

Nuclear Prevention Is Better Than the Cure

Dialogue Crucial to Best Practices in Environmental Remediation, Decommissioning

Countries embarking on a nuclear programme or activity should consider the decommissioning of a nuclear facility and remediation of the environment even before laying the first stone. This was the message emerging from an expert meeting on decommissioning and environmental remediation held today at the *54th IAEA General Conference*.

With hundreds of aging and out-of-use nuclear facilities undergoing decommissioning and contaminated sites to be remediated throughout the world, the importance of dealing with the so called "legacy issues" and ensuring that those building new facilities can avoid a repeat of previous mistakes is a priority for the nuclear community.

The IAEA is in a unique position to facilitate dialogue and the sharing of experience among operators and regulators from across the world.

"We want people to share what they have learned with each other and especially with those tackling these problems for the first time," said Tero Varjoranta, the IAEA's Director of Nuclear Fuel Cycle and Waste Technology.

Networking is an important aspect of bringing remediation and decommissioning considerations forward as it can provide a unique opportunity for the sharing and exchange of information and experience from a global perspective. Comparing information and experiences often lead to finding the most efficient answer to an issue.

The IAEA's Environmental Management and Remediation Network (ENVIRONET) and International Decommissioning Network (IDN) have already been successful in engaging several hundred professionals in more than 70 Member State organizations in this exchange of experience and know-how, complementing other IAEA efforts to actively support several decommissioning and environmental remediation programmes in Member States.

"Through its technical cooperation programmes, the IAEA supports decommissioning projects in a number of countries," indicated Ana María Cetto, IAEA Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Technical Cooperation.

Given the widespread nature of the issue, Member States representatives to the *54th IAEA General Conference* are currently considering an international action plan for decommissioning and remediation in which the IAEA networks could play a key role.

-- *By Giovanni Verlini, IAEA Division of Public Information*
