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Press Release 2009/11

Safety Experts Complete Second IAEA Regulatory Review of UK Nuclear Regulator

Bootle, United Kingdom, 13 October 2009 | Nuclear safety experts today concluded a 10-day mission to peer-review the UK Nuclear Regulator: Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Nuclear Directorate (ND).

At the request of the UK Government, the International Atomic Energy Agency assembled a team of ten high-level regulatory experts from eight nations to conduct the Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission.

The mission was the second of three planned IRRS missions for the United Kingdom. The first was held in March 2006 to begin a process to assess the nation's readiness to regulate and license new reactor designs, considered as a result of the Energy Policy review initiated by the British Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (DTI) in 2005.

The IRRS team leader Mr. William Borchardt, Executive Director of Operations from the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, stated, "The IAEA IRRS serves an important role in both benchmarking against its safety standards and in promoting dialogue between nuclear safety regulators from around the world."

During the 2nd mission the IRRS the team reviewed HSE/ND progress since the first IRRS mission and recent regulatory developments, the regulation of operating power plants and fuel cycle facilities, the inspection and enforcement programme for nuclear power plants and fuel cycle facilities, and the emergency preparedness and response programme.

The IAEA found that HSE/ND has made significant progress toward improving its effectiveness in regulating existing nuclear power plants and in preparing to license new nuclear reactors designs. Many of the findings identified in the 2006 report had been fully addressed and therefore could be considered closed, the others are being addressed in accordance with a comprehensive action plan.

IRRS team members visited the Heysham 1 Nuclear Power Plant near Lancaster, the Sellafield site at Cumbria and the Strategic Control Centre at Hutton, and they met senior managers from HSE and a UK Government senior adviser.

IAEA IRRS Coordinator Mr. Gustavo Caruso said, "The HSE/ND at all levels were enthusiastic and very interested in obtaining advice relating to the application of the IAEA safety standards for their further development."

In the light of the UK Government decision to move the regulatory body to a Statutory Corporation, IRRS team members conducted a review of the transition arrangements put in place by HSE/ND. It was concluded that it is of vital importance to take several fundamental principles into account during and after the transition: adequate legal authority, effective independence, technical and managerial competence and human and financial resources to fulfil all regulatory responsibilities and functions. ND has developed and is implementing a comprehensive programme for this transition process.

Mr. Tomihiro Taniguchi, IAEA Deputy Director General, said, "This is especially important and timely in the context of the world wide nuclear 'vita nova' - providing input to the new entrants as well as the rapidly expanding current nuclear programmes, without adequate regulatory competence and resources."

Mike Weightman, Head of ND and HM Chief Inspector of Nuclear Installations said: "The Nuclear Directorate welcomes this important peer review of our regulatory arrangements and practices as part of our continuing to strive to be at the cutting edge of nuclear regulation worldwide. This review comes at a most important time for us with the Government's proposal to provide us with more freedom and independence to better meet challenges of a changing nuclear industry. We are committed to taking the necessary measures to address the findings made in the IAEA report, when it is finalised, and welcome

the recognition of several of our practices as good examples for nuclear regulators around the world."

Related Resources:

- » [Integrated Regulatory Review Service \(IRRS\)](#)
- » [Peer Review of Spain's Nuclear Safety Regulation](#), 13 November 2008
- » [Globalized Peer Evaluation Exercise Lauded by Member States](#), 28 March 2008
- » [IRRS Report: United Kingdom](#), March-April 2006

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