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## CONVENTION ON NUCLEAR SAFETY

**Opened for Signature:** 20 September 1994

**Entered into Force:** 24 October 1996

**Duration:** Indefinite

**[States Parties and Signatories](#)**

**Depositary:** [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#)

### [Treaty Text](#)

The convention was adopted on 17 June 1994 by a Diplomatic Conference convened by the IAEA from 14-17 June in document INFCIRC/449 after having been negotiated during a series of expert meetings from 1992 to 1994.

**Convention Obligations:** Contracting parties are to take, within the framework of national laws, the legislative, regulatory, and administrative measures and other steps necessary for implementing obligations under the convention. They are to take steps to ensure that a review of the safety of their existing nuclear facilities takes place as soon as possible after entry into force of the convention (when necessary, to ensure that all reasonably practicable improvements are made as a matter of urgency to upgrade an installation's safety; if such upgrading cannot be achieved, plans should be implemented to shut down the installation as soon as practically possible, taking into account the whole energy context and possible alternatives as well as the social, environmental, and economic impact). Also, they are to establish and maintain a legislative and regulatory framework to govern the safety of installations; establish a regulatory body with adequate authority, competence, and resources to implement the framework; and provide sufficient financial and human resources to support the safety of each installation throughout its life.

Parties are to ensure that comprehensive and systematic safety assessments are carried out before the construction and commissioning of an installation and throughout its life, including verification by testing and inspection to ensure that the physical state and operation of the installation continue in accordance with requirements. Also, they must ensure radiation exposure by the installation is kept as low as reasonably achievable and within national dose limits for

individuals. Parties must establish and routinely test on-site and off-site emergency plans for installations and provide their own population and the competent authorities of states close to the installation with appropriate information for emergency planning and response.

Additional provisions detail obligations for site, design, construction, and operation of nuclear installations. Parties shall hold review meetings for the purpose of reviewing the reports submitted by contracting parties. The interval between meetings shall not exceed three years.

**Scope of Application:** The convention applies only to civilian nuclear power plants. Upon signature of the convention, India made a declaration that the convention should cover both civilian and military nuclear power plants. Ukraine made a reservation that the convention shall not apply to the Shelter — a construction enclosing the remains of Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant Unit 4.

**Verification and Compliance:** The convention does not contain verification provisions. The convention is an incentive instrument based on a common interest to achieve higher levels of safety. It obliges the parties to submit reports on the implementation of their obligations for review by other parties and, if necessary, clarification.

**Review Meetings:** The convention provides for review meetings to be convened by contracting parties for the purpose of reviewing the reports on the measures they have taken to implement the convention's obligations.

### **Developments:**

**2011:** On 1 April, Indonesia ratified the Convention.

The [Fifth Review Meeting](#) was held from 4-14 April in Vienna. 61 of the 72 contracting parties participated in the meeting, which was chaired by Mr Li Ganjie, Director of the Chinese National Nuclear Safety Administration. Delegates focused much of their discussions on the events at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, issuing a statement expressing their condolences to Japan and committing to reviewing existing and planned nuclear power plants. The

delegates also decided to hold an Extraordinary Meeting in 2012 on the Fukushima accident to review lessons emerging from the incident. Through the country group meetings, the contracting parties were able to establish a high degree of compliance with the Convention's provisions.

On 26 April, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev issued [remarks](#) proposing updates to nuclear safety standards fixed upon new international agreements. He also stated Russia would be bringing proposals on nuclear safety to the G8 Summit in May.

On 26 May, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy [called](#) for greater nuclear safety measures following the March nuclear accidents at Japan's Fukushima plant. They also called on revising and strengthening the Convention.

On 27 May, the G8 Summit issued a [declaration](#) calling for a consideration to strengthen the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident. While Russia agreed with the wording of the final communiqué, the state [noted](#) how it wants IAEA safety standards to be mandatory, as well as a restriction on building reactors in earthquake-prone areas.

On 1 June, Ghana acceded to the Convention

On 2 June IAEA Deputy Director General Denis Flory [called](#) upon Iran to join the Convention. According to Iranian media, the state's nuclear power plant at Bushehr is projected to be in operation within the next two months. If the plant goes live, Iran will be the only non-Convention country operating a nuclear power plant.

