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Director General of the IAEA

First, I would first like to address what happened and what impact the Fukushima Daiichi accident had in the world, as well as what happened afterwards. The Fukushima Daiichi accident was a terrible accident, a very severe accident caused by an earthquake and a tsunami. People around Fukushima Daiichi had to evacuate and the accident has not yet completely ended, even now.

This accident had a very important influence to the world. In my view, it caused damage to confidence in nuclear power. The accident was in Japan, but everyone in the world is worrying about nuclear power. Social acceptance, or confidence, is at its weakest point in nuclear energy. Nevertheless, we have been watching developments since the accident closely. What happened after Fukushima is quite different to what happened after Chernobyl.

I am not so sure if the division is so clear between the developed countries and developing countries. It is true that Germany decided to phase out of nuclear. Italy, Belgium and Switzerland are also making those decisions. However, the other side of the story is that there are other countries, including developed countries like France, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. These have not changed their position that much. China, India, Brazil and Argentina will continue to include nuclear power as an important option.

What is happening now is that there is continuous expansion of nuclear power, but with a slower pace and increased safety. That is what is happening. It is very different to what happened after Chernobyl. Why is this so? It is because the current situation is very different to the situation in the mid-1980s, when Chernobyl happened. Climate change is at the top of the agenda. Fossil fuel is very expensive. Energy is needed everywhere in the world. Nowadays, developing countries like Vietnam, Jordan, the UAE and Turkey hope to join the nuclear-power club. Ironically, this is different to the perception after the accident. The nuclear renaissance has not ended, but slowed down. Nuclear power is still perceived as an important option for power.

Jim HOAGLAND, Associate Editor, Chief Foreign Correspondent of the *Washington Post*

What do national Governments or international organisations such as yours need to do to make sure that we do not have this kind of huge disaster again?

Yukiya AMANO, Director General of the IAEA

This is a very important point. It is different to nuclear non-proliferation. Showing the highest level of nuclear safety is a responsibility for each country. The role of the IAEA is to help them. As I said, every country is varied and an international response is needed. Since the first day of the accident, the IAEA wanted to be at the centre of the international response. I thought I should be at the forefront and I took the initiative.

I went to Japan just after the accident. I visited the Fukushima Daiichi site. We convened a Ministerial meeting and we adopted an action plan and now, the priority is the implementation of the action plan. It is not words, but actions that count. The responsibility lies with each country. However, an international response is needed and the IAEA is now ready to take that responsibility.



Jim HOAGLAND, Associate Editor, Chief Foreign Correspondent of the *Washington Post*

As you were spelling that out, I was thinking that it sounds like somebody talking about the Eurozone. Each country is responsible, but it requires a much more coordinated response. Do you think that what you did in this case is a model for global governance?

Yukiya AMANO, Director General of the IAEA

There are good elements. For example, we have disseminated verified information and that was used as a reference point. We have sent assistance to Japan. We have been successful in agreeing on an action plan to enhance safety, but it does not mean there are not lessons.

We have learned a lot of lessons through this accident. First, it is obvious that the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), and Japan, underestimated the risk of a huge tsunami. We also think that transparency was most needed; in an area which was most damaged, confidence was most needed. In order to recover, an assurance of the highest level of transparency is needed. Also, we have to involve a wide range of stakeholders. It is not only the work of international organisations or countries.

For example, there is an association of operators, called the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO). I participated in a meeting of WANO and proposed concrete ideas to strengthen cooperation. We need to have more cooperation, with a wider range of stakeholders. We need to ensure the highest level of transparency; we need to communicate in a much better way. These are the lessons that we have learned. There are positive elements, but there are a lot of lessons that we have learned and that we should learn.