

## Rapporteurs Report – Session III Waste Management Policy - Perspectives

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The rapporteurs report of session III identifies and summarizes the main issues of 12 contributed papers to the session. The submitted papers from 10 developed and developing countries and two international organisations (IAEA and WNA) show increased interest of in the subjects of radioactive waste management policy. This interest ranges from the activities of the IAEA in this area through the development of national policies and strategies in countries with both small and large nuclear industry sectors up to the perspectives of the operators. From Figure 1 is obvious that the issue of RAW management policy becomes a priority not only in highly developed industrial countries of Europe, North America and South Africa but also in developing countries of Asia and Latin America.



FIG. 1 World-wide distribution of countries contributing papers to the Session III

From the broad spectra of issues related to the development of RAW management policies and strategies following ones have been identified from the presentations in Session III by the panellists:

- international co-operation on various aspects of RAW management covering issues such as sharing of financial, human and technological resources, development of national policies and strategies (cost of storage vs. disposal, delayed development of geological repositories, ...),
- periodic updating of national policies and strategies and their adaptation to changed external conditions,
- comparison of large vs. small RAW management projects; what are the commonalties and differences and what are the lessons learned,

- management of historical and legacy waste, the responsibility of governmental bodies and pre-disposal and disposal options,
- technical issues influencing the definition of national RAW management policies and strategies
  - \* treatment of ion exchange resins
  - \* centralised waste management facilities
  - \* NORM, sealed disused sources and VLLW.

The auditorium responded very well to above listed issues. In the area of international co-operation the participants highlighted the need for knowledge management. It is quite difficult to deal with this issue, but as the nuclear industry expects dynamic growth in following decades it is vital to assure the exchange of practical operational experience between different generations of operational staff. The IAEA acknowledges the role of knowledge management and recently, in June 2007 has organised an international conference dealing with this issue.

The terms national policy and national strategy very often overlap in official documents on this subject and there is no clear distinction between them. Usually there is no need to update the national policy on RAW management; i. e. the final goals which should be met (safe disposal of all categories of RAW). But the technical means and processes how to reach these goals as described in national strategy require more frequent updates. It was clearly stated that the national policies and strategies can not be considered as dogmatic document and some level of flexibility is needed. But this flexibility can not put in question the final step in RAW management process – the disposal of RAW. Participants from Germany shared their experience with the development and update of national waste management strategy taking into account changed time schedule of the development of Konrad facility and changed properties of disposed waste (volume, density, ...).

A significant part of the panel session was dedicated to the so called “pragmatic” approach to disposal of RAW. Some countries do not consider the disposal of RAW as the final step in their national RAW management policies yet. Some of these countries, especially developing ones, have very ambitious nuclear projects considering construction of several nuclear power units, but considerations regarding the disposal of some RAW streams, especially HLW and SF, if declared for waste, are very limited. Similar statements were made also during presentations to other sessions (e. g. Session V). The IAEA representatives clearly expressed their opinion that this approach violates with at least one of the IAEA fundamentals on safe management of RAW – no undue burden to future generations. The disposal option has to be offered to the future generations including sufficient financial resources and established regulatory, organisational and R&D frameworks. Therefore the long-term storage of different waste classes is not considered as sustainable solution of RAW management.