Deputy Director General: “GNSSN is a key instrument to help interconnect professionals.”

He highlighted that an important challenge for the GNSSN is to accommodate the diversity and the complexity of national situations as well as the variety of structures and objectives of the networks under its umbrella. The IAEA Strategic Approach on the GNSSN is designed to address this difficulty and will provide a roadmap for the various GNSSN users. Furthermore, he revealed the GNSSN survey results that showed the GNSSN is found by its members to be a very effective channel for them to share their work and find resources for improving it.

The plenary also discussed and presented the activities and main achievements of the regional and global networks in 2013-2014. This included significant development of the content of the International Regulatory Network (RegNet) and the preparation of a major international Conference as a result of the activities of the Technical and Scientific Support Organization Forum (TSOF). Additionally, a side event took place during the GNSSN plenary to launch the Emergency Preparedness Network (EPnet), an online platform aimed at connecting EPR professionals through a collaborative network.

In his concluding remarks, IAEA Deputy Director General Flory, Head of the Department for Nuclear Safety and Security, emphasized the key role of partners who have helped to develop and financially support GNSSN and its associated networks. He also highlighted “I strongly believe that your continuous leadership and commitment are the key to the sustainability of GNSSN.”
TSOs conference: Enhancing Nuclear Safety and Security

Several key aspects were addressed in the course of the Conference, including: the role of research and development in enhancing nuclear safety; the role of TSOs in the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety and in capacity building in countries launching or expanding their nuclear power programmes; as well as the idea to develop centres of excellence.

During the event, Mr Benoit De Boeck, President of the Conference, and General Manager of BEL V, Belgium, noted some future challenges; particularly in building capacity for Member States embarking on nuclear power development programmes. Moreover, future opportunities for networking and cooperative research and development in several key technical areas, such as: decommissioning, remediation, human and organizational factors, safety analysis and predicting severe accident progression, emerge during the discussions.

Finally, Mr De Boeck emphasized that: “In light of the Fukushima accident and the momentum that the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety has created among Member States, TSOs must continue to be one of the driving forces to pursue this effort.” Mr. Denis Flory, IAEA Deputy Director General of the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security closed the conference by expressing the IAEA’s full support to all TSOs worldwide. The next TSO Conference was proposed to take place in 2018 and to be hosted by the Government of Belgium.

This four-day event was attended by over 240 participants from 42 Member States and 5 international organizations. Its overall aim was to assess and review ways to further improve the effectiveness of Technical and Scientific Support Organizations (TSOs), also taking into account lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident. “Nuclear safety is the lifeline for development of the nuclear industry and technical capacity of nuclear safety is its guarantee” said Mr Z. Li, Conference Co-President and Director General of the Chinese Nuclear and Radiation Safety Center.
EPnet:
The new web-based network in the GNSSN family

24 September 2014 | During the GNSSN plenary at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna, a side event took place to launch a web-based network created to share knowledge and experience, and to enhance Emergency Preparedness capabilities.

The Emergency Preparedness Network (EPnet) is the youngest member within the GNSSN family. It aims to connect emergency preparedness and response (EPR) professionals through a collaborative network.

This initiative was created as an element of the GNSSN framework, which provides the organizational and IT support and facilitates possible coordination with activities among global nuclear safety and security networks/forums, regional safety networks and national safety portals. Through a collaborative web-based workspace, designed for the exchange of technical and scientific information, expertise, knowledge and experiences, EPnet aims to achieve the global integration of harmonized capabilities in emergency preparedness and response. There are sub-networks within EPnet for the following six groups of professionals: Emergency Planners, First Responders, Radiation Specialists, Medical Practitioners, Dose Assessment Experts and Public Information Officers.

