

Meeting Reports for 2008

Dated 26 February 2009

During 2008 the International Nuclear Energy Academy held three meetings, whose discussions are summarized in this Newsletter.

1. Executive Committee meeting by telephone conference: 7 July 2008

This meeting of the Executive Committee was a great success. The telephone arrangements allowed a much better attendance than usual. Nils Diaz, whose nomination as chairman had been suggested, took part as an observer and played a very useful part in the discussion.

The Chairman said that he was struck by the fact that he was personally better known than the Academy which he chaired. He wondered what could be done to publicize the Academy, and by extension the contribution to nuclear science and policy of its members. More use of the Web site would help: the more "hits" a site has the higher it appears in Google listings. Publishing more material - authoritative papers for example on it would also help. It was agreed to encourage much greater use of the Academy website, by whatever means turned out to be effective.

Most of the discussion concerned the draft paper submitted by the Chairman on Uranium Resources. His purpose was to look further ahead than the World Nuclear Association's regular publication on the uranium market, and to answer those opponents who claimed that there was not enough uranium to fuel the imminent nuclear renaissance, still less to make any real contribution to the problem of Global Warming. There was general agreement that there was more than enough uranium at present rates of consumption, there were divided views about how to describe what would be needed if the use of nuclear power expanded significantly so as to make significant inroads into dealing with climate change dangers, or with a view to replacing oil as its production declined. Most thought that the paper needed to be more explicit about the possibilities in the medium term for a transition from the present once through cycle to the use of innovative fuel cycles including thorium, and breeder reactors. Such a transition could be politically sensitive. Nils Diaz was persuaded to supply some drafting to cover the point.

The meeting also had before it a paper by Dan Meneley and Robert Morrison on the Canadian medical isotope crisis, which had culminated in the Canadian Government's sacking of the chief Canadian regulator, Linda Keen. It was agreed that the main interest of the Academy lay in revisiting the balancing of nuclear risk against other equally important risks. It was suggested that a shorter paper concentrating on this point might be worth circulating to Members of the Academy.

It was agreed on a proposal by the Secretary to raise the subscription of \$50 for individual members and \$200 for those who could persuade their institutions to pay it on their behalf.

2. 2nd Meeting of the Executive Committee

In preparation for the Annual General Meeting the Executive Committee met again on 29 September 2008, this time in person, in the margins of the IAEA's General Conference in Vienna. The Chairman tabled a new draft of his paper on uranium resources which accommodated the comments and suggestions raised in June by Dan Meneley , Pierre Zaleski and Nilz Diaz. It was agreed that the AGM should discuss the revised draft and decide whether it should issue as an Executive Statement or as a "Member's View".

The Chairman raised the question of his successor. He did not wish to continue in office beyond the end of his term at the end of 2008. He had approached a number of distinguished members, so far without result.

A new version of the Meneley /Morrison paper on the clash of risk was also tabled but there was no substantive discussion of it.

3. Annual General Meeting

The meeting was then followed without a break by the Annual General Meeting. A number of other members joined the group. The Chairman led with his report of the past year's activities he drew attention to the long and lively discussion at the telephone meeting in July (described above)[, with the French and Canadians wishing to say more than the draft had done on the need to introduce closed fuel cycles around the middle of the century, while the Americans argued for not emphasising this. His revised draft had attempted to square the circle. After further discussion it was agreed unanimously that the paper should issue as it stood as an Executive Statement. {*The text can now be found on the Academy web site: www.INEA.org.br*}

Victor Mourogov suggested that further papers should follow: he offered to launch drafts on nuclear education, the multilateral fuel cycle proposal and on the development of commercial fast reactors. The meeting welcomed this proposal.

The meeting agreed to explore strengthening the Academy's relations with the World Nuclear University, and suggested that those with experience of tutoring or mentoring at the WNU's summer seminars might set the ball rolling by writing to the Secretary about their experiences.

After some discussion of possible candidates the meeting agreed that the Chairman should invite Harold McFarlane of the Idaho National Laboratory to succeed him. [*Dr McFarlane subsequently accepted the invitation and has taken up his position.*]

The Secretary explained that because of increased expenditures on travel and on the telephone conference (where the cost of meeting was met by the Academy and not by the participants) the funds were now running low. After examining the implications of seeking sponsorship, the meeting endorsed Executive Committee's approval of the Secretary's proposal to raise the subscription, as recorded above.

The Secretary reported that the promised paper from ESKOM on potential bottlenecks in the construction supply chain (intended as a companion piece to the uranium resources paper just approved) was still in preparation, but with luck would be circulate by the end of March 2009. As not all participants had seen it, it was agreed to defer discussion of the revised draft paper by Dan Meneley and Robert Morrison on how to deal with clashes of nuclear risk.

The meeting discussed briefly possible candidates for membership of the Academy. A number of names were suggested, but only one completed nomination has so far reached the Secretary.

Finally, it was agreed that the tradition of holding the AGM in the margins of the IAEA's General Conference should continue. The 2009 meeting would therefore be in the afternoon of the first day, Monday 14 September 2009. The Executive Committee would again attempt to meet by telephone conference in the Spring of 2009.