

News from INIS

Information and Nuclear Newcomer States

The world we live in today is characterized as a world of crises. Already present food and poverty crises are now supplemented by global environmental, energy and financial crises. All efforts to foster world development and make it sustainable are impacted. The most influential minds and institutions around the world are trying to take us out of this social, economic and political condition of instability and danger, but there is still a long way to go.

Availability of energy resources is in direct correlation to human well being and development prospects of any nation. Lack of energy and its cost are prohibiting factors for all nations, but particularly for developing countries. In his statement to the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting on the global energy crisis in 2008, Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, pointed out that “nuclear energy looks certain to play a larger role in the future energy mix of the developing world. Of the 35 new reactors currently under construction, 17 are in developing countries”.

This increased interest in using nuclear energy by developing countries is understandable. The nuclear power newcomer states see nuclear energy and nuclear power plants as large-scale and reliable power suppliers for large cities and their much needed industry infrastructure. Nuclear power emits almost no greenhouse gases and is therefore environmentally friendly, one of several major concerns for newcomer states. Sufficient uranium resources are available and expectations of a nuclear renaissance have prompted new uranium exploration. Furthermore, the cost of energy generated through nuclear plants has become more financially affordable while safety and reliability of the plants themselves have increased.

Greater interest from newcomer states has also strengthened the demand for reliable and speedy information on various aspects of nuclear energy and related implementation programs. Depending on the stage of development of their national infrastructure for nuclear power, information requirements of newcomer states vary. Users might be looking for information on economic and planning aspects, safety and security concerns, non-proliferation and other legal requirements, very technical and operational instructions, wider social impact or human resource constraints and development. The level of users' knowledge of information retrieval and use can also vary from inexperienced to very sophisticated. Users' information retrieval path usually starts with Google, but, frustrated with the information glut, they quickly turn to locally available resources such as libraries or information and documentation centres. Reference questions and requests for information are as wide as their

subject interests and information proficiency levels. This places considerable stress on the capabilities of locally available information specialists. Although willing to help, these may be frequently limited by their own experience and the information collections at hand.

So what is the role of the International Nuclear Information System (INIS) in this setting of heightened interest in nuclear energy and how can it assist newcomer states in obtaining much needed information?

INIS was established almost forty years ago in response to the IAEA's mandate to foster the exchange of scientific and technical information on peaceful uses of atomic energy. During all these years, INIS has been successfully fulfilling its mission by:

- creating a reservoir of nuclear information for current and future generations,
- providing quality nuclear information services to Member States, and
- assisting with the development of a culture of information and knowledge sharing.

INIS continues to play an important role in nuclear information management and knowledge preservation by processing most of the world's scientific and technical literature on a wide range of subjects from nuclear engineering, safeguards and non-proliferation to applications in agriculture and health. During this period, INIS has moved from a bibliographic database to a full text searchable resource. The number of full text documents in INIS accessible directly via the Web is currently 250 000, while the total number of bibliographic records exceeds 3 million. At present, INIS members total 142 (119 countries and 23 international organizations) and INIS still remains a main source of nuclear information for many IAEA Member States.

Providing open access to full-text non conventional literature (NCL) as requested by Member States was an important enhancement to the INIS Database. This ongoing project has as its objective to completely open the INIS Database and its full-text documents to all Member States. Endorsed by the 34th Consultative Meeting of INIS Liaison Officers held in November 2008, this project represents one of the main INIS development directions towards newcomer states.

INIS has continued its efforts to expand free access to its Database for universities. At the end of 2008, a total of 387 universities in 66 Member States were granted free access to the INIS bibliographic and full-text documentation via the Internet.

Information capacity building of newcomer States to nuclear energy is another important activity which includes training, assistance and feedback to a number of INIS centres, as well as improvement of all aspects of their INIS operation capabilities. In addition, the International Nuclear Libraries Network (INLN), coordinated by the IAEA Library, focuses in particular on the information needs of newcomer States by providing an international, not-for-profit forum for the exchange of best practices and lessons learned, creating the opportunity for networking and collaboration across organizations.

Information has always been considered, and has been proven to be, a very powerful tool. Comprehensive, well structured and organized, timely and easily accessible information definitely has its role as part of a reply to the increased interest in nuclear energy and in the easing of at least one of the current world crisis – the energy crisis.

Contact: Mr. Dobrica Savić

Introducing Mr. Dobrica Savić

Mr. Dobrica Savić joined the IAEA as Head of INIS on 1 November 2008. He has over 28 years of experience in various information management positions, 23 of which within the United Nations System (ICAO, UNESCO, World Bank, UNV). In his previous position at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in Montreal, Canada, he was Chief of the Web and Documentation Management Section. His responsibilities included Web development, sales of electronic publications, CD-ROM production, records management, library and archives. He was also ICAO's Coordinator for Language Services (translation, interpretation, terminology and document control). During his time as a UNESCO expert, Mr. Savić worked in Africa establishing various government information and documentation centres.



34th INIS Liaison Officers Meeting



Ms. Hahn-Weinert addressing participants during the 2008 ILO Meeting held in Vienna (Photo. T. Kalapurackal, IAEA).

The 34th Consultative Meeting of INIS Liaison Officers was held at the IAEA Headquarters in Vienna, Austria from 3-5 November 2008. Sixty-four Liaison Officers and representatives from 57 Member States and 3 international organizations got together to discuss the past two years' achievements as well as the challenges ahead. Liaison Officers participated actively; some chairing individual sessions, others giving presentations and many participating in the discussions. The 3 day long series of sessions, regional meetings and workshops focused on topics ranging from the strategic vision for INIS to Database content, technical developments, user needs and marketing.

The new information environment - advanced technology, global telecommunication infrastructure (e.g. the Internet), new information holders and providers, the need to meet new levels of requests from users, the pos-

sibility of integrating different types of information - permeated the discussions, encouraging strategic thinking on how INIS may steer towards the information needs of future generations and best fulfil its role as a modern nuclear information system. Discussions also centred on enhancements to the INIS Database, open access to nuclear information and INIS Database usage analysis.

A special session addressed to newcomers was held one day prior to the start of the consultative meeting. Over 20 participants attended and actively participated in this Introductory Session, which included discussions on the role of the INIS centres and that of the INIS Secretariat. This session was followed by three parallel regional meetings: the *Regional Meeting for Arab Speaking Countries*, the *Regional Meeting for Former USSR Countries* and the *Regional Meeting for Latin American and Caribbean Countries*.

During the consultative meeting, four side events took place; a workshop on Computer Assisted Indexing (CAI), a session on Digital Preservation, an International Nuclear Library Network (INLN) session and a session with representatives of countries considering/starting national nuclear programmes.

Highlights of the meeting included reinforcing the importance of accelerating the transfer of traditional information resources to a digital world. The *INIS Database on the Internet: Open Access Pilot Project* was fully endorsed by the Liaison Officers with a final objective of completely opening the INIS Database and its full-text documents to all Member States.