Three months have passed since its creation and EPnet is rapidly increasing its numbers of registered users from all over the world (e.g. Canada, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, the Russian Federation, Romania, Slovenia, United Arab Emirates).
The emergence of a new network for Communication Practitioners

3 September 2014 | At the IAEA headquarters in Vienna, nuclear communication experts from Canada, Czech Republic, France and the USA gathered to discuss the need and possible features of a new worldwide network, the Global Nuclear Safety and Security Communication Network (GNSCOM). The presence of various IAEA safety officers working to help the Member States ensure adequate communication in various nuclear safety situations was also a great support to guide this initial discussion.

All countries face communication challenges in areas such as transparency, dissemination of information, message and information clarity and the IAEA currently does not provide a network for communication practitioners that could support their exchange of experience and capacity building activities. GNSCOM aims at bridging this gap by allowing its future members to exchange knowledge, expertise, lessons learned and good practices in the field of safety communication (excluding emergency communication which is outside the scope of GNSCOM).

Throughout workshops, technical meetings and online collaboration, GNSCOM will focus on building communications capacity for communication practitioners of national regulatory bodies and other relevant organizations worldwide. These efforts will be led by a Steering Committee expected to meet for the first time in spring 2015. Some of the main components of this future network are already in preparation: draft terms of reference already exist and the Secretariat is working to develop a prototype website for GNSCOM.

“The initiative is an important step for the promotion of transparency and effective communication within the Member States, and for the development and sustainability of strong nuclear and radiation safety and security programmes” said Ms Ruth Morgart, Communication Adviser for the Nuclear Safety and Security Department, who is leading this project.
ANSN brings together 11 participating countries working to improve the safety of nuclear installations in South East Asia, Pacific and Far East countries. During the meeting, ANSN Steering Committee members provided on the progress achieved this year in the Asian region through the network.

The Asian Nuclear Safety Network (ANSN) 20th Steering Committee meeting took place at IAEA Headquarters in Vienna on November 19th and gathered 23 participants. Both Steering Committee members and representatives from partner countries (France and the USA) reported on the progress achieved this year in the Asian region through the network.

The improvement of the ANSN website was another key topic addressed during the meeting. The IAEA team in charge of GNSSN oversight is working closely with ANSN to finalize a feasibility study for the migration of the ANSN website to the IAEA domain. This migration to the SharePoint environment of GNSSN is expected to strengthen the network and to offer new functionalities. It will enhance the document management system, allow advanced online collaboration opportunities and improve the reporting and online nomination processes. The final feasibility study will be submitted to the 21st ANSN Steering Committee meeting, scheduled on April 20th-22nd 2015 in Tokyo, Japan, for approval along with a prototype version of the new ANSN portal.

The second Capacity Building Management Group (CBMG) meeting took place during the event. This group coordinates ANSN capacity building activities and supervise the effort the base these activities of the needs expressed in national self-evaluation effort. The main achievement of this meeting of the CBMG was to propose the establishment of new self-assessment guideline for ANSN, to replace Integrated Safety Evaluation (ISE) currently in use, and to restructure the composition of topical groups in order to decrease the risk of overlap.

Mr. Huda, Chairperson of ANSN Steering Committee expressed his satisfaction with the recent developments of ANSN management tools, such as the preparation of self-assessment guideline. He further invited to reflect on how to reach out more effectively to other regional and global capacity building networks within the GNSSN.
Strengthening cooperation in the Arab region

23 September 2014 | The Arab Network of Nuclear Regulators (ANNuR) met on the margins of this year’s IAEA General Conference, providing an overview of ANNuR and its activities for the 50 attending delegates and Member State representatives.

During the meeting, Mr. Lingquan Guo, Head of the Knowledge Networks Unit in the IAEA Department of Nuclear Safety and Security, encouraged member countries to take leadership and ownership in ANNuR’s development, as well as to fully engage in its activities, because “this isn’t IAEA’s network, the Agency is simply the Secretariat. This is ANNuR’s network and requires your leadership to really work”, he said.

ANNuR seeks to increase cooperation between Arab countries, some of which are in different geographical regions, but share a language, have many cultural similarities and face many of the same socio-economic, political and trans-boundary issues. Moreover, since its founding in 2010, this Arab network has conducted 50 training events for 1217 participants. ANNuR has developed partnerships with the Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety (KINS), the US Department of Energy, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the European Union, all of which contribute to its activities in various ways. In 2014, eight events were held in the framework of ANNuR, including regional workshops and other meetings.

