

VIII Current international situation

As previously mentioned, 115 countries have acceded to the NPT and the major nuclear suppliers have agreed to certain minimum guidelines governing their nuclear exports. Furthermore, significant resources have been made available to improve the operation of the IAEA's safeguards system. However, there continues to be a general acknowledgment that the current non-proliferation régime is not without its faults and weaknesses. Improvements are necessary and several recent international discussions have focused on this objective. These include:

1) The International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE)

INFCE was an international technical evaluation carried out between October 1977 and February 1980. The evaluation, in which 46 countries and five international organizations participated and which resulted in eight Working Group Reports and a Summary and Overview Report totalling 1 600 pages, was not a political negotiation (no treaty or agreed upon arrangements could be formulated in INFCE) and its results or findings were merely to be transmitted to governments for their consideration. Three basic elements provided the focus for the study. The participants:

“were conscious of the urgent need to meet the world's energy requirements and that nuclear energy for peaceful purposes should be made widely available to that end;
were convinced that effective measures can and should be taken at the national level and through international agreements to minimize the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons without jeopardizing energy supplies or the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes;
recognized that special consideration should also be given to the specific needs of and conditions in developing countries”.

In the end, INFCE recognized the general principle that assurances of supply and assurances of non-proliferation are complementary and identified nine “fundamental matters the relevance, importance and acceptability of which should be considered” in common approaches to