

Look Before You Leap

INSAG Urges Nuclear Newcomers to Prioritize Safety

Safety in the nuclear power industry must be a continuous aspiration and should be a top priority for those countries that are considering introducing nuclear power in their energy mix.

This was the principal message delivered during this year's International Safety Advisory Group (INSAG) Forum held during the IAEA's *54th General Conference*.

INSAG experts called on newcomer countries to give sufficient thought to the amount of effort that must be invested in safety before going ahead with constructing their first nuclear power plant.

In INSAG's Assessment Letter to the IAEA Director General, Chairperson Richard Meserve said, "The creation of a culture that enables the achievement of safety takes persistence, commitment and very hard work and needs to start at the moment that a decision is made to embark on a nuclear power program and endure throughout a power plant's life. It is expensive. And it involves an attention to detail and a willingness to accept and learn from intrusive peer review by others.

"The nature and scope of this challenge may not be fully apparent to those who have not previously been involved in the nuclear enterprise."

Between 10 and 25 new countries are expected to bring their first nuclear power plants on line by 2030. A first power reactor is under construction in Iran, while contractual relationships with vendors are advancing in Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Concentrated efforts to introduce nuclear power are underway in Belarus, Chile, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Poland and Vietnam.

INSAG experts attending the forum also spoke of the need for newcomers and countries seeking to expand their nuclear power programmes to focus on engendering a culture where safety is paramount among power plant operators, staff and government regulators.

This year's Forum focused on *Responsibility for Safety in a Globalized Nuclear Environment*.

Background

Each year, INSAG issues a letter to the IAEA Director General on current nuclear safety issues.

INSAG includes high-level officials from 15 countries and organizations. The group is composed of experts with high professional competence in the field of safety working in regulatory organizations, research and academic institutions and the nuclear industry.

It is convened under the auspices of the IAEA with the objective to provide authoritative advice and guidance on nuclear safety approaches, policies and principles for nuclear installations. In particular, INSAG provides recommendations and opinions on current and emerging nuclear safety issues to the IAEA, the nuclear community and the public.

-- By Sasha Henriques, IAEA Division of Public Information
