

safety measures and to review their national reports at a meeting of all signatories. Preparations are under way for the first review meeting in April 1999.

Fissile materials for weapons

Experts met in October 1996 to examine how to safely and effectively manage fissile materials no longer required for defence purposes. They concluded that using the material in reactors was the most promising way of making weapons-grade plutonium inaccessible for reuse in nuclear weapons. Immobilizing the plutonium in glass or ceramic logs with high-level radioactive waste was also seen as an option for some countries.

Once plutonium is converted to a mixed-oxide (MOX) fuel and then consumed in a reactor, it is of too low a quality to be used in nuclear weapons. France, Germany and Russia are collaborating on a project for the construction of a MOX fuel fabrication plant in Russia using French technology and German equipment. Canada and Russia, in collaboration with France and Germany, are investigating ways of adapting this plant design to produce MOX fuel for both Russian VVER and Canadian CANDU reactors.

The safety, security, cost and technical feasibility of the various options will be studied over the next two years, with the intention of then committing facilities for the start of surplus weapons-grade plutonium disposition early in the next decade.

Nuclear liability

At the 1996 Moscow nuclear safety summit, participants agreed that all countries with nuclear installations should have an effective liability regime to assure adequate compensation to victims of, and for damage caused by, nuclear accidents. Canada's regime is being reviewed to ensure that it meets, or exceeds, the most recent internationally accepted norms. It was also agreed to improve the international regime by negotiating amendments to the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and a supplementary funding convention which would include a mechanism to supplement national compensation funding. Canada contributed positively to the successful conclusion of these negotiations and is considering its participation in one, or both, of these new instruments.