

# International Conference on Radioactive Waste Disposal

## GEOLOGICAL REPOSITORIES: A COMMON OBJECTIVE, A VARIETY OF PATHS

Berne, Switzerland, October 15–17, 2007

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### Stockholm Conference, December 8–10 2003

#### Organisation

The conference was organised by Svensk Kärnbränslehantering AB (**SKB**) and held in co-operation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (**IAEA**), the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (**OECD/NEA**), the European Commission (**EC**) and the International Association for Environmentally Safe Disposal of Radioactive Materials (**EDRAM**).

#### Participants

The conference was attended by more than **210 delegates from 25 countries** as well as international organisations (\*indicates countries whose delegates presented a paper):

- Argentina, Austria, Belgium\*, Brazil, Canada, China\*, Czech Republic, Finland\*, France\*, Germany\*, Hungary\*, Iceland, India, Italy, Japan\*, Korea\*, Lithuania, Norway, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain\*, Sweden\*, Switzerland\*, Ukraine, United Kingdom\*, USA\*
- European Commission\*, IAEA\*, OECD/NEA\*

#### High-level representatives included:

- China: Huazhu Zhang, Ministry of Energy, Chairman China Atomic Energy Authority
- Sweden: Claes Anstrand, State Secretary, Ministry for Industry and Trade
- USA: Ambassador Kenneth C. Brill, U.S. Mission to the IAEA in Vienna
- EC: Christian Waeterloos, Director, Nuclear Safety and Safeguards
- IAEA: Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General
- OECD/NEA: Luis Echávarri, Director General

Representatives from the ministries also included:

- Germany: Wolfgang Renneberg, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
- France: Bernard Frois, Ministry of Research and New Technologies
- Finland: Jussi Manninen, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Deputy Director General, Energy Department
- Japan: Akio Morishima, Atomic Energy Commission (Government agency reporting to the Cabinet)
- Russian Federation: Alexander Erastov, Minatom
- Switzerland: Michael Aebersold, Swiss Federal Office of Energy

#### Conclusions

There was general agreement that progress is continuously being made, to the point that **technological aspects of geological disposal can be considered to have been solved**. Although further progress will surely be made, no major breakthrough is expected in this area and many consider the technology to be mature.

**Socio-political issues**, however, are far from having been resolved. Progress has been made, in the sense that technologists accept that they need help from other, non technical groups in society. This is however a complex issue because socio-political issues are closely connected to the continuous evolution of one particular national society. Here, **international cooperation may mean following what others are doing, but not necessarily copying their approach**. All national societies can draw technical help from a common international pool of knowledge, but each one will weave it into its national fabric, in its own specific way.

The assumption that the future, 20 or 30 years from now, will be a continuation of the present is plausible for technologies, but need not be true for socio-political developments. **We cannot predict the future but we should not assume that we know what it will look like**. In our policies we must therefore not only have a clear idea of where we want to go, but also favour **flexible approaches** that we can modify if required. Above all, we must never lose sight that our ultimate goal is to ensure the **safety of geological waste disposal**.