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## **NUCLEAR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND OUTREACH IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION**

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In December 2010, at a technical meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) held in Lima, Peru, the Latin-American Network for Education in Nuclear Technology (LANENT) was formally created. Diversity and contrast are key characteristics of the Latin-American and Caribbean region. For instance, while some countries have very active nuclear programs, including the existence, construction and planning of Nuclear Power Plants and Research Reactors, the use of nuclear technology is below optimum in others. Similar disparities are also observed in nuclear education, training and outreach (NETO) activities, where some countries have ample experience and tradition, with adequate or even exceptional facilities, while others lack them completely.

Since its creation, LANENT is actively pursuing joint activities for networking educational institutions at a regional level, the creation of distance learning initiatives and the use of shared facilities are basic cornerstones for the efficient cooperation. Its endeavors are being eased by the recent emergence of e-learning, while providing a way to overcome the vastness of the region.

The absence of cultural or idiomatic barriers is an important asset of the region, which certainly facilitates LANENT activities. So are some pre-existing proactive networking initiatives, the open access to high quality equipment for nuclear education, the availability of well trained and highly specialized teachers and programs tailored to the needs of each country throughout the region, and the will to support NETO activities for the common development. Furthermore, most of the areas of Nuclear Education are covered by different countries in the region, even though some few vacancies in specific areas could be detected.

All these issues, with emphasis on the status and trends of NETO activities and its key actors in the region, will be analyzed in the present communication.

**Primary author:** Mr BARRACHINA, Raul (National Atomic Energy Commission, Argentina)

**Co-authors:** Dr FRANCOIS, Juan Luis (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México); SBAFFONI, Monica (NKM Section - NE Department - IAEA)

**Presenter:** Mr BARRACHINA, Raul (National Atomic Energy Commission, Argentina)

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