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World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS) is Launched in Vienna; New Organization Will Strengthen Security for Nuclear Materials

A new, first-of-its-kind organization to strengthen the physical protection and security of nuclear and radioactive materials and facilities worldwide was launched today in Vienna, Austria. The World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS) will bring together nuclear security experts, the nuclear industry, governments and international organizations to focus on rapid and sustainable improvement of security at nuclear facilities around the world.

Through WINS, the professionals responsible for on-the-ground security will collect the world's best security practices for dealing with nuclear facilities and materials and share that information with their peers worldwide. These security professionals are in the best position to know where the vulnerabilities are, how to improve security, and how to ensure that improvements are implemented quickly and effectively. WINS will place a high priority on protecting sensitive information that may be discussed between members.

While WINS's scope of work will include both weapons-usable material and radioactive materials, its initial activities will concentrate on the most dangerous materials -- highly enriched uranium and plutonium, which can be used to make a nuclear weapon.

In launching WINS, former Senator Sam Nunn, co-chairman of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), announced that NTI, with financial support from the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, has committed \$3 million to the new organization. U.S. Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman announced that the Department of Energy is matching NTI's gift with an additional \$3 million. Ambassador Bengt Johansen of Norway announced his country's support for WINS and an initial \$100,000 contribution to support the participation of security professionals from developing states in WINS activities. WINS expects to leverage additional contributions from governments around the world and from the nuclear industry.

NTI, the Institute for Nuclear Materials Management and the U.S. Department of Energy partnered together to develop and launch WINS, with the close coordination of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

“I believe that we must be committed to the vision of a world in which all nuclear materials are safe, secure and accounted for from cradle to grave,” said former Senator Sam Nunn, co-chairman of the Nuclear Threat Initiative. “The ultimate goal of WINS is for every institution responsible for nuclear and radioactive material to join and participate in this organization – both to share what they know and to learn from others. Our message to everyone handling nuclear materials is that a terrorist nuclear attack anywhere in the world will cast a dark cloud over the entire nuclear community -- no matter where the material originated. WINS will help ensure that we can enjoy the benefits of nuclear energy while defending against its dangers.”

"Each nation has the responsibility to assist in the effort to make nuclear materials and facilities secure. This means we need cooperation at every level and every stage of the process: from government, to industry, to non-governmental organizations," said U.S. Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman. "The World Institute for Nuclear Security will make an important contribution to the cause of nuclear nonproliferation and nuclear security."

“Vulnerable nuclear material anywhere is a threat to everyone, everywhere,” said Senator Nunn. “Like most global problems, the defense against nuclear terrorism is dependent upon cooperative and collective global action.”

WINS will not duplicate the essential activities of the IAEA. WINS will work closely with and complement the IAEA’s work. WINS will be headquartered in Vienna to ensure close coordination.

“I am pleased to provide my support and endorsement for the establishment of the World Institute for Nuclear Security to be based in Vienna,” said IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei. “As the full support of nuclear operators is key to effective nuclear security, I am confident that establishing a forum to help share and promote best practices amongst them will improve nuclear security, and contribute to and complement the efforts of the IAEA towards establishing and helping to implement a global nuclear security regime based on internationally accepted norms and guidelines.”

“The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism’s Terms of Reference explicitly speaks of the need to share best practices to develop and improve accounting, control and physical protection systems for nuclear and other radioactive materials,” said Charles Curtis, who first urged a dialogue among professionals to improve security in 2005 and serves as President of NTI. “With the launch of WINS, we hope to provide an institutional means for doing that important work.”

NTI will continue to offer its encouragement and assistance to WINS, but the organization will be accountable and responsive to its membership, its international Board and its participants.

Dr. Roger Howsley has agreed to serve as WINS’s first executive director. He will report to and be accountable to an international Board of Directors, whose membership will

expand in the coming months. Roger has long experience at the highest levels of nuclear security. He was previously the Director for Security, Safeguards and International Affairs at British Nuclear Fuels. In that position, he was responsible for the security and safeguards functions across the BNFL Group of Companies which included 16 countries and 17,000 employees.

“We believe that a key element of global nuclear security must be the facility operators who have ‘first-line’ responsibility for the security of their materials,” said Dr. Howsley. “WINS will fill dangerous gaps in existing government and international regulatory efforts.”

NTI’s contribution is made possible by a grant from the Peter G. Peterson Foundation. The Peterson Foundation is dedicated to increasing public awareness of the nature and urgency of challenges threatening our future and accelerating action on them. The foundation’s approach is to bring people together around common sense, long-term solutions that tackle intractable problems and transcend ideological divides in order to achieve real results.

The Nuclear Threat Initiative is a charitable organization working to reduce the risks from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Additional information can be found at www.wins.org or by emailing info@wins.org.

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