



IAEA BULLETIN

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High Hopes... with Expectations

2006 opened with the world looking to the IAEA and its governing board for action. The issue was Iran's nuclear programme and the international inspection of it.

While the issue's twists and turns have engaged the IAEA for some time, the new year ushered in a higher sense of urgency in the high-stakes diplomacy.

IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei put it squarely in a global magazine interview: "If I say that I am not able to confirm the peaceful nature of the programme after three years of intensive work, that's a conclusion that's going to reverberate, I think, around the world."

Few would argue that his message carries more weight today than it would have a year ago—before Dr. ElBaradei and the IAEA teamed to become the world's 2005 recipients of the coveted Nobel Peace Prize. The Prize strengthens the IAEA's hand, and adds timbre to its voice as a trusted international authority in the public eye.

This edition's special coverage of the Nobel ceremony in Oslo captures much of that recharged hope and spirit, and the rising expectations for carrying the public trust. "There is nobody else" to lead the global fight against nuclear proliferation, the Chairman of the Nobel Committee said that day.

We hunger for heroes, and the IAEA and its leader have been named ones.

Rising expectations steer the Agency's day-to-day business in many ways where stakes run high. Witness the work featured in this edition to help countries raise levels of nuclear and radiation safety. From Asia to Africa and Europe to Latin America, experts see steady and commendable progress—but the goals demand a path of constant vigilance and close cooperation.

Not long after the Oslo ceremonies, a report from Venezuela centred on a case of missing radioactive material, this time a radioactive source used in instruments for oil drilling. Authorities suspected theft and quickly moved on the trail of recovery. The source was recovered, fortunately still shielded, in the back of a stolen truck.

Venezuela is one of 91 countries participating in the IAEA's global project to strengthen capabilities for nuclear and radiation safety.

—Lothar Wedekind, Editor-in-Chief