

## **India Supports the International Initiative to enhance Nuclear Safety**

A five member Delegation from India led by Shri R. Bhattacharya, Secretary, Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) represented India in the Diplomatic Conference of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), held at International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna on February 9 2015. The Indian delegation supported the consensus on the [Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety](#). The Declaration seeks to achieve significant safety enhancements in the nuclear power plants all over the world, both new as well as the existing ones. 71 countries attended the conference of the 77 member states.

The Vienna Declaration is part of an ongoing international effort to strengthen nuclear safety, subsequent to the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan, was approved by consensus of all the Contracting Parties to the CNS at the Diplomatic Conference. The Conference was called to consider a proposal by Switzerland to amend a part of the text of the CNS. Swiss proposal for Amendment of Article 18 of CNS was not approved, however a consensus document was adopted by the participating countries.

The Declaration calls for enhancements in the design, siting and construction of nuclear power plants, with the objectives of preventing accidents as well as mitigating possible radioactivity releases, should an accident occur and avoiding early and large radioactivity releases. It also calls for systematic and periodic safety assessments of existing plants, throughout its lifetime, for implementing reasonably practical safety enhancements. These principles are being integrated in the review process of the CNS with immediate effect, with the requirement of reporting on the measures by the individual Contracting Parties and its peer review, from the next CNS Review Meeting in 2017.

This declaration comes on the back of extensive discussions extending over many weeks and months, among the Contracting Parties of the CNS, on the issue of voting on a proposal for change in the text of CNS vis-à-vis a consensus. Right from the time the proposal for amending the text of the CNS was mooted, India has been expressing the view that the CNS processes have enough in-built mechanisms to keep the Convention up to date and contemporary without necessarily going in for any amendment to the text of the Convention. In fact soon after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Extraordinary Meeting of CNS in 2012, AERB has started the work of reviewing the regulatory requirements for the nuclear power plants, in the light of the lessons from the Fukushima accident. The new Codes issued recently by AERB, for 'Siting of Nuclear Facilities' and 'Design of LWR based NPPs' incorporate the requirements arising out of the lessons learned from the Fukushima accident. The regulatory practices of AERB, with the enhanced safety requirements would help enormously in addressing the objectives of the present Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety.

In its [statement to the Diplomatic Conference](#), the Indian Delegation extended its full support to the approval of the Declaration by consensus and highlighted the efforts it has taken to enhance safety of the nuclear power plants in India.