

Mr. Chair, excellences, dear colleagues,

Norway would like to thank the Secretariat for its efforts, and the Bureau, the Working Group and the Implementation Committee for its important work under the Convention and Protocol. Special thanks to the Secretariat and Co-Chairs of the Ad-Hoc group for maintaining the focus on producing guidelines for the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants, utilizing numerous internet meetings during these trying times.

We believe that it is important that the Meeting of the Parties keep in mind that the Espoo Convention and its protocol are environmental instruments. Assessing possible impacts on the environment is important for sustainable economic development.

Such assessments also constitute an important democratic tool, playing an essential part in improving international cooperation. Through open participatory processes, relevant information is brought to the fore and conflicting views may have a better chance at being reconciled.

Many negative side effects of development projects do not stop at national borders: The importance of these assessments in avoiding or solving transboundary environmental issues between neighboring states must therefore not be underestimated. The Espoo Convention and its Protocol are crucial elements in this respect

The Fukushima accident has shown us again that a severe nuclear accident anywhere in the world, including Europe, cannot be completely excluded. LifeTime Extensions (LTE) of nuclear power plants increase risk by extending the duration of operation in an aging facility and therefore the possibility of significant adverse transboundary impacts. Environmental Impact Assessments when considering an LTE would help minimize this risk.

Norway takes this opportunity also to highlight the work done by the Implementation Committee. The Committee strives for the continued adherence to the obligations of the Convention by the Parties. We encourage the Parties to engage and respect the outcomes from the Implementation Committee in line with long-standing and consistent practice.

Thank you very much.