

Strengthening National, Regional and International Cooperation for Safe and Secure Transport of Radioactive Material in Rwanda

I. Background

Rwanda has developed a robust legal and regulatory framework to ensure the safe and secure transport of nuclear and radioactive materials, including Regulation No005/R/RS-NRP/RURA/2021 on transport and Law No. 59/2017 on radiation protection. Although the number of shipments remains low, they are expected to rise significantly with Rwanda's forthcoming nuclear power program. Early planning and cooperation are critical to ensure future readiness.

II. National Capacity and Coordination

RURA is empowered to inspect and license all transport activities involving radioactive materials within Rwanda and at its borders. National coordination mechanisms are operational and involve Rwanda National Police, Customs, and Border Control Agencies. Rwanda also maintains an Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) framework (Regulation No006/R/RS-NRP/RURA/2021) to ensure timely and effective response to incidents. However, the number of qualified transport companies remains limited.

III. Regional and International Cooperation

Rwanda works with neighboring countries and regional forums (e.g., AFRA) to harmonize safety and emergency procedures. It actively contributes to international nuclear security by submitting reports to the IAEA's Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) and collaborating with IAEA peer networks. No unauthorized transport has been recorded to date, showing the effectiveness of Rwanda's regulatory oversight and border vigilance.

IV. International Legal Instruments Ratified

Rwanda has demonstrated strong commitment by ratifying key instruments relevant to nuclear transport:

1. Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) –1 October 2001 Amendment to the CPPNM –16 July 2021
2. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) –7 May 2010
IAEA Statute –15 December 2011

These instruments guide Rwanda's licensing, physical protection, transit control, and emergency response frameworks.

V. Conclusion and Outlook

Rwanda's experience illustrates the importance of comprehensive national regulations, institutional coordination, and international cooperation. Anticipating growth in radioactive material transport, Rwanda recommends strengthened regional training programs, wider licensing of transport operators, and continued use of international reporting platforms like ITDB to enhance transparency and security in nuclear material transport.

Country or International Organization

Instructions

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