Radiological Protection and Public Communication
Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety

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Christopher Clement, ICRP Scientific Secretary
Jacques Lochard, ICRP Main Commission
Radiological Protection and Public Communication

ICRP advice for post-accident recovery
Good public communication can:
- Help people be safe
- Directly improve living conditions

Poor public communication can:
- Create and reinforce misconceptions about safety
- Damage confidence in authorities and experts
- Increase stress and anxiety
ICRP Publications

Publication 103
Fundamental Recommendations

Publication 109
Emergency Situations

Publication 111
Post-Accident Recovery

This special free release of ICRP Publication 111 is dedicated to those in Japan who have lost so very much.
Protection Strategy

- Protective actions implemented centrally and locally by authorities, experts, and professionals

- Self-help protective actions directly implemented by the exposed individuals with the support of the authorities
Protective Actions Implemented by Authorities

- Clean-up of buildings
- Remediation of soil and vegetation
- Changes in animal husbandry
- Provision of clean foodstuffs
- Waste management
- Health surveillance
- Monitoring of the environment and produce
- **Provision of information, guidance, instruction and equipment**
- Education of children, and information for particular exposed groups and the public at large
Self-help Protective Actions

**Informed** actions taken by inhabitants of affected areas to reduce their exposure and the exposure of the people for whom they have responsibility (e.g. children, elderly)

**Why?**
- Exposure is largely driven by individual behaviour
- Individuals regain control of their situation
- Inhabitants have local knowledge

Self-help protective actions complement and are supported by actions taken by authorities
Local Forums

Authorities should facilitate the setting-up of local forums involving representatives of the affected population and relevant experts (e.g. health, radiation protection, agriculture authorities, etc.). These forums will allow gathering and sharing of information, and favour common assessment of the effectiveness of strategies driven by the populations and the authorities.

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Key Considerations

- Every dimension of daily life is effected

- Management goes far beyond radiological protection (health, environmental, economic, social, psychological, cultural, ethical, political, etc.)

- The language of radiological protection is foreign

- The multitude of “expert” voices (positive, negative)

- Mass media and social media play important roles
Multiple “Expert” Voices

Can be positive

• A multitude of (trusted) voices providing similar information can increase confidence

Can be negative

• People cannot easily differentiate between views with broad consensus and “fringe” views
• Extreme views based on poor science can create unwarranted alarm, resulting in real harm
Social & Mass Media

Social Media
• An ever increasing force
• Over time, sensible voices seem to outweigh (but never replace) extreme views

Mass Media
• Most communications go through mass media
• Moral responsibility to provide reliable information
• Unreliable information can cause unwarranted fear and real harm
• Well founded and useful information can improve safety
Issues Identified from the NPP Accident in Japan and Recommendations to Improve the System of Radiological Protection

ICRP Task Group 84
- Chair: Abel J. González (ICRP Vice-chair)
- Established: June 18, 2011
- Summary report released: November 22, 2012

- Advice to ICRP, not of ICRP

- 18 issues identified & several recommendations
- Many relate to communications
TG 84: Issues Relating to Communications

- Risks of low-dose exposure, particularly internal exposure
- Complexities of the system of protection: various units, exposure situations, reference levels, etc.
- Protection of children and pregnant women
- The meaning of “contamination”
Some Obvious Advice (1)

- Communications should
  - Restore personal control, confidence, and hope
  - Promote responsible action
  - Improve safety and general living conditions

- Construct a discourse that helps citizens, experts, and authorities to act together to manage the day-to-day situation

- Focus on the questions and concerns of stakeholders

- Appeal to the responsibility of each actor
Some Obvious Advice (2)

- Be open, honest and realistic
  - Remain true (scientifically) on the possible actions and their implications

- Use plain language
  - Avoid expert jargon, euphemisms, and paradoxical injunctions

- Provide clear, concise, and practical advice
  - Present the facts and what can be done to improve the situation
Some Obvious Advice (3)

- Avoid relying too heavily on requirements and prohibitions

- Be reassuring when appropriate

- Give people the knowledge they need to make their own decisions, and the tools they need to take their own actions

*Most people don’t need or want a lesson on radiological protection: they need to know how to work together to improve their situation*