



**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
Forty-ninth session
Vienna, 7-16 June 2006

Reply of the Secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the letter sent by the secretariat of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space concerning questions identified at the Joint Technical Workshop on the Objectives, Scope and General Attributes of a Potential Technical Safety Framework for Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, held in Vienna from 20 to 22 February 2006

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Joint Technical Workshop on the Objectives, Scope and General Attributes of a Potential Technical Safety Framework for Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space was organized by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna from 20 to 22 February 2006, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/99 of 8 December 2005 and the multi-year workplan endorsed by the Subcommittee at its fortieth session (A/AC.105/804, annex III) and amended at its forty-second session (A/AC.105/848, annex III). The Workshop was held during the forty-third session of the Subcommittee.
2. During the same session of the Subcommittee, its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space agreed that, in accordance with the conclusions contained in the preliminary draft report of the Workshop, the secretariat of the Committee should prepare and submit to IAEA a letter containing a number of questions identified at the Workshop that were contained in the preliminary draft report of the Workshop (A/AC.105/869, annex III, appendix, para. 6 (d)).
3. Pursuant to that request, the secretariat of the Committee sent, on 10 March 2006, a letter to the Secretariat of IAEA concerning the questions identified at the Workshop.



4. On 21 April 2006, the Secretariat of IAEA sent a reply to the secretariat of the Committee. With respect to the specific questions raised by the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, the Secretariat of IAEA informed the secretariat of the Committee that:

(a) In accordance with its Statute,¹ IAEA would be pleased to cooperate with the Committee in the development and support of a safety framework for nuclear power sources in outer space. To that end, the Agency was prepared to assign staff from its Secretariat to participate in such activities, in particular to join technical meetings and working groups that the Committee might wish to establish;

(b) IAEA might, in addition, provide independent peer review services. In that event, IAEA would convene a team of international experts and provide a team leader from its Secretariat. The cost of such review would, however, need to be borne by the Committee;

(c) In relation to the formulation of nuclear safety standards, the current vision and strategy approved by the IAEA Board of Governors in March 2004 did not include nuclear power sources in outer space. That matter would however be brought to the attention of the Commission on Safety Standards at its nineteenth meeting, to be held in Vienna on 6 and 7 June 2006.

5. Further to the foregoing, the Secretariat of IAEA would suggest that the focus be on elaborating a technical safety framework for nuclear power sources in outer space prior to establishing the specific safety standard to be associated therewith. In that connection, it was noted that the human and financial resources necessary for the development of safety standards for nuclear power sources in outer space were not currently envisaged and therefore would need to be secured possibly by extrabudgetary contributions from Member States. Such modalities could be discussed in the near future.

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 276, No. 3988.