

REGIONAL RADIOISOTOPE CENTRE IN CAIRO

The first regional radioisotope centre established under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency was opened in Cairo on 18 March. This Middle Eastern Regional Centre for the Arab Countries will train specialists in the application of radioisotopes and in health physics and radiation protection, conduct research using isotope techniques in subjects of interest to the participating States, and generally promote the development of radioisotope uses in those countries.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the IAEA Director General, Dr. Sigvard Eklund, described the establishment of the centre as "a very encouraging and constructive development". "It is gratifying to note", he said, "that some developing countries appreciate the immediate and practical benefits which can be derived from the application of atomic energy."

The agreement for the establishment of the centre was approved by the Agency's Board of Governors in September last year. The original request for the setting up of the centre came from the United Arab Republic in 1959. Two training courses were

held by the Agency in 1961 at the UAR national radioisotope centre at Dokki, Cairo, and these demonstrated the suitability of Cairo as a venue for the regional centre. The building and facilities of the national centre as well as the equipment provided by the Agency for the training courses held there are now part of the new regional centre.

The operation of the centre is financed out of contributions from the participating States and funds made available under the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA).

The Director of the centre is Dr. I.B. Hazza, who was formerly head of the UAR national radioisotope centre. A Technical Adviser is to be appointed by the IAEA Director General. Professor Engelbert Broda of Vienna University has helped as a consultant to prepare the first working programme in respect of both training and research. Among the subjects which will receive special emphasis in the initial stages will be isotope applications in medicine, agriculture and the hydrology of arid and semi-arid areas.

The UAR Minister of Scientific Research, Salah El Din Hedayat, receiving Dr. Eklund at the opening ceremony of the Regional Radioisotope Centre in Cairo



A general view of the Radioisotope Centre at Dokki, Cairo

