

2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Preparedness and response to nuclear and radiological emergencies

Working paper submitted by France

1. Implementing measures to avoid nuclear accidents is essential for the responsible development of nuclear energy. This, along with the importance of doing everything possible to reduce to a minimum the potential consequences of an accident, was pointed out by the States parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety in the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Convention at the Diplomatic Conference held on 9 February 2015.
2. Despite all the precautions taken during the design, construction, commissioning and operation of nuclear facilities, States must not fail to prepare for any emergency that may occur. This has been reasserted several times at international forums. Thus, the Conference of States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons requested those States that have not already done so, in the 2010 Action Plan, to “consider becoming parties to the Convention on Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency”. After the Fukushima Daiichi accident, the member States of the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) undertook, in the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety adopted in 2011, to introduce measures to strengthen preparedness and response to emergencies.
3. In this context, extending worldwide the scope of the relevant conventions, such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Conventions on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, which were concluded under the auspices of IAEA, is a priority for responsible development of nuclear energy. Concluding agreements and arrangements that are either bilateral or on a regional basis, relating to early information-sharing and assistance, may also be useful. In this respect, the “WebECURIE” communications system (European Community Urgent Radiological Information Exchange) enables information to be shared rapidly between the European Commission and member States of the European Union.
4. States should also adopt national guidelines for the management of serious accidents. Introducing adequate regulations, framing a national organization plan in case of crisis, preparing potential intervention measures and devising public information mechanisms are among the measures that States wishing to develop an



electro-nuclear programme should put in place as soon as possible. States which have no nuclear facilities, but which are likely to suffer the consequences of a trans-border accident, should also prepare for nuclear emergencies. With respect to the European Union, the 2014 directive establishing a Community framework for the nuclear safety of nuclear facilities, and the 2013 directive setting basic standards for health protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionizing radiation require member States to fix a national framework for emergencies and for both on- and off-site intervention.

5. IAEA, and, in particular, the Incident and Emergency Centre, plays a key role, which must be supported, in coordinating international cooperation with regard to preparedness and response to nuclear emergencies.

6. France encourages States to make use of the various services and activities offered by IAEA to improve preparedness and response to nuclear emergencies. States can turn to the IAEA Emergency Preparedness Review department to identify aspects of their national crisis management organization that require improvement. It is also useful to participate as much as possible in the so-called “ConvEx” exercises organized by the Agency, which aim to test the procedures provided for by the Conventions on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, and in particular in the large-scale exercises known as “ConvEx-3”, the latest edition of which took place in Morocco in 2014. France also encourages States that have not yet done so to register their assistance capabilities on the database of the IAEA Response and Assistance Network (RANET) and update data relating to them as often as necessary.

7. Several main lines can be identified for improving international cooperation in respect of crisis management:

(a) Further thought should be given to how to provide the Agency with the means of fully implementing its task, set out in the 2011 Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, of providing States with “clear, factually correct, objective and easily understandable information, [...] including analysis [...] and prognosis of possible scenarios [...]” in the event of a nuclear accident. Networking experts from the States’ crisis centres, placing their assessment and prognosis capabilities at IAEA disposal, is a worthwhile path for assisting the Agency in carrying out its mandate;

(b) Strengthening the RANET database is also an important factor for progress: for example, States should consider the possibility of registering the assistance capabilities they have at their disposal for the management of transport accidents;

(c) Further thought should be given to improving audit services offered by IAEA regarding preparedness and response to nuclear emergencies.

8. France is able to draw upon considerable expertise, both institutional and industrial, in terms of preparedness and management of nuclear and radiological emergencies. She strives to improve it constantly and plays an active part in international efforts to that effect. France has established bilateral aid programmes with many countries, mainly neighbouring ones, for the exchange of good practice and assistance in crisis management, whether with particular regard to the government, the Nuclear Safety Authority, the *Institut de radioprotection et de sûreté nucléaire* [Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety], or the *Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives* [Atomic Energy and

Alternative Energies Commission] (CEA). Some examples of crisis management units introduced in France, which she is prepared to offer to States requesting her to do so, are the following: the Nuclear Rapid Action Force (FARN) set up by Electricité de France; *zones d'intervention de premier échelon* [entry-level intervention areas], which are CEA mobile intervention teams comprising radiation protection specialists; the Major Nuclear or Radiological Accident National Response Plan, which the Government revised and adopted in 2014; and the National Doctrine for Post-Accident Management in the Event of a Nuclear Accident or a Radiological Emergency.