On 19 June the IAEA Nuclear Safety Conference took place at the Viennese headquarters. The conference was aimed to address lessons learned from the horrific incident in Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) on March 11 earlier this year. During the conference, the Ministerial Declaration that focused on emergency preparedness and strengthening nuclear safety was adapted. The IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano was asked to prepare an Action Plan for improving nuclear safety that will also include his five proposals. The proposals included strengthening IAEA Safety Standards, more frequent review of NPPs by expanding the IAEA's program of expert peer reviews, and granting independence to national nuclear regulatory bodies. Furthermore, the Director General announced that he sought more effective emergency response, as well as the widening of the Agency's role in spreading vital information.

On 29 June, Albania acceded to the Convention.

**2010:** The NPT RevCon was held from 3-28. At the Conference, "the Vienna Group of Ten" (Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden) submitted a [working paper](#) on nuclear safety. Amongst other notions, the paper called for all member States commissioning, constructing or planning nuclear power reactors or programs to become party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. It also encouraged national and international cooperation in strengthening nuclear and radiation safety.

Kazakhstan ratified the Convention, the last state with operating nuclear reactors to join the Convention. Four countries, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bahrain acceded to the convention.

**2009:** On 25 June, the European Council adopted a [directive](#) "establishing a Community framework for the nuclear safety of nuclear in nuclear installations." The directive ordered that the obligations resulting from the Convention on Nuclear Safety become mandatory for all nuclear power plants within the European Union.

Jordan ratified the Convention on 12 June.

On 31 July, the United Arab Emirates acceded to the Convention.

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya acceded to the Convention on 13 August.

On 28 September, the [first Extraordinary Meeting](#) was held. It was decided at the fourth Review Meeting to hold an Extraordinary Meeting alongside the fifth Organizational Meeting to agree on changes to INFCIRC/572/Rev.2, Guidelines Regarding National Reports under the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The contracting parties accepted the proposal of the president pending an amendment to the third revision on the document. The president of the fourth Review Meeting was unable to preside so Ms. Ann McGarry, Chief Executive of the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland and vice-president of the fourth Review Meeting, presided instead.

The [fifth Organizational Meeting](#) was held on 29 September in Vienna. 46 out of 65 contracting parties participated, including the newly acceded United Arab Emirates. Bill Borchardt, Executive Director for Operations of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, was elected chair and Li Ganjie of China was elected as president of the fifth Review Meeting. The meeting decided to establish six country

groups for the fifth Review Meeting based on the contracting parties' numbers of nuclear installations.

**2008:** The fourth Review Meeting was held from 14-25 April in Vienna. 55 out of 61 contracting parties participated. The President of the Meeting was Mr. Maurice Magugumela, CEO of the National Nuclear Regulator of South Africa.

The Country Groups met for five and a half days and discussed each national report. A high degree of compliance with the Convention was reported, and the discussions resulted in the identification of good practices, challenges, and planned measures to improve safety.

Iceland ratified the Convention on 4 June.

Senegal acceded to the Convention on 24 December.

**2007:** The fourth Organizational Meeting was held on 24-26 September in Vienna. 44 out of 60 contracting parties participated in the meeting, which was chaired by Ms. Linda Keen, President of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. Mr. Maurice T. Magugumela was elected as President of the 4<sup>th</sup> Review Meeting to be held in 2008.

The meeting discussed a number of proposals to further enhance the review process and agreed to refer all proposals to the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG). An Agenda was set for the 4<sup>th</sup> Review Meeting.

As part of the review process, Contracting Parties organized themselves into six Country Groups, each group including countries with nuclear power programs of different sizes, as well as countries not having nuclear power reactors.

Nigeria ratified the Convention on 4 April.

Malta acceded to the Convention on 15 November.

**2005:** The Third Review Meeting pursuant to Article 20 of the Convention was held in Vienna, 8-19 April. Fifty out of 55 contracting states participated in the meeting, which was chaired by Linda Keen, president and chief executive officer of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

The parties noted India's ratification of the convention on 31 March. The chair acknowledged that all countries with operating nuclear power plants are now members of the Convention.

