

IAEA says nuclear power to remain key energy source

New Projections from the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency show that nuclear power will remain a key energy source in the coming decades, with over two dozen new reactors now under construction globally. A new report from the IAEA projects an average growth rate of up to 2.5 per cent by 2030. “Our job is not so much to predict the future but to prepare for it,” says IAEA nuclear analyst Alan McDonald. “To that end we update each year a high and low projection to establish the range of uncertainty we ought to be prepared for,” he adds. The report documents 435 operating nuclear reactors around the world, including 103 in the United States alone. Globally, 29 more are under construction. The US has the most operating units, followed by France with 59, Japan with 55, and the Russian Federation with 31. Of the 30 countries with nuclear power, the percentage of electricity supplied by nuclear ranged from a high of 78 per cent in France to just two per cent in China. But the report notes that China is experiencing “huge energy growth and is trying to expand every source it can, including nuclear power”. With four reactors under construction, China plans a nearly five-fold expansion by just 2020. Nuclear power’s share of worldwide electricity production rose from less than one per cent in 1960 to 16 per cent in 1986, and that percentage has held essentially constant in the 21 years since 1986, according to the IAEA. Nuclear electricity generation has grown steadily at the same pace as overall global electricity generation. At the close of 2006, nuclear provided about 15 per cent of total electricity worldwide.

[Source: esaa]