



NIGERIA ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION (NAEC), ABUJA

(Established by Act 46 of 1976)

COMMUNIQUE OF THE THREE-DAY RETREAT ORGANIZED BY THE NIGERIA ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION ON THE THEME: "ANCHORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAMME ON A SUSTAINABLE PLATFORM" WHICH HELD AT THE SHIRORO HOTEL IN MINNA, NIGER STATE FROM APRIL 9 TO 11, 2008.

A three-day retreat for professionals, academics and researchers from the core stakeholder institutions involved in the implementation of the national nuclear energy programme held in Minna, the Niger State Capital from April 9 to 11, 2008. The retreat was organized under the auspices of the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC), which is the focal national agency with the mandate for the formulation and implementation of the nation's atomic energy programme for the socioeconomic development of the country.

2. The retreat with the theme: "Anchoring the implementation of the National Atomic Energy Programme on a Sustainable Platform", was organized to reappraise the implementation strategy of the national nuclear roadmap, with an emphasis for the timely deployment of nuclear power plants for electricity generation in the country.

3. The retreat was attended by over eighty nuclear scientists and engineers and other professionals from all over the country, particularly, from the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission; the three national nuclear energy research centres based in the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and the Sheda Science and Technology Complex, Abuja; the Energy Commission of Nigeria, and several other national universities and Nigerians in the diaspora. The conference was also blessed with the full participation of several senior academics in the sector, including the septuagenarian and foremost Physicist, Professor Awele Maduemezia.

4. The retreat was opened under the chairmanship of the Special Adviser to the President on Electric Power, Engr. Joseph Makoju. The chairman, in his opening remarks expressed government's commitment to strengthen and properly position the electric power sector to drive Nigeria's industrialization

process. The retreat was declared open by the Governor and Chief Servant of Niger State, Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, who in his remarks reiterated the strong need for Nigeria to diversify her electricity generation base beyond the traditional sources of oil, gas and hydro to include nuclear and the renewable sources of energy, in order to get out from the current energy crisis the country is enmeshed in.

5. In her welcome address, the Honourable Minister of Science and Technology, Chief (Mrs.) Grace Ekpiwhre, restated the commitment of the Federal Government to implement a streamlined nuclear power programme in partnership with the private sector, where government's major focus would be directed at building the requisite manpower and infrastructure base to create an enabling environment for the programme to take roots in the country. Noting that the nuclear power project should be seen as a Strategic National Project, the Honourable Minister further enjoined the participants to be focused in their deliberations so as to position the country to benefit from the fruits of a successful nuclear power programme.

6. The Director-General of the Commission, Dr. F. Erepamo Osaisai, in his vote of thanks, expressed the appreciation of NAEC to the dignitaries who have graced the occasion in colour. He noted the significance of the decision of the Federal Government in activating a programme to deploy nuclear power plants for electricity generation, since it is economically competitive, safe and environmentally friendly, and would play a major role in the long-term energy security of the country.

7. The proceedings of the retreat entailed technical presentations and in-depth sectoral group discussions. Various technical presentations in the broad fields of Reactor Engineering and Reactor Physics; Nuclear Materials and Thermal Hydraulics; Nuclear Physics, Nuclear Chemistry and Nuclear Instrumentation and Applications; Radiation Protection, Nuclear Safety and Nuclear Fuels; as well as Radioactive Waste Management and Nuclear Power Projects Planning and Management, were also made.

8. At the end of the retreat, participants resolved as follows:

- i. Thanked the Federal Government for activating the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission which had been moribund for thirty years, and resuscitating the implementation of the nation's nuclear energy programme for the socio-economic development of the country, particularly, by approving the national nuclear roadmap for the deployment of nuclear power plants for the generation of electricity.
- ii. Acknowledged these positive actions of the Federal Government as a challenge to the small but committed indigenous core of nuclear energy professionals and pledged their commitment and willingness to put in their best to position the country to achieve set objectives.

- iii. Recognized the fact that the building of a critical mass of trained and experienced manpower, as well as the emplacement of basic research infrastructure would be pivotal in laying the foundation for the implementation of the nation's nuclear energy programme in a sustainable manner.
- iv. Expressed sincere appreciation to the Chief Servant of Niger State, Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu, the Government and good people of Niger State for their friendliness and the hospitality extended to the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission for the successful hosting of the retreat.

9. Desirous of moving the process of implementing the national nuclear energy programme forward, and in order to achieve the set objectives of the programme within the specified timeframe of the roadmap, the participants made the following recommendations:

- i. That noting the importance of a highly qualified and committed professional manpower in the implementation of a nuclear power programme, sustainability of the national programme can only be achieved by a strategy which will entail long-term financial commitment by the Federal Government to manpower development and the emplacement of the requisite infrastructure during the gestation period of at least ten years, thereby creating the enabling environment for the successful implementation of the programme.
- ii. That NAEC should design and implement a training programme whereby at least one hundred (100) Nuclear Science and Engineering graduates are trained in the next five years and this number should grow to about 2,000 in fifteen years.
- iii. That NAEC should as a matter of policy, encourage the full participation of Nigerian professionals in the Diaspora in the implementation of the National Nuclear Energy Programme.
- iv. That a realistic database of strategic materials needed as inputs for the design and operation of the nuclear power industry be developed; this would be achieved by liaising with all relevant stakeholder agencies and institutions, as well as carry out a proper national survey of available raw materials (nuclear fuel, chemicals, and other process and structural materials) essential for the successful implementation of the programme.
- v. That functional physical facilities and laboratories in relevant areas of nuclear technology such as nuclear thermal hydraulics, nuclear materials, neutronics and health physics be set up in the nuclear research centres, as specified in the roadmap, so as to develop the needed capacity to effectively participate in the nuclear power industry.

- vi. That opportunities be provided through institutional linkages and bilateral cooperation for the training of suitably qualified and experienced personnel in the various technical and allied fields in the sector to stimulate and increase indigenous participation in the nuclear power industry.
- vii. That in view of the unique and specialized training requirements for professionals in nuclear science and technology, and in order to retain existing staff and attract quality professionals to the sector, it is desirable to create special service conditions, including the provision for a special remuneration package for nuclear scientists and engineers.
- viii. That the successful and sustainable harnessing of nuclear energy for the socio-economic development of Nigeria will be anchored on a culture of nuclear safety, nuclear security and protection of radiation workers, the general public and the environment in conformity with international norms and standards; these being preconditions for the practical applications of nuclear energy. Government is therefore further implored to create the enabling environment for the provision of the requisite infrastructure and take-off of appropriate training programmes in nuclear safety, radiation protection, nuclear fuels and radioactive waste management.
- ix. That public information and consultation are essential components of the process of preparing the citizenry for the introduction of nuclear power, and should therefore be pursued with vigour to ensure public confidence in the national nuclear energy programme.
- x. That NAEC should pursue with vigour its programmes on capacity building in all areas needed to support the introduction of nuclear power plants (NPPs) and in other areas of the application of nuclear technology. This should be based on a combination of approaches such as scholarships, fellowships, research grants and networking with foreign institutions, as well as training and re-training to enhance proficiency.
- xi. That it should be noted that nuclear energy programmes, globally, require high professionalism, maturity, patriotism, and above all commitment and dedication. A national mechanism should therefore be put in place to ensure that all personnel working within the sector are able to give their best and with an unalloyed national loyalty.

**SIGNED:
BY MANAGEMENT**

DATED THIS 11TH DAY OF APRIL, 2008