The contracting parties recalled the main purpose of the review meeting was to review the nuclear safety status of each party and reiterated the primary goal of the convention to achieve and maintain a high level of nuclear safety worldwide.

The parties noted the importance of reviewing accurate self-assessments of national safety standards submitted by each party in the form of national reports.

The contracting parties noted and discussed internal and external factors that pose challenges to the nuclear industry in maintaining safety management and culture.

The parties recalled the emphasis the Second Review Meeting had placed on quality assurance, safety management and culture, and long-term operations. The parties expanded the more specific concepts of quality assurance and safety culture into the broader concept of safety management systems.

The parties also recognized, after 10 years and three review meetings, the need for renewing the review process. The parties adopted recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group of the Third Review Meeting to improve the review process. These recommendations will also be applied to future review meetings.

**2004:** Pursuant to Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure and Financial Rules of the Convention, the organizational meeting was held at the headquarters of the IAEA in Vienna, 28-30 September, with the participation of 44 out of 55 contracting parties. The meeting was chaired by Linda Keen.

The meeting decided to establish six country groups for the Third Review Meeting and elected country group coordinators, chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, and rapporteurs. The meeting also decided that coordinators and rapporteurs would meet to consider questions received and review the approach of country group discussions. It was established that the General Committee of the review meeting, consisting of the president, vice-presidents and country group chairs, would meet on the Sunday preceding the review meeting. This would be followed by a meeting of all officers for the review meeting to finalize an approach to the detailed review process.

The meeting discussed how to improve the review process for the Third Review Meeting, which included a discussion of the Lessons Learned Report from the Second Review Meeting. As a result of this discussion, the Open-Ended Working Group was established.

The meeting decided on the agenda for the Third Review Conference and agreed to the report by the chair of the organizational meeting.

**2002:** The Second Review Meeting pursuant to Article 20 of the convention was held in Vienna from 15-

26 April at the headquarters of the IAEA, which serves as the secretariat. The meeting was chaired by Miroslav Gregoric, Director of the Slovenian Nuclear Safety Authority (SNSA) with the participation of 46 states contracting parties. Six parties, namely Bangladesh, Lebanon, Mali, the Republic of Moldova, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, did not comply with the basic obligations of the convention to submit a national report and attend the review meeting, while Portugal submitted a national report but did not attend the meeting.

The parties observed that the national reports submitted were in most cases of high quality and provided ample information on steps and measures taken and in progress to implement the obligations stipulated in Chapter 2 of the convention. However, the parties observed that some parties did not clearly identify the actual changes that had taken place in response to the issues identified at the First Review Meeting. This led to extended discussion in some country groups sessions.

The contracting parties concluded that the review process — starting with the self-assessment involved in producing the national reports, followed by the review of national reports by other parties, with exchange of questions, comments and answers, and finally the open discussions at the review meeting — had proven to be of great value to the enhancement of nuclear safety worldwide. The review process demonstrated the value of the comprehensive exchange of nuclear safety information between peers.

The parties also concluded that the review process had demonstrated the strong commitment by all to the objectives of the convention. Significant progress had been observed since the First Review Meeting in the areas of legislation, regulatory independence, financial resources for regulatory bodies and operators of nuclear installations, implementation of safety improvements in installations built to earlier safety standards, and emergency preparedness.

Commitments were made by contracting parties to complete as planned the important safety improvements identified in the review process. They also noted other areas that warrant special attention, including safety management and safety culture; plant ageing and upgrading; maintaining competence; and effectiveness of regulatory practices. While the parties cited additional steps required to reach the principal objective of the convention — to achieve and maintain a high level of safety at all nuclear installations — they nevertheless noted that all contracting parties participating in the review meeting were taking steps in the right direction, and that the review

meeting had provided valuable guidance in that respect.

A number of nuclear installations were in operation or under construction in states that were not contracting parties to the convention. Recognizing the value of the review process under the convention, the contracting parties encouraged such states to join the convention as soon as possible. The parties agreed that the timely submission of the national reports and of questions and answers on these reports was a key element in the success of the review meeting process.

