

3RD ASIA-EUROPE MEETING (ASEM) SEMINAR ON NUCLEAR SAFETY

“Initiatives for Enhancing Cooperation between European and Asian Countries for Strengthening Nuclear Safety”

1. The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant (NPP) accident in March 2011 triggered a fundamental re-evaluation about the safety and merits of nuclear power as an energy source.
2. The potential trans-boundary impacts of nuclear accidents are amplified by the increased interconnectedness of people, goods and services as a result of globalisation.
3. Singapore put in place contingency plans to reassure our population of the well-being of their fellow citizens residing in Japan and alleviate concerns about the safety of food imports and other imported contamination, with two main objectives:
 - a. **how to mitigate the impact of the accident**
 - b. **protect our people.**
4. As potential effects of nuclear accidents cannot be confined only to the accident site, it is imperative for stronger international cooperation to establish and sustain a robust global nuclear safety framework.
5. IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety approved by the IAEA Board of Governors on 13 September 2011 and endorsed by the IAEA General Conference during 55th Regular Session, which focuses on twelve main points:
 - a. **safety assessments;**
 - b. **IAEA peer reviews;**
 - c. **emergency preparedness and response;**
 - d. **national regulatory bodies;**

- e. IAEA Safety Standards;
- f. the international legal framework;
- g. capacity building;
- h. protection of people and the environment from ionising radiation;
- i. communication and information dissemination;
- j. Research and development.

6. Nuclear safety must go beyond merely improving the inherent safety of nuclear power plant design. It must also encompass operational safety, underpinned by a strong nuclear safety culture, and be supported by robust Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) plans at regional, national and international levels.

7. Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety voted to convene a Diplomatic Conference on amendments to strengthen the Convention proposed by Switzerland at the 6th Review Meeting in March/April 2014 to ensure that the design and construction of nuclear power plants, operational processes and accident response plans adhere to high safety standards.

8. In July this year, the EU amended its 2009 Nuclear Safety Directive to:

- a. strengthen the powers and independence of national regulatory authorities;
- b. set up a European system of peer reviews; and
- c. Ensure that nuclear installations are designed, sited, constructed, commissioned, operated and decommissioned with the objective of preventing accidents and, should an accident occur, mitigating its consequences and avoiding radioactive releases.

9. Deployment of nuclear energy is expected to grow significantly over the next two decades in Asia, with over 60 new nuclear power plants under construction in over a dozen countries.
10. China, India, Japan, and South Korea reviewed the safety of their nuclear power plants. More stringent safety standards have been applied after the reassessment of several of these plants.
11. ASEAN recognises the need for a more focused and coordinated strategy to deal with common interests, such as developing capability in important areas like EPR.
12. In September 2013 the ten ASEAN Member States agreed to establish the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy, or ASEANTOM.
13. ASEANTOM is a network of national nuclear regulators which aims to:
 - a. **share best practices and exchange experiences** in regulating nuclear and radioactive materials and related activities;
 - b. **build capacity in human resources development** through training courses and technical collaboration;
 - c. **improve regional cooperation** in the areas of **nuclear emergency preparedness and response; environmental radiation monitoring; and nuclear security;**
 - d. **as a confidence building measure** to facilitate the mutual exchange of information on nuclear activities in each country.
14. Since its establishment, ASEANTOM has held two meetings with EURATOM to:
 - a. better understand EURATOM's structure and operational framework;

- b. update EURATOM colleagues on the formation of ASEANTOM and its Workplan for 2014/2015, and
- c. Explore possible areas of collaboration.

15. One of the key areas of discussion was the possibility of the EC JRC providing information on the EC Urgent Radiological Information Exchange (ECURIE) and European Radiological Data Exchange Platform (EURDEP) systems.
16. Information exchanges allow countries in ASEAN region to draw on the well-established expertise and experience of EU colleagues to help raise standards and facilitate regional cooperation in strengthening nuclear safety.
17. Another important example of cross-regional cooperation is the study to assess the feasibility of establishing a regional framework for Emergency Preparedness and Response in ASEAN, which is supported by the EC.
18. Six participating ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam) agreed to the Terms of Reference for the study in Brussels in August 2014. The feasibility study is expected to be completed by the end of 2015.
19. Enhancing nuclear safety has to be a global, collaborative effort. Continued and sustained international cooperation, such as that enjoyed between Europe and Asia, is important in rebuilding trust in nuclear energy.