

Possible evolution of the CEG in future

(Discussion paper for the CEG Plenary Meeting in Paris)

The Contact Expert Group (CEG) for International Radwaste Projects in the Russian Federation was established under the auspices of the IAEA in 1996 to actively promote international cooperation and assistance in the field of resolving problems caused by radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel left as a Cold War legacy. The Global Partnership Programme Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction launched at the G-8 Summit in 2002, which was later joined by a number of other states, has given a new impetus to nuclear assistance programmes in the Russian Federation. Since then significant part of CEG activities has been carried out in the framework of the Global Partnership Programme.

Addressing the key priority areas of the Global Partnership Programme and other programmes, CEG has proved to be a useful tool for information exchange, facilitation of joint projects and informal coordination of nuclear legacy programmes in Russia.

After successful completion of the first half of the GP programme some countries have already started thinking about its evolution after 2012. Such evolution requires early consultations and analysis, and, therefore, discussions on that subject have already started. Specific proposals as for the evolution of GP are expected at the G8 summit in 2010.

With the view of a possible evolution of the Global Partnership it is obviously expedient to think about the value of a gradual evolution of CEG to address new realities and new tasks. The CEG has proven to be an efficient instrument of international cooperation and it would be unwise to disband it when the current objectives of the GP programme are achieved if it has potential to be an effective instrument for wider coordination and information sharing with respect to nuclear safety, security and non proliferation issues.

These suggestions by no means should be regarded as deviation of resources from the existing Global Partnership programmes which are to be implemented according to the pledges taken by the Global Partnership parties.

Over the last few years Russia has been increasingly assuming the role of not only a recipient but an equal partner in addressing nuclear legacy problems. This would certainly mean that it is now capable of utilising its substantial technical expertise to assist other countries to address successfully their own nuclear legacy issues, and also making annual financial contribution to CEG as an equal member.

Experience and lessons learned accumulated by CEG members will be of use to other aid recipients and donors working together in the frames of the Global Partnership. Therefore, it might be useful to identify areas of cooperation in other countries, first of all in the republics of the former Soviet Union, to which the working methods of the CEG could be usefully applied, and then to invite the corresponding aid recipients to CEG meetings and workshops.

Assuming that the global threats entailed by the nuclear legacy are relevant to Russia as well as to other Global Partnership donors and taking into account growing capabilities of Russia, the latter will also be encouraged to address these threats internationally and assist countries which are less capable of solving the problems of nuclear legacy. Therefore, CEG may gradually incorporate the issues of assistance to the republics of former Soviet Union and, possibly, other countries.

Some CEG members suggested that it is also expedient to discuss the possibility of widening the scope of CEG activities in the frames of assistance programmes to the issues beyond the nuclear legacy that would be of interest to all CEG members for further development of their long term nuclear programmes. The first step in this direction could be a workshop on long term disposal of HLRW in

Sweden where experience of Sweden, US, Finland, Russia, France and other countries could be discussed. The scope of CEG will be ideal for such discussion.

We suggest that CEG members discuss the above issues at the Plenary Meeting in Paris and, if they agree, corresponding changes could be introduced in the CEG Terms of Reference.