

# **Norwegian Working Paper**

## **Enhancing nuclear and radiological emergency preparedness and response**

### **Introduction**

In spite of all our efforts to prevent accidents and incidents, they still occur. It is today widely recognised that nuclear and radiological emergencies easily become international emergencies that may directly or indirectly impact multiple states and require response from the authorities in these states. Adequate response requires information and sufficient resources to carry out necessary actions. This requires international co-operation.

After the disaster in Chernobyl in 1986, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency were established to provide a legal basis for improved international co-operation in response to nuclear and radiological emergencies. These conventions have now been acceded by approximately 100 states and international organisations.

However, we recognise that these conventions are somewhat outdated, that they have not yet been fully implemented and that additional work needs to be done in order to provide an adequate basis for a well functioning international co-operation and enhanced national response capabilities.

Norway was one of the initiators behind the **International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies, 2004-2009** that was approved by the IAEA Board of Governors in 2004. More than 130 experts from more than 40 Member states and international organizations contributed to the work resulting in a number of conclusions and recommendations for the way forward, in order to establish a better and more sustainable framework for international nuclear and radiological emergency preparedness and response.

Our experience after the Fukushima accident confirms that it is necessary to further enhance the co-operation among states and international organizations to perform better. The outcome of the above mentioned Action Plan provides an excellent basis for our future work.

### **Proposals**

Norway welcomes the initiative by this Ministerial Conference to develop an Action Plan covering all relevant aspects relating to nuclear safety, emergency preparedness and response and radiation protection of people and the environment as well as the relevant legal framework. We believe that such an overarching plan for states and international organisations is needed to ensure a coordinated, efficient and sustainable development both in the short and long term.

In the area of nuclear and radiological emergency preparedness and response we propose the following elements to be considered as part of the Action Plan:

- The Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident should be reviewed and brought in line with today's needs and requirements, including:

- provision of mechanisms enabling the State Parties to meet on a regular basis to ensure a timely implementation of the convention
  - lowering of the threshold for notification.
- Likewise, the Convention on Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency should be reviewed and brought in line with today's needs and requirements, including:
- provision of mechanisms enabling the State Parties to meet on a regular basis to ensure a timely implementation of the convention
  - establishment of an improved funding mechanism for international assistance where prompt response is required.
- The conclusions and recommendations from the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies, 2004-2009, need to be followed up and built upon when the IAEA Director General develops a new Action Plan. From the previous Action Plan we especially emphasise the importance of
- establishment of a Senior Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy Group supporting the IAEA Secretariat to ensure a coordinated, effective, harmonized and sustainable international emergency preparedness and response system
  - continuing development of the necessary compatibility requirements for international assistance, including the Response and Assistance Network (RANET).

### **Conclusion**

We support the development of an Action Plan that covers nuclear and radiological preparedness and response. In this regard the new Action Plan should build on past efforts to strengthen international co-operation, including important elements of the 2004-2009 Action Plan. We look forward to close co-operation with the IAEA Secretariat, other Member States and other international organisations in order to develop this plan.

We propose that the Assistance and Early Notification conventions be reviewed with a view to establish a better and more sustainable legal framework for international emergency preparedness and response.

Norway would like to see the proposals contained in this Working Paper reflected in the Action Plan. We are prepared to support this work and we encourage other Member States to agree on such an approach and support the proposed actions.