

nuclear science and technology,” said Safyyah binti Muhammad Nasir, one of the three Malaysian students on the winning team. “But after familiarizing themselves with basic elements of nuclear applications, 96% of respondents had a positive perception of both nuclear energy and science.”

The student competition, held in conjunction with the four-day conference, was aimed at fostering interest in nuclear science and technology among secondary school students and was open to participants worldwide. Students aged 14-18 were assigned the task of promoting discussion and awareness of the current and future impact of nuclear science and technology.

Five finalist teams, one each from Hungary, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea and the United States of America, designed and implemented the most innovative projects and won a trip to Gyeongju to present them at the IAEA conference.

Wan Mod Shatar, the teacher overseeing the team at SMK Kuala Besut secondary school, emphasized:

“It is important to note that our students are from a fishing village in Malaysia, where knowledge about nuclear science is limited. Through this competition, they not only had to interact with the community, but have also started exploring a new scientific field.”

Criteria for initial selection included accuracy, innovativeness, potential impact and gender balance.

“When we first learned about the IAEA International Student Competition, we knew that this was a great opportunity to learn more about the nuclear industry and underline our passion for a world with safe nuclear energy,” said Andrew King, Vice-Principal of Alliance Dr. Olga Mohan High School, USA, which sent one of the finalist teams. The students from the high school found that the image of nuclear energy among students was clouded by fear over nuclear weapons and that greater industry outreach was needed to inform students of careers in the nuclear sector.

With the closing of the conference, Yves Bréchet, High Commissioner

of the Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission, France, underlined that, from primary school to doctoral programmes, all levels of education are crucial for the future of nuclear energy. In fact, all contemporary issues faced by the nuclear industry have their place in education and training:

- increasing public acceptance of nuclear power requires education of the general public and raises the importance of a scientific education for everybody;
- the need to increase efficiency and safety must mobilize a new generation of engineers more familiar with computer simulation and data analysis; and
- developing innovation will require engineering science, long-term projects and academics from various fields.

The conference attracted over 520 participants and observers from 51 countries and five organizations.

— *By Shant Krikorian*

## IAEA launches Nuclear Energy Capacity Building Hub

The IAEA has launched a new digital platform focusing on workforce planning, leadership, training, stakeholder involvement and human performance to support countries operating nuclear power plants and those considering or developing new nuclear power programmes. The Nuclear Energy Capacity Building Hub allows registered users to join proactive communities of practice for information sharing, capacity building and networking.

Experts can join communities of practice for each topic, provide feedback on IAEA draft publications, explore IAEA e-learning tools, connect to other relevant webpages, browse IAEA publications and access documents from past meetings.

“The Hub offers a unique interactive online space for specialists working in the nuclear field,” said Lotta Halt, a training specialist for nuclear power at the IAEA. “It will serve as the IAEA’s one-stop-shop for information and discussion on topics related to human resource development and stakeholder involvement for nuclear power programmes.”

The Hub was introduced at the Third International Conference on Human Resource Development for Nuclear Power Programmes, which took place in Gyeongju, South Korea, on 28–31 May 2018.

The development of the Hub follows requests from Member States for modernization of the way nuclear

professionals communicate. Its goal is to enable faster and more collaborative forums.

To register and participate, please contact [HRD.Contact-Point@iaea.org](mailto:HRD.Contact-Point@iaea.org).

— *By Lisa Berthelot*