

## Contribution of the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation to Nuclear Security: Building Consensus and Expertise through Outreach and Training

The role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding nuclear security evolved after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the IAEA is currently held to be the global platform for nuclear security efforts, with a central role in facilitating international cooperation in the field. However this evolution has not been effortless, and universal acceptance by Member States of nuclear security as a vital component of the IAEA's role in global nuclear governance, remains elusive. Among a number of reasons for that there are varying degrees of knowledge and capacity for nuclear security implementation between Member States and, whilst the IAEA has been playing and continues to play a central role in meeting nuclear security capacity building demands, the needs of Member States far outweighing the resources available to the IAEA.

Member States maintain seemingly intractable positions about the funding of the IAEA's nuclear security activities and the role of nuclear security vis-a-vis peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear applications. Building consensus on nuclear security in the IAEA requires a concerted effort to change this dynamic between Member States. The Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) is contributing to consensus building by promoting a better dialogue between Member States on nuclear security practices and their impact on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear applications. In order to be constructive, this dialogue has to be factually based and result in a better understanding of the challenges faced and efforts made by Member States and the IAEA to improve nuclear security when applying nuclear technology for peaceful uses.

In April 2018 the VCDNP embarked on a series of panel discussions with the aim to create opportunities for dialogue between technical experts and diplomats on the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, the challenges related to the safe and secure management of nuclear and other radioactive materials and related facilities, and the support provided by the IAEA to its Member States. These panel discussions have been well attended by diplomats and other nuclear professionals from a broad range of countries, who have commended the VCDNP on increasing their knowledge and understanding of the benefits of peaceful uses, the role and importance of nuclear security and the support provided by the IAEA. The VCDNP is also producing fact sheets related to the panel discussions, which serve as an additional source of information for diplomats and policy makers.

The VCDNP also developed a nuclear security course to support capacity development in Member States, which complements the IAEA activities enshrined in its Nuclear Security Plan 2018-2021. The first VCDNP Nuclear Security Professional Development Course took place in February 2019 and was targeted, inter alia, at the nuclear energy policy makers, regulatory staff and diplomats of newcomer states. The purpose of this course is to enhance participants' understanding of key nuclear security-related issues, including the history of the nuclear security regime, legal framework and other international instruments, the role of the IAEA and other organisations, opportunities and challenges related to nuclear security, and the policies and politics of nuclear security. The course programme included presentations and practical exercises on nuclear security issues delivered by IAEA and other international experts.

The 21 participants from nuclear newcomer states confirmed that the course contributed significantly to their knowledge and to their professional development in the field of nuclear security. This course will be expanded in future to include diplomats from other Member States, to meet the demand in this regard and to support the VCDNP's goals of promoting a better dialogue between Member States on nuclear security and to contribute to achieving consensus on nuclear security in the IAEA.

### Gender

Not Specified

### State

Austria

**Primary authors:** Ms KIRSTEN, Ingrid (Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation); Mr LAZAREV, Artem (Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation)

**Presenters:** Ms KIRSTEN, Ingrid (Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation); Mr LAZAREV, Artem (Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation)

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