Partnerships are not only developed among the region, the Secretariat has close relation with the network, and on May 2014, Mr. Denis Flory, IAEA Deputy Director General for the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security, and Mr. Hafedh Belmabrouk, ANNuR Chairperson signed a “Practical Arrangements” agreement to further strengthen IAEA’s support, capacity building and cooperation with the ANNuR network. This agreement is designed to better facilitate current and future education, training as well as the advisory mission needs of Arab regulatory bodies in the production and sustainability of relevant regulations and guidelines.

The main purpose behind the network is to provide a framework for ANNuR countries to exchange experience and discuss as they confront complex issues of nuclear safety and regulation, explained Yassine Chaari, Nuclear Safety Officer at the IAEA. This is an opportunity for them to become aware that they are part of a global initiative where they can connect with their peers regionally, as well as globally through the GNSSN. The GNSSN facilitates assistance and training required by ANNuR members for the safe and sustainable use of nuclear technologies. ANNuR’s Programme for 2015 includes training events as part of the different thematic working groups activities as well as for the development of cross-cutting activities.
Health care, agricultural production, food security; management of natural resources and provision of sustainable energy are some of the challenges in Africa that nuclear technologies are contributing to address. The Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa (FNRBA), created in March 2009 and gathering 33 members, is working to enhance, strengthen and harmonize the related nuclear safety and security regulatory infrastructure among the FNRBA’s members.

The FNRBA strives for developing nuclear safety capacity at national and regional levels. For Mr Agustin Simo, Chairman of FNRBA, the effort provided in the frame of this network is crucial to accompany national efforts. It will help FNRBA members join forces and benefit from one another’s experience. FNRBA is becoming a fully effective and efficient internationally recognized organization for the exchange of regulatory experiences and practices among the nuclear regulatory bodies in Africa.

A major challenge faced by many countries in the region is the lack of efficient documentation systems and effective knowledge management tools. They also need online collaborative working space. Such issues are addressed through collaboration with the GNSSN, as it provides support for establishing national knowledge management system.

During the 57th IAEA General Conference, in September 2013, the IAEA and the FNRBA signed practical arrangements to increase collaboration and cooperation between the two organizations. These arrangements will hopefully enhance progress in the countries of the African continent and help them liaising among each other through FNRBA and other safety networks administrated by the Agency.
Within the GNSSN website, National Nuclear Regulatory Portals (NNRPs) have been developed as internet portals allowing Member States to manage and display national information on their nuclear safety infrastructure as part of their Country Nuclear Regulatory Profiles (CNRP). NNRPs enable sharing of country specific information on items of interest for nuclear regulatory purposes, such as reports from review missions, legal references and news.

At the end of 2014, the number of countries which developed an NNRP reached 32 countries. The National Nuclear Regulatory Portals (NNRPs) provide Member States with an effective platform for national stakeholders to connect, communicate and collaborate. They serve as interfaces between national stakeholders and the international nuclear safety community at large and as a nuclear knowledge management tool. Therefore, NNRPs act also as an incentive for the harmonization of knowledge management of nuclear safety and security at national, regional and global level.

The exact type of information differs from one national portal to another and the content is provided voluntarily. National platforms are mainly used as an authoritative source of information maintained directly by the Member States. As new national contact points are nominated, the number of these platforms is expected to increase during the coming years.
Interview with the Deputy Director General:
“The GNSSN is an essential support to assist Member States in strengthening the global nuclear safety and security framework.”

What would you say are the primary benefits of the GNSSN for its members?

The GNSSN provides an essential support for the IAEA to assist Member States in strengthening the global nuclear safety and security framework. It allows them to exchange information and best practices, to build capacity and to develop partnerships and coordinated initiatives. As more and more people connect through the GNSSN gateway, they bring with them valuable expertise to exponentially grow the various knowledge bases. The size of the network is more than the sum of its parts, providing growth and capacity building opportunities to the worldwide nuclear community.

