

Joint Statement InfoArena 2013 meeting point Oslo

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Guardians of our Common Seas, Bellona and Sellafield Ltd have held their 9th conference on nuclear waste and safety, 13 June 2013.

The joint conference in Oslo continued a programme of positive and constructive dialogue that commenced in 2001 and has led to a 95% reduction from Sellafield of sea discharges of Technetium 99 and a positive development in the work for safety. The dialogue has involved Nordic representatives visiting Sellafield and receiving information that has enabled them to gain a better understanding of the site.

The conference was attended by the Norwegian Minister of Environment, politicians from the Norwegian Parliament and Nordic Council, as well as technical experts, safety regulators and the management of Sellafield Ltd, ONR, UK Government (DECC) and NDA. The conference focused on nuclear safety, environmental impacts and the oversight by Norwegian and UK regulators.


The Norway Minister of the Environment, Bård Vegar Solhjell, stressed the importance of precise information as basis for Norway's emergency preparedness. A broad contact base, including the NGO's role, is essential. He also stressed the importance of rapidly reducing the risk from the storage of liquid high level waste. Lastly he underlined the importance of the need for the continued funding of decommissioning of Sellafield.

Kliss McNeel, director of Environment, Health and Safety at Sellafield said: - «We are making significant progress in improving safety at Sellafield and we are committed to safe, secure stewardship of the site. We are doing this against a backdrop of reducing risks in our operations, especially in the area of highly active waste. Reducing highly active liquor (HAL) stocks is always an important focus of this conference. We are ahead of schedule set by our regulators and we will continue to drive those stocks down».

Rene McTaggart, of the UK Government's Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) said «The success of the dialogue has been built on an atmosphere of trust that has resulted in a better understanding of the issues by interested parties in Norway and the UK. He also restated the high priority given to nuclear safety so that safety is at the heart of the UK decision making process.».

Lauri Heikkilä, Sannfinländarna (saf), member of the Nordic Council, said that InfoArena is a very important platform for the dialogue. The Nordic Council welcomes reports about progress made and will continue to follow the developments at Sellafield in the years to come. The Fukushima accident shows very clearly that we have to take nuclear safety seriously and be prepared to handle unforeseen events. He reiterated the request from last year's InfoArena, that information was needed on the pollution of sediments in the Irish Sea.

Ingvill Størksen, Centre Party Parliamentary Group political advisor, expressed that we have a responsibility to ensure that the environment is protected for future generations. Therefore, safety at Sellafield is of paramount importance. She noted accidents that had happened in the nuclear industry with particular concern about the consequences of



Chernobyl accident. Norwegian Food Safety Authority continues to provide dietary advice to those who harvest meat, mushrooms and berries from areas that received the most radioactive precipitation. Sheep from the worst affected areas still need special feeding before they are slaughtered. She was concerned that the consequences from a leak at Sellafield may be far worse.

Arne Ivar Mikalsen, Nordland parliamentary candidate for Norway's Social Liberal Party said that if there is a problem in the UK, we, the Nordic countries will also have problem. My region, Nordland, is the home of the world largest and most important cod fisheries. It is also the birthplace and first home for the mighty cod. And the seabed is most probably a resource itself, of unknown potential.

The operations and decommissioning of Sellafield have been issues of public and political concerns for the Nordic countries. The conference heard the views of the Nordic representatives and were given an appraisal of the UK's policy and strategy on nuclear matters that are of concern to the Nordic countries. The conference was given an update on the progress being made at Sellafield in reducing risks at the site particularly those associated with High Active Liquor stocks.

The broad approach that through cooperation ensure openness and transparency at Sellafield will provide a rigorous basis on which future discussions can take place. This approach has done much to build trust and confidence in the operations and activities at Sellafield.

It was agreed that dialogue will continue in order to maintain productive relationships between Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Sellafield Ltd., Guardians of our Common Seas and Bellona. To maintain the transparency with Sellafield Ltd, meetings will continue for regular updates. This will enable politicians, experts and communities to continue the positive dialogue about nuclear safety receiving the latest developments and plans regarding the safety at Sellafield and Thorp.

Per-Kaare Holdal from Guardians of our Common Seas and Nils Bøhmer from Bellona will underline the value that InfoArena has been able to produce greater transparency during the years of discussion with Sellafield Ltd., Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and Department of Energy and Climate Change. And we agree that it is important to maintain this in the years to come until the goals that are set are reached.