

TRAINING THE ATOMIC LAWYERS

In April the Agency held the first fully international training course ever organized to study the legal aspects of peaceful uses of atomic energy.

Under its programme of advisory services to Member States, the Agency has assisted a number of countries in framing nuclear legislation. The course was organized to provide advanced training for administrators and lawyers who are associated with or may be called upon to assist national authorities in the drafting or implementation of nuclear legislation.

The attendance of participants and observers from 30 countries, several of them at their own expense or at the expense of their Governments, clearly reflected the importance attached by many countries to an adequate training of lawyers and officials concerned with the elaboration of laws and regulations in the nuclear field. The interest of various developing countries for such a programme was further corroborated by the qualifications and functions of the participants nominated by their Governments since most of them are high officials from national administrations. This may also be regarded as a recognition of the Agency's leading role in the world-wide development and harmonization of nuclear legislation.

In an opening address, Dr. Sigvard Eklund, Director General of the IAEA, expressed the hope that the course would make "some contribution to the creation of a world nuclear law — a direction which must be taken increasingly if the problems are to be met successfully". Altogether 33 lectures were delivered and eight seminars conducted. In the first part of the course, the lectures were devoted to three main subjects:

- Basic legislation establishing national bodies on atomic energy;
- International conventions and national legislation on third party liability in the nuclear field;
- Financial protection against nuclear risks, and nuclear insurance problems.

The second week focussed on:

- Structure and activities of regional and world-wide organizations in the nuclear field;
- Technical and legal aspects of Agency safeguards and safety standards;
- Licensing of nuclear reactors;
- Prospects of food irradiation and nuclear power.

Discussions in the daily seminars reflected keen interest in making a practical approach to a number of questions, such as the distribution of functions at the national level, the framing of safety and licensing regulations, the establishment of nuclear insurance schemes, the economic and financial aspects of nuclear power projects, etc.

A brief survey of the present status of nuclear legislation in various countries was submitted by the participants with a view to providing guidelines concerning specific needs. In turn, the Agency's Secretariat offered advice on the elaboration of appropriate legislation and, in particular, made available a draft model law on civil liability for nuclear damage, designed to assist the preparation of national legislation in harmony with the Vienna Convention. Consultations were also held on the proposed establishment by the Agency of a computerized system of references on nuclear law, through the collection of such information throughout the world.

By the training course, the Agency has set the stage for a development of nuclear legislation that would both respond to the immediate needs of many developing countries and contribute to further harmonization in this field. It may, therefore, be expected that the contacts established at the Course and the guidance provided for a practical approach to a number of problems of concern to the various countries represented would result in more reliance upon the Agency's help for the framing of adequate legislation. In the years ahead, more countries will probably turn to the Agency for advisory services in this field and such assistance will have to be envisaged as one of the most demanding sectors of the Legal Division's activities.

Participants for the course were selected from 21 developing countries in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia, many of them being officials of national bodies on atomic energy. Observers came from fourteen countries and one international organization, as well as from the European Nuclear Energy Agency, a number of permanent missions accredited to the IAEA, law faculties, research institutes and a power corporation.

Of thirteen experts who took part as visiting lecturers, seven were provided cost-free by ENEA and EURATOM, the Governments of France and the United States, and two nuclear insurance corporations. The six others were invited by the Agency from Argentina, France, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. In addition, sixteen members of the IAEA Secretariat contributed lectures.