

# **The role of the Tunisian Association in communicating information to the public and strengthening their safety and security**

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Established in July 2016, the Tunisian Association of Nuclear Sciences and Awareness is a non-profit association. It aims to raise awareness of the nuclear techniques applications benefits in different domains: energy, health care, environment, agriculture...

Ionizing radiation arising from all these nuclear techniques applications represents a risk to the public even directly or indirectly and it needs to be effectively communicated.

Since Tunisia is considered as a new embarking country in nuclear energy, scientists are trying to do their research, they have no time to communicate to the public the benefits, and the risks associated with any applications involving the use of radiation. As a result, the public is afraid when hearing the word “nuclear” and this has an influence on their security. The benefit and the side effect of nuclear techniques applications may not be effectively communicated in a comprehensive, timely and professional manner. In this context, the Tunisian Association of Nuclear Sciences and Awareness addresses the issue of communication of radiation risk and benefits to the public.

While there are different ways of communicating radiation risk, we recognize that certain basic parameters are essential for public awareness. In this context, we are seeking to develop a safety culture before nuclear culture to promote nuclear activities in Tunisia and increase the impact of security by organizing scientific events on nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes, open days in collaboration with influential partners as well as media information (radio, newspapers ...).

Although the events organized by the Tunisian Association on Nuclear Sciences and Awareness have achieved success for its promotion, public confidence, acquiring the required knowledge of nuclear sciences and techniques. Our association begins to have the trust of the public for the communication related to nuclear and radiological information. To this end, it begins to strengthen the preparedness of Tunisia regarding communication with the public in a nuclear or radiological emergency.

The existing legislative and regulatory Tunisian infrastructure does not meet the needs related to existing and future installations and nuclear facilities. This program was based on the various uses of radioactive sources (mainly medical installations). However, over time the infrastructure is not in accordance with the new standards and international recommendations.

An important event planned by the Tunisian Association of Nuclear Sciences and Awareness is to organize an informative day for the members of the parliament in order to sensitize them on the importance of the promulgation of the new nuclear law. This event can achieve success when supported by the IAEA.