identification of volunteer co-chairs, and program of its work. The activities of this Group should be based on close coordination with the IDWG and RNFSWG. All IFNEC Participant and Observer Countries and Organizations are encouraged to participate. It is particularly important that IFNEC supplier and customer market countries substantively participate as much as possible to settle up the aims and program as a temporary group. This discussion may be addressed during dedicated meetings, as appropriate. A report on the activities and results of this Ad Hoc group is to be submitted to the Executive Committee during its 2017 meeting, where it will be decided whether to continue or conclude the Ad Hoc Group's activities.
- In order to further address international arrangements for the disposal of used nuclear fuel (UNF) and radioactive waste (RW), the RNFSWG should continue to identify and address key issues related to this concept in coordination with the IDWG and interested Participant and Observer countries and organizations. This effort should include industries willing to support this process. Key issues such as seeking approaches to addressing the need for international cooperation in exploring the development of - international arrangements for the disposal of RW and UNF, and the economics for a country with a multinational repository project, as well as its international legal status and the infrastructure development requirements should be considered. Examples of the export of UNF RR to other countries for reprocessing or disposal could be used as examples for future arrangements on larger scale applications for international solutions;
- The concept of a multinational repository merits being addressed more in depth within the IFNEC forum to expand the understanding by member countries of both the challenges associated with the concept of developing multinational disposal options, and the benefits that the options would provide, particularly to countries with limited capabilities to site, construct, and operate their own geologic repository for the disposal of spent fuel and high-level waste; the development of multinational disposal options should be considered in addition to the national program of these countries (pursue a dual track approach).
- The RNFSWG and the IDWG should continue technical collaboration in its activities with the OECD/NEA and IAEA, and other organizations as appropriate.
- The IDWG should continue to address important issues in developing the national infrastructures countries need for safe and secure pursuit of a nuclear energy program, including human resource development, nuclear regulatory development, emergency management planning, long-term radioactive waste management, reactor technology choices, and needs assessments;
- The IDWG should continue to explore ways by which IFNEC may be able to contribute through fostering collaborative and innovative approaches to the important issues of safety, security, and non-proliferation, and raising awareness of the issue of nuclear liability, including the need for a global nuclear liability regime;
- The IDWG should continue its successful collaboration with the IAEA based on the positive response from both the Asia Pacific Region held in the Philippines in 2016 and the Africa region held in Kenya in 2015 as well as other IAEA/IFNEC collaborations.
- The Technical Secretariat should continue analysis on the survey results and complete a comprehensive survey report and share it with member countries in the first quarter of 2017.

The Executive Committee:

- Encouraged all IFNEC Participant and Observer countries to actively participate in the IFNEC Steering Group and Working Group meetings schedule for the week of June 26, 2017 in Paris, France.