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Environment



UN Agency Appeals for Funds to Combat Nuclear Terrorism

VIENNA, Austria, March 22, 2002 (ENS) - The United Nations agency responsible for inspections and verifications of nuclear facilities around the world has approved an action plan to upgrade worldwide protection against acts of nuclear terrorism. The International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors is now calling on governments to contribute to funding of the plan "as a matter of urgency."

In approving the plan, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) acknowledged that national measures for protecting nuclear material and facilities are "uneven in their substance and application."



IAEA safeguards inspectors at work (Photo courtesy [IAEA](#))

In his remarks to the Board March 19, IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei said, "All of us are vulnerable because all of us use nuclear materials and radioactive materials can easily move across borders."

As an independent intergovernmental, science and technology based organization that serves as the global focal point for nuclear cooperation, the IAEA admitted, "There is wide recognition that the international physical protection regime needs to be

strengthened."

The IAEA has calculated its annual funding needs at \$12 million to carry out its action plan and an additional \$20 million per year to enable the agency to respond to urgent situations that require immediate security upgrades.

A number of countries have already contributed to fund the plan, including Australia (\$100,000), Great Britain (\$350,000), Japan (\$500,000), the Netherlands (EUR 250,000), Slovenia (EUR 14,000), and the United States (\$1 million).

UN inspection shows damaged Tammuz-2 reactor at Tuwaitha, Iraq. (Photo courtesy Mouchkin/IAEA)

A number of other countries announced in-kind support to the plan, including Finland, France, Germany, India, Romania, and Turkey. Other countries expressed hope to finance or provide support to the plan in the near future.



Also, in November 2001, the United States and the Nuclear Threat Initiative each pledged \$1.2 million for the fund.

ElBaradei emphasized that these new activities will not "diminish the primary responsibility of the state on all matters of security; rather they are designed to supplement and reinforce national efforts in areas where international co-operation is indispensable to the strengthening of nuclear security."

"This modest investment in nuclear security will bring benefits for all states," he said.

The IAEA currently safeguards over 900 facilities in 70 countries on a regular safeguards budget of approximately US\$80 million per

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year.

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