

## MEASURES AGAINST ILLICIT TRAFFICKING OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS AND OTHER RADIOACTIVE SOURCES IN NIGERIA

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### Introduction : Background Information

The concern worldwide over the dangers associated with illicit trafficking of nuclear materials and other radioactive sources is shared by the Federal Government and people of Nigeria. In order to protect its territories, the government in the second quarter of 1998 gave a directive that Nigeria should be registered as a participating nation in the Illicit Trafficking Database Programme being organised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Vienna, Austria. Immediately, a National Committee (NC) was established comprising of all relevant ministries and government agencies, particularly the ones involved in the control and use of radioactive materials such as the Federal Radiation Protection Service (FRPS), Nuclear Research Centres, Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA), Energy Commission of Nigeria, the Nigerian Police Force, the Customs and the Ports Authority. By August 1998, the committee got Nigeria duly registered with the IAEA as a participating nation and presented a proposal to the Federal Government on how to monitor our ports of entry, borders and the entire country in order to participate effectively in the programme.

In order to check illicit trafficking of nuclear materials effectively and efficiently within and across the Nigerian borders, the National Committee gave priority to proper organisational structure, manpower training and development, and the provision of adequate and necessary facilities and infrastructure for nationwide radiation monitoring programme.

### Organisational Structure

In Nigeria, there is a Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection Decree No. 19 of 1995 which established Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NRA) and an Institute of Radiation Protection (IRP). The decree empowers the NRA to regulate the production, possession, transfer, import, export, trade, use, transportation, storage and disposal of radioactive materials and radiation equipment in order to ensure radiation safety of the general public, radiation workers, properties and the environment. Pending the time the NRA and IRP are brought to operational existence, the FRPS has been mandated to perform the role of the Regulatory Body while the existing three Energy Research Centres and FRPS are jointly saddled with the responsibilities of the IRP. All these government agencies and the research centres play major roles in the National Committee on Illicit Trafficking and form the core of the Technical Committee of the National Committee.

Six institutions which are strategically located round the country have been selected as Illicit Trafficking Data Collection Centres taking into consideration competence in terms of personnel and monitoring equipment. The institutions are located in Zaria, Ile-Ife, Ibadan, Abuja, Warri and Enugu. In all the institutions, there are Radiation Physicists that can competently take care of the nation-wide radiation monitoring and participate effectively in the programme. One of them, the Sheda Science and Technology Complex, Abuja is the coordinating centre and Point of Contact pending the time the NRA is properly constituted.

and becomes fully functional. Reports on illicit trafficking in Nigeria from the Data Collection Centres as well as reports from the Illicit Trafficking Database at the IAEA are to be sent to the Point of Contact in Abuja.

### **Manpower Training and Development**

The Technical Committee (TC) is to provide adequate supervision for the programme, guide the personnel involved in the monitoring of our territories at the seaports, airports, border posts and hinterland, and develop a sound training programme for all the participants. In addition, members of the TC are to pay regular visits to the monitoring centres particularly at the ports. During each visit, Seminars/Lectures are to be organised for the personnel of FEPA, Police, Customs, Immigration and the Ports Authority. This is to increase awareness at the ports of entry and for capacity building of manpower for radiation monitoring at the ports. The responsibility of the TC also includes presentation of progress report and the IAEA reports to the National Committee at the quarterly meetings.

### **Provision of Adequate and Necessary Facilities and Infrastructure**

In order to establish the necessary infrastructure, 6 seaports, 4 international airports and 5 land border posts were selected as monitoring stations to be equipped with radiation monitoring equipment. The six data collection centres are to be upgraded with all necessary modern radiation monitoring facilities. Presently, three of the centres have facilities to detect and determine the type of radionuclides, type and quantity of radiation and provide further testing of any radioactive materials intercepted from unauthorised persons.

### **Conclusion : Problems and Areas of Need**

There is a good organisational structure in place despite the absence of a national nuclear regulatory authority. In fact, the Nuclear Regulatory Authority, when properly constituted and becomes fully functional, has to work with the relevant ministries and government agencies that constitute the present National Committee. We do have well trained and qualified personnel that can properly manage the programme. In addition, there are some existing infrastructure that are presently being used. There are laboratories, office spaces and monitoring equipment at some centres in the country.

Our problems are :

- (i) Lack of radiation monitoring equipment at our seaports, international airports and the border posts for quick check for radioactive materials carried into and out of our territories. Consequently, it has been very difficult to successfully track the illicit traffickers.
- (ii) The National Committee does not have enough fund to carry out the committee's programme. This has inhibited the committee from expanding its scope of work.

Assistance is required from the IAEA to enhance efficiency and effectiveness by :

- (i) providing radiation monitoring equipment for use at the ports of entry; and
- (ii) personnel training, particularly, the Police, Customs and State Security Service in the tracking of illicit traffickers of nuclear materials and other radioactive sources.