

Activities undertaken by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 2002 in the context of radioactive waste management and the oceans

- The International Atomic Energy Agency is an organization within the UN family with unique statutory responsibilities relating to the safety of persons and property from the effects of ionizing radiation. Specifically, it has been mandated to establish standards of safety for protection of health and to provide for the application of these Standards, at the request of a Member State. Its role in providing authoritative international advice on matters related to radioactive materials in the marine context has been formally recognized by the Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Waste and Other Matter (the London Convention 1972).
- The IAEA has worked for some years on assembling information on all inputs of radioactive materials into the world oceans. In 2002 the IAEA continued to collect information and data to be included in its computerized database of radioactive discharges from land-based sources into the marine environment. During the year the IAEA established contact with national organizations in 33 countries nominated by their Governments as counterparts for the provision of data for the IAEA's database. In November 2002 the first meeting of these national contact points was held in Vienna.
- The information gathered on the inputs of radioactive material into the oceans will be incorporated into the IAEA's Clearing House on Radioactive Substances which is being developed as part of the IAEA's commitment to the UN Global Programme of Action (GPA) for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities. In 2002 work continued at the IAEA towards the development of the first full version of the internet based IAEA's Clearing House on Radioactive Substances which will replace the current prototype. The Clearing House will also contain information on the levels of natural and artificial radioactivity in the world oceans, monitoring techniques, assessments of the impact of radioactivity released into the marine environment, international and regional conventions and regulations. The development is expected to be completed in 2003.
- International standards of radiation protection provide for the protection of humans from the effects of ionizing radiations but do not specifically address the protection of other species in the environment. In response to growing interest in the issue the IAEA has In 1993 the IAEA set up the International Arctic Seas Assessment Project (IASAP) in order to assess the radiological consequences associated with the radioactive wastes dumped by the Former Soviet Union in the Arctic Seas. In 1998 the IAEA published the main report of IASAP, entitled "Radiological Conditions of the Western Kara Sea, Assessment of the Radiological Impact of the Dumping of Radioactive Waste in the Arctic Sea". In 2002 the IAEA brought the IASAP study to a conclusion by completing the report of IASAP's Modelling and Assessment Working Group, established by the IAEA within the framework of IASAP to model the dispersal and transport of the radioactive waste potentially released from the dumped objects and assess the radiological impact. The

report, entitled “Modelling of the radiological Impact of radioactive waste dumping in the Arctic Sea”, will be published as IAEA-TECDOC-1330 in 2003.

-

determinations in bottom sediments have also proven useful for establishing the frequency of HAB events in enclosed coastal areas and their correlation with environmental parameters which promote their occurrence.

- IAEA-MEL has been developing Marine Information System, a relational database on the distribution of radioactive and stable isotopes in the world oceans and seas. The data stored in the radionuclide database (GLOMARD) has been recently used in the EU project MARINA II, assessing the impact of marine radioactivity in the Northern European Seas on the population of the European Union.
- IAEA-MEL has been running the Analytical Quality Control Services (AQCS) programme for radionuclides in the marine environment with the aim to assist laboratories in data