Some regulatory bodies may not have the necessary human resources to carry out their functions in the most effective way. How do you see the GNSSN assisting Member States with this issue?

Relying on sufficient and adequately qualified human resources is a recurring issue for the regulatory bodies in nuclear power states, but even more in less experienced countries. This difficulty is regularly found during IAEA safety reviews missions. The GNSSN is a key instrument to help address this problem as it provides many opportunities of capacity building and gives our Member States worldwide access to experts from other regions and other countries, allowing them to obtain and share their knowledge and expertise. Such effort truly helps strengthen and widen the base of competent human resources in the field of nuclear and radiological safety.
What do you think are the main challenges of the GNSSN in a short and long term?

I think an important challenge is for GNSSN to gain visibility and to be acknowledged as the nuclear safety and security networking “hub” that it really is.

It is also a challenge to involve various types of members in the activities of the GNSSN. Achieving a geographical balance, gathering Member States with large, very small or no nuclear power programs at all, represents a continuous effort for the Secretariat. Everyone should also be able to find what they are looking for in this global network. It is important that the growing number of networks gathered in the GNSSN is structured with an effort to maintain consistency and to prevent overlaps. It is a very challenging task for the GNSSN management team to develop links, consistency and coordination among the various components of this global network.

EPNet is a new network for emergency responders within the GNSSN; do you foresee any other future projects under the GNSSN umbrella?

Networks are developed if they answer a need identified by the Agency or the Member States and can truly support nuclear safety and security. With that in mind, I think preliminary work is currently ongoing on the creation of a forum dedicated to capacity building, a network for nuclear safety communication practitioners (GNSCOM) and a forum for countries interested in the development of Small Modular Reactor (SMR), that will enable them to discuss SMR related safety and security issues.
**Main Events**

**Jan/Jun 2015**

**6th GNSSN Steering Committee meeting**
**4th - 5th May 2015**
**IAEA Headquarter, Vienna, Austria**

Objective: To exchange information on the safety knowledge networks among the participants and to discuss the progress and the development of regional and global networks and forum.

**4th - 5th May 2015**

**IAEA Headquarter, Vienna, Austria**

Objective: To exchange information on the safety knowledge networks among the participants and to discuss the progress and the development of regional and global networks and forum.

**FNRBA Plenary Meeting**
**28th - 30th April 2015**
**Egypt**

Objectives: To exchange information on the progress of FNRBA topical groups among the participants; to discuss the progress of the annual work plan; to restructure the FNRBA network and to define the roles and responsibilities of the FNRBA members.

**First FNRBA Workshop for French speaking countries, on radioactive sources management**
**29th June - 3rd July 2015**
**Paris, France**

Objective: To provide guidance and to share expertise on the way to safety manage radioactive sources throughout their entire lifecycle.

**Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Technical and Scientific Support Organization**
**26th - 27th March 2015**
**IAEA Headquarter, Vienna, Austria**

Objective: To oversee implementation of activities developed by the TSO Forum.

**31st March – 2nd April**
**IAEA Headquarter, Vienna, Austria**

Objective: To launch the new network by involving more Member States in the definition of the network characteristics, to set up a Steering Committee for GNSCOM and to discuss and adopt the network's Terms of Reference.

**21st Steering Committee meeting of ANSN**
**20th - 22nd April 2015**
**Japan**

Objective: To oversee the implementation of ANSN activities in the first half of 2015 and decide on proposed management issues including the migration of the ANSN website to the GNSSN SharePoint environment.

**Workshop on National Nuclear Regulatory Portals**
**21st - 23rd January 2015**
**Belarus**

Objective: National Nuclear Regulatory Portals (NNRPs) are web-based portals on the GNSSN platform, allowing Member States to manage and display their national nuclear safety information resources, including their country nuclear regulatory profile (CNRPs).