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nuclear program, carefully planned, adequately staffed and efficiently operated, could now bring within reach of many countries the possibility of longer-term energy security and, with advances in resource development and reactor technology, an increased degree of energy independence.

The Agency, through its various programs, has a vital role to play in this expansion of nuclear power. One of its most important activities this year will be its study of the desirability and the technical and economic feasibility of regional fuel-cycle centres, a move Canada endorses wholeheartedly. Urgent study is needed of such possibilities in order to make the most effective use of scarce resources. The joint efforts of groups of countries to cooperate to this end could be a breakthrough in the wider introduction of nuclear power for development. Canada shares the views expressed by other countries as to the role which regional fuel-cycle centres might play in lessening the danger of proliferation of nuclear-explosive devices by limiting the number of facilities producing fissile material.

It is equally clear that the Agency is also the organization to which all nuclear-program operators must look for help in the definition of common standards of safety and environmental protection. Canada fully supports the Agency's continuing program to develop safety codes and guides. Canada is an active participant in the Agency's work in the area of radioactive-waste management, reflecting our national policy to store wastes at land-based sites in retrievable form rather than attempting to "dispose" of such materials, while recognizing at the same time that such solutions may not be possible for all countries.

One of the most controversial and fundamental issues facing the Agency concerns the environmental implications of nuclear power. In keeping with the high standards of scientific objectivity and responsibility to the international community that we have always been able to take for granted in the case of the Agency, it should continue to do its best to ensure that a comparative examination of the environmental impact of the various alternative energy sources is pursued on the highest scientific plane possible. We welcome most heartily the co-operation of the IAEA and the WHO (World Health Organization) in a study aimed at a quantitative evaluation of effects of all available options for energy production. We agree with the Director-General's remarks that it will be more useful if environmental implications of nuclear energy are examined in the context of other available energy options, and welcome his willingness to seize the opportunity for the Agency to play a most useful role towards this end in its co-operation