

Information Circular

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Communication from Agency Director on reframing the Agency mission statement.

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DISCLAIMER - Of course this was a fake memo as an April Fools joke. But it is a serious issue that the UN uses tax payers money to promote dirty, dangerous nuclear power.

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World leaders regularly declare nuclear weapons and nuclear terrorism to be the number one threat to humanity. I agree with them; working towards a world free of nuclear weapons should be the path that all countries follow. Rather than declarations or rhetoric, concrete actions and steps are urgently needed. What we have to face is that the case of Iran and others demonstrates there is no true guarantee that nuclear civil programmes will remain civil and not lead to nuclear weapons.

In recent years, four developments have radically altered the security landscape - the emergence of clandestine nuclear supply networks, the spread of nuclear fuel cycle technology, the efforts by more countries to acquire nuclear weapons, and the declared ambition of terrorists to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction. All those are threats that we cannot ignore.

In a year that marks the 20th anniversary of Chernobyl, the eyes of the world will turn to the worst nuclear accident in history. It is a time for us at the Agency to reflect upon the future of nuclear energy, and the Agency's role in promoting it. I have spent many hours soul searching, asking what I can do personally, and what can the Agency do to create a safer world for all? This is the year the Agency should start a reform process.

I am convening a panel of experts under my direction to prepare a report for the next General Conference in September. Their remit is three-fold, first to find the best approach for the Agency to become a world leader and advocate of renewable energy sources – the only solution to expanding world energy needs; second to project the structure and resources required for the Agency to truly facilitate and verify disarmament, and third to explore how the Agency can become a centre of excellence and dialogue on how to decommission existing nuclear power plants, keep existing technology out of the hands of those who wish it for military means, and safely deal with nuclear waste.

I realise this might take many of you by surprise, thus this internal memo. This panel and my agenda may certainly dismay our friends and associates in the nuclear power industry who have been so helpful and demonstrably appreciative of our efforts on their behalf over the years. Certainly some member states will be unsupportive of a change of mandate but I believe it is time we called them to account.

I can see no way that the Agency can continue to promote nuclear power on the one hand, while promoting world peace with the other. The Agency needs a 21st century mandate for the 21st century – the assumptions and hopes made about nuclear power in the 1950s are clearly just not technically or politically supportable. I intend this to be my legacy to the Agency.

The panel of experts would not only be of academia and the Board of Governors but also with a wide range of NGOs and Civil Society advocates.

I promise a smooth transaction in the process, all staff will be consulted and kept updated. It is only right that this consultation on a new vision for the Agency has begun during the month of the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and should be viewed as creating a lasting memorial to all those who have suffered and will continue to suffer from the Chernobyl disaster.

Your input as agency staff is of course highly valued and you will have every opportunity to input to this process. These will be outlined in future information circulars from my office. Any questions regarding these changes can be addressed to the IAEA Mission Change Hotline on:

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