

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE TO GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY  
Vienna, 19 September 2011**

*Delivered by Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs*

I am pleased to send greetings to all the participants in this IAEA General Conference.

Your meeting comes at an important time. Since March, the international community has been focused on responding to the horrendous tragedy at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan. At the United Nations, I commissioned a system-wide study on the accident's implications. Later this week, I will convene a High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security in New York to consider that study and all related issues. I hope this will be an occasion to build political support and momentum at the highest level for ongoing international initiatives in this area.

I had the moving experience of personally travelling to Japan last month to show my solidarity with the people of Fukushima. I met with high-level officials and high school students, government ministers and displaced families. I saw the devastation and sensed the continuing fear. At the same time, I was deeply impressed by the resourcefulness, resilience and resolve of the Japanese people, who are already planning for a better future.

The situation in Fukushima demonstrated all too clearly that major nuclear accidents do not respect national boundaries; they are a matter of international concern and global public interest.

I remain grateful to Director General Amano and the entire IAEA staff for their swift and professional response to the accident, their follow-up efforts and their valuable contribution to the UN system-wide study. I welcome the outcome of the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety and the development of an Action Plan.

I hope this General Conference can adopt that forward-looking Plan so that it can serve as a basis for international efforts to improve nuclear safety. I also welcome Japan's initiative, in cooperation with the IAEA, to convene a high-level meeting on the issue in late 2012.

For my part, I am determined to exert all possible efforts to prevent any future tragedies at a nuclear facility. I am seeking new ways to enhance cooperation among international organizations, particularly in the areas of emergency response and

information sharing. I have also emphasized the need to strengthen the capacity of the IAEA to promote nuclear safety and nuclear security.

Your discussions can maintain the political momentum, which should build at this week's High-Level Meeting and gain further strength through future events, including the Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul next year.

You have a broad range of issues on your agenda, including the all-important challenges of strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, enhancing the safeguards system and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, while also furthering the goal of global nuclear disarmament as mandated in the IAEA Statute.

In 2011, initial steps were taken to carry out the measures agreed to at last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including the action plan on the Middle East. I welcomed the Second Conference of the Nuclear-Weapon States on Confidence Building Measures towards Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, as well as measures by non-nuclear weapon States to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

I wish you great success in your work to advance progress on these issues, which are critical to the safety and security of generations to come.