

Pakistan's national Centre of Excellence contributes to sustaining nuclear security

By Aabha Dixit

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— Muhammad Anwar Habib,
Chairman, Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory
Authority

Pakistani front line officers and first responders are in a better position to fight illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials, as well as to use advanced radiation detection and monitoring equipment, thanks to training they have received at the country’s Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security. This is just one of the benefits the country has reaped from the Centre, which is collaborating with the growing International Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres (NSSC Network), building national capacity through training and strengthening technical and scientific support programmes.

Since the establishment of the Centre of Excellence, Pakistan has organized training courses on nuclear security for personnel from national and regional organizations. The Centre of Excellence also offers technical support to personnel involved in the maintenance and upgrade of facilities, with a focus on enhancing technical and scientific skills and quality control of equipment.

With an integrated capacity building programme in place, Pakistan can now offer its training facilities to other countries for capacity building in physical protection of nuclear power plants and nuclear security, said Muhammad Anwar Habib, Chairman of the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority,

adding that a new Physical Protection Exterior Laboratory was established in April this year.

Specific training enhances security

Pakistan has used its Centre of Excellence to promote and share best practices in nuclear security through three affiliated institutes: the Pakistan Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security (PCENS), the National Institute of Safety and Security (NISAS), and the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS).

The PCENS offers training in nuclear security and response, while NISAS conducts specialized courses to provide comprehensive training for effective regulatory operations. In addition, PIEAS conducts academic courses at the master’s level in nuclear security. Academic courses in this field will prepare the next generation of young engineers and scientists to take up nuclear security responsibilities, Habib said.

“Pakistan’s Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security will offer cutting edge education and training in nuclear security and contribute to the work of the International Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres,” he added.

What is the NSSC Network?

The NSSC (‘Nuclear Security Support Centre’) concept, developed by the IAEA, is a means to strengthen the sustainability of nuclear security in countries, and has the following objectives:

1. to develop human resources through the implementation of tailor-made training programmes;
2. to establish a network of experts; and
3. to offer technical support for equipment management and scientific support for the prevention and detection of, and response to, nuclear security events.

The NSSC Network was established in 2012 in response to the international community’s growing focus on nuclear security. It fosters nuclear security culture and enhances coordination and collaboration among States that have established, or are interested in establishing, an NSSC.

“The NSSC Network has become an established community of practice for Member States and the IAEA to exchange information, identify best practices, and deepen cooperation on the development of such centres,” said Juan Carlos Lentijo, Deputy Director General and Head of the IAEA Department of Nuclear Safety and Security.