

KEYS TO SECURITY

As this issue of the IAEA Bulletin goes to print, nuclear security is becoming a headline theme. An international summit will convene shortly in Washington, D.C., to consider global approaches to securing nuclear technologies, sites and facilities against the threat of malicious activity. Preventing such willful acts is one of the many keys that can enable the peaceful development of nuclear technology.

In this April 2010 issue, we will examine several other keys that grant us a higher level of security in different senses.

For instance, current research and development in long-term nuclear waste disposal technologies will grant future generations the security that high-level radioactive waste will be safely sequestered over centuries. An in-depth article on these long-term storage technologies offers insight into international disposal strategies and current prognoses for their deployment.

A key limiting factor in nuclear power's growth is its level of public acceptance. The Swedish town of Oskarshamn may be one of the world's most 'nuclear-friendly' communities. Its inhabitants feel so secure that our correspondent could not find a single nuclear detractor within the town limits. That unusually high level of confidence is not a coincidence: the Äspö Hard Rock Laboratory that tests high-level nuclear waste disposal technologies and a nuclear power plant are located near Oskarshamn. We take a look at the town's perception of nuclear power and waste as a case study in how community acceptance can be fostered.

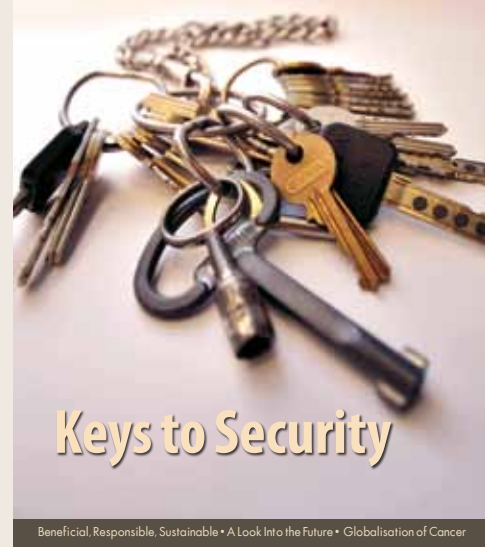
As the Swedish case study demonstrates, security requires credible, personal engagement. Experienced experts, knowledgeable in these methods and systems, are critically important for a plant's safe operation. The security procedures and technologies used today to protect nuclear power plants and other nuclear sites are as complex as the technology they guard. Among IAEA Member States the demand for such expert training and advice is growing. In partnership with the IAEA, the International Nuclear Security Training Centre in Obninsk, Russia, expanded its extensive training capabilities to offer this key expertise to IAEA Member States. Our article provides an up-close view of the Centre's work.

Security will again be a frequently-cited term in Op-Eds and the news when the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's (NPT) five-year review conference commences in May. The IAEA's inspections play a key role in the NPT verification regime. Through its training programme, the Agency ensures that inspectors are ready to monitor and verify that the safeguards we all depend upon for our security are in place.

The NPT also refers to regional treaties that assure the total absence of nuclear weapons from territory of those nations that undertake such agreements. "Nuclear weapons-free zones" (NWFZs) now girdle the territories of the entire Southern hemisphere. Mongolia's Resident Representative to the IAEA, Ambassador Enkhsaikhan, shared with us his experience in establishing Mongolia as an internationally-recognized NWFZ, recognized by its neighbours and anchored into international law.

And finally, I would like to acknowledge the IAEA Bulletin's long-serving editor, Lothar Wedekind, who over the past quarter-century steered, sustained, expanded and adapted the journal in swiftly changing times. Beginning in 1974 and until his retirement in 2009, Lothar ensured that the IAEA Bulletin remained a vocal and authoritative forum for debate on the issues that shape peaceful nuclear development. It is a distinct privilege to assume responsibility for this enterprise that includes a rich publishing history, as well as an on-line presence. The IAEA Bulletin team's monumental effort to build a searchable, six-language, on-line journal archive is now nearing completion, securing this legacy for a broad global population. In future, readers can be assured that the team will continue to innovate to reach the growing, global audience that follows peaceful nuclear developments.

— Peter Kaiser, Editor-in-Chief



Keys to Security

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