**2001:** Pursuant to Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure and Financial Rules of the Convention, the organizational meeting was held at the headquarters of the IAEA in Vienna on 25-26 September with the participation of 41 out of 53 contracting parties. Mr. Miroslav Gregoric, Director of the Slovenian Nuclear Safety Authority, was elected chairperson of the meeting. Mr. Gregoric was also elected president of the Second Review Meeting and Mr. M. Ishikawa of Japan and Mr. C. Tenreiro Leiva of Chile as vice-presidents.

The meeting decided to establish six country groups using the list of contracting parties and their nuclear installations, for the Second Review Meeting. The contracting parties were allocated to country groups based on a ranking of the number of nuclear installations. Contracting parties that did not have any installations were also added to country groups, starting where the assignment of states parties with nuclear installations ended. The meeting required the country groups to meet separately and, pursuant to Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure and Financial Rules, to make recommendations for country group coordinators and officers of the Second Review Meeting. Pursuant to the same rule, the meeting also decided to recommend a budget for the Second Review Meeting.

The meeting elected country group coordinators and selected chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, and rapporteurs from each country group. The meeting asked the officers for the review meeting to meet on the Sunday preceding the review meeting to determine a consistent approach to the review process, taking into account the comments raised by the contracting Parties on national reports. The meeting mentioned that in developing such a consistent approach, the secretariat would be invited to assist officers.

During the meeting, the contracting parties also discussed how to further improve the review process and agreed to assign a specific agenda item at the Second Review Meeting to take into account any improvement deemed appropriate according to Arti-

cle 22.2 in the convention on the procedural arrangements for review meetings. The meeting also agreed on the establishment of a working group under the chairmanship of Spain, which would assess different options to increase publicly available information from the review process and report on its findings to the Second Review Meeting of the contracting parties.

**1999:** The First Review Meeting pursuant to Article 20 of the convention was held in Vienna from 12-23 April at the headquarters of the IAEA—which serves as the secretariat. The meeting was chaired by Lars Hogberg, Director-General of the Swedish Nuclear Power Inspectorate (SKI) with the participation of the 45 contracting parties. Bangladesh, Mali, and Moldova did not submit a national report and did not attend the meeting. Singapore submitted a report but did not attend the meeting. Other than that, the contracting parties noted the high quality of most of the reports, which provided ample information on steps and measures taken to implement the obligations under the convention.

The contracting parties noted that this convention entailed two basic commitments by each contracting party:

- to prepare and make available a national report, including a self-assessment of steps and measures already taken and in progress to implement the convention obligations; and
- to subject its national report, and the nuclear safety program it describes, to a peer review by the other contracting parties, and to take an active part in that review and in the review of the reports of other contracting parties.

At the review meeting, contracting parties organized themselves into six country groups, each group including countries with nuclear power programs of different sizes, as well as countries not having nuclear power reactors. The contracting parties concluded that the review process had proven to be of great value to their national nuclear safety programs. Although the review process had been successful, especially considering that it was the first of its kind, they decided on certain improvements and amendments to the procedural documents providing guidance for the review process. The contracting parties voiced satisfaction with the commitment of all of them to the objective of achieving and maintaining a high level of safety at all nuclear installations. They reaffirmed their commitment to the objectives and obligations of the convention, and their commitment to

make all reasonable efforts to provide the additional information called for in the next national reports.

Six months before the review meeting, contracting parties submitted national reports on steps and measures taken to implement convention obligations. In the following months the contracting parties reviewed each other's reports, and exchanged written questions and comments.

**1997:** On 21-25 April, contracting parties held their first preparatory meeting on matters related to the implementation of the convention. The meeting focused on the adoption of guidelines regarding the form and structure of national reports, the process of reviewing such reports, the rules of procedure and financial arrangements. The meeting agreed on the last date for submission of national reports before the review meeting in April 1999.

**1996:** The participants of the Moscow summit in April underscored progress to date and reinforced the importance of partnership among the participants of the summit in addressing nuclear safety concerns. They pledged to assist in the completion of least-cost power sector plans and in the safety assessments on nuclear reactors as an integral part of a licensing process.

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