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## CONVENTION ON NUCLEAR SAFETY

**Opened for Signature:** 20 September 1994

**Entered into Force:** 24 October 1996

**Duration:** The convention does not set any limits on its duration

**Number of Signatories:** 65

**Number of Parties:** 63 and [EURATOM](#)

**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:**

**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.

**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 Article 22.2 in the convention on the procedural arrangements for review meetings. The meeting also agreed on the establishment of a working group un-

der 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 reconfirmed 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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