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Featured Story

Environment Ministry Holds Seminar on Strengthening Nuclear Energy and Radiation Regulations

Authored by: Gena Gibbs
Source: Bahamas Information Services
Date: October 31, 2017

NASSAU, The Bahamas – The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Expert Mission to the Bahamas for Inventory of Radioactive Devices, Sources, and Radiation Equipment held a workshop for staff of the Ministry of the Environment and Housing and the Department of Environmental Health (DEHS) at the British Colonial Hilton, October 23-25, 2017.

The IAEA is the United Nation’s agency charged with ensuring that radioactive and nuclear materials are secured and applied safely.

The lecture for environmental health professionals on using nuclear materials for peaceful purposes officially opened on the Monday morning. Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment and Housing, Janice Miller stated: “The Bahamas became a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during January 2014. Since then we have been making incremental steps to establish a regulatory infrastructure for the safe and secure use of radioactive materials, including an independent regulatory body.

“We are continuing to work with many of our partners including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bahamas Bureau of Standards, Ministry of Health, Health Facilities Council, Ministry of Works, Bahamas Customs Department, University of The Bahamas, Ministry of National Security, Attorney General’s Office and others, in order to achieve this objective.”

Ms. Miller explained further that preliminary information suggests that radioactive technology is presently being used in The Bahamas in Medicine and Industry.

“The activities of the IAEA experts and local team, for the next few days will assist in establishing and maintaining a national inventory of radiation sources, and by extension inform the process of our efforts in ultimately putting in place the appropriate regulation. Of course the completion of this effort will have to be conducted by the local team, so funds will have to be accessed to make visits to the other islands,” said Ms. Miller.

“In addition to other agencies being involved in training workshops, the Ministry of Environment and Housing is taking part in regional projects to begin building capacity in meeting the human and technical resource needs of all aspects of establishment of the needed regulatory infrastructure. The IAEA has been very helpful in this regard and will hopefully continue to give the necessary assistance.”

Ms. Miller said that the proper legal framework is crucial to our country receiving full benefits as a member, and as a result, the Ministry of the Environment & Housing has prepared a Cabinet Paper for submission to Cabinet, so that we along with the Attorney General’s Office can officially begin drafting the regulations for the safe and secure use of radioactive material.

“The salient components of the law will include, (1) Designation of regulatory body and functions (e.g. Authorization, Licensing, Inspection, Enforcement); (2) Radiation/nuclear protection and safety; (3) Safeguards; (4) Emergency preparedness and response; (5) Transportation of radioactive material; (6) Import/export; (7) Radioactive/nuclear waste/storage; and (8) Nuclear liabilities,” said Ms. Miller.

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Official Funeral Service of Sir Arlington Butler
 The Cabinet Office announced today that an Official Funeral will be held for Sir Arlington Butler K.C.M.G, former Cabinet Minister & Parliamentarian

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“At each phase the IAEA will be consulted for guidance so that assurance is given that our obligations as a member, are met. We along with The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Attorney General’s Office will also give attention to the various international instruments, conventions, codes and protocols, which will strengthen the international response to nuclear accidents by providing a mechanism for rapid information exchange in order to minimize trans-boundary radiological consequences.”

Ms. Miller concluded with saying the Ministry believes that “being a part of key conventions will strengthen the international response to a nuclear accident or radiological emergency, including a terrorist or other malicious act, thus protecting life, property and the environment against the effects of radioactive releases.”

“It is my sincere desire that the objectives of this workshop are met and that the meeting will encourage us to continue to work together toward the common goal of establishing a regulatory infrastructure for the safe and secure use of radioactive materials, in The Bahamas,” said Ms. Miller.



Group photo of the IAEA lecturers and participants from various agencies throughout the government, including the Ministry of the Environment & Housing and the Department of Environmental Health (DEHS) at the workshop opening session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Expert Mission to the Bahamas for Inventory of Radioactive Devices, Sources, and Radiation Equipment, October 23-25, 2017. (BIS Photo/Gena Gibbs)