

Advisory Council to the
Nuclear Waste Management Organization

Record of Discussion: September 23, 2003 Meeting

Record of discussion of the meeting of the Advisory Council to the Nuclear Waste Management Organization / Soci t  de gestion des d chets nucl aires (NWMO)

held at Toronto, Ontario, commencing at 8:30 p.m. and concluding at 3:00 p.m. on September 23, 2003.

Present

Advisory Council:

David Crombie	Chairman
David Cameron	Member
Helen Cooper	Member
Gordon Cressy	Member
Fred Gilbert	Member
Derek Lister	Member
Donald Obonsawin	Member
Daniel Rozon	Member

Also in attendance:

NWMO:

Elizabeth Dowdeswell	President
Kathryn Shaver	Corporate Secretary
Jo-Ann Facella	(Items 5 and 7)
Mike Krizanc	(Item 3)
John Neate	(Item 6)
Donna Pawlowski	(Item 3)
Tony Hodge	(Item 7)

COUNCIL BUSINESS

1. Constitution of Meeting

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

On motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the minutes of the Advisory Council meeting held on June 25, 2003, were approved with one point of clarification as requested by the Advisory Council.

3. Nuclear Seminar

Basic Nuclear Physics Concepts

Dr. Rozon delivered a presentation to the Advisory Council on basic nuclear physics concepts, in which he addressed such topics as atomic structure, nuclear energy production, radioactivity and the generation of nuclear fuel waste.

Radiation

Dr. Lister delivered a presentation to the Advisory Council focused on radiation, in which he described how radiation is emitted from different radionuclides, and addressed such issues as radioactivity decay rates, radiation dose and radiation sources in the environment.

General discussion on the presentations followed.

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

4. Debrief on Yucca Mountain

The Advisory Council had requested time on the agenda for members to debrief and reflect on the site visit to the Yucca Mountain repository which took place in July 2003.

5. Update on Consultations

In response to an Advisory Council request, the President provided a verbal update with highlights on the NWMO's activities designed to support engagement and the development of the analytical framework:

- The NWMO has issued its first Newsletter (distributed to Council). Newsletters will be produced at regular intervals as a means of reporting out on the NWMO activities. In addition to being posted on the NWMO website, the Newsletter will be tabled as an information document during NWMO consultations with the public.
- The Advisory Council received a two-page summary of the "Year in Review", highlighting some of the NWMO's key accomplishments in its first year.

- All five concept papers commissioned by the NWMO have now been received. The papers are presently being peer reviewed. The papers, and the comments of the peer reviewers, will be posted on the NWMO website. It is planned that some topics in the papers may be the subjects of e-dialogue coordinated with the public. Binders containing the concept papers were distributed to Advisory Council members at the meeting.
- Papers commissioned by the NWMO on a variety of social and technical topics will be posted on the NWMO website over the coming weeks.
- Also being finalized, is a document on “What We Heard”, intended to capture key messages delivered to the NWMO during initial conversations in the early part of the NWMO mandate, through some 250 meetings. This document will also be available as a handout.
- The NWMO held its first meeting with the Ethical Expert Roundtable on September 5th. The President reported on a very productive, full day of discussions with eminent ethicists who brought a variety of interesting backgrounds and perspectives to the exercise. A report on the discussions, under development, will be shared with the Advisory Council and will be publicly available on the NWMO website. It is planned that the Ethics Roundtable will meet several times to support the NWMO’s development of discussion documents and to provide reflection on the issues raised in the documents. The Advisory Council registered their interest in attending one of the sessions with the Roundtable.
- NWMO held a one-day Environment Workshop in Ottawa on September 15th which brought together experts from different fields to address key environment questions for the analytical framework. The report from the Workshop will be posted on the website.
- The NWMO is holding a Technical Workshop at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario on September 26. Through the participation of broad cross-section of experts, a number of technical issues will be addressed, relating to technical considerations of different management approaches, active versus passive management, and technology and time horizons.
- The NWMO is convening a Traditional Knowledge Workshop in Saskatoon on September 24-25th. Through the participation of approximately 25 representatives from different Aboriginal groups, the NWMO will seek to identify Traditional Knowledge principles that can help to guide the NWMO study, and consider how to integrate this knowledge into subsequent phases of the NWMO work.
- The NWMO is in the process of contacting individual participants from the Seaborn Panel process by way of written correspondence, to introduce the NWMO and identify how to follow and get involved in the NWMO work. The first set of these letters was sent to the aboriginal participants in the Seaborn Panel process.

- The NWMO has sent letters to each of five national Aboriginal organizations, and looks forward to discussing how each organization may wish to be involved in the NWMO study. The NWMO met with the head of the Inuit national organization on September 22.

The Advisory Council inquired as to the role of Natural Resources Canada with respect to consultations with Aboriginal people on the matter of nuclear fuel waste. The President reported that Natural Resources Canada is not holding their own stream of consultations with the Aboriginal people. Rather, they are providing funding to national Aboriginal organizations to support capacity building in the organizations so that they might consider and comment on the issue.

- Working with the Centre for Dialogue at Simon Fraser University, the NWMO has been preparing for the Community Dialogue with representatives from nuclear site communities across Canada. Through this forum, the NWMO will bring together community members to help identify and describe different approaches to engaging with reactor site communities in ways that are responsive to specific concerns and interests within the communities. The first meeting is planned for early October.
- The NWMO will be working with the Canadian Policy Research Networks on an important component of the engagement plan, designed to lead facilitated National Citizen Dialogues with groups of Canadian citizens across the country. Preparatory work is currently under way for this activity that will be initiated in 2004, following the release of the NWMO's first discussion paper. The President would like to invite each Advisory Council member to attend one of the sessions, so that they might hear directly some views and perspectives of citizens in different regions of the country.
- On September 16th, 17th, and 18th the NWMO met with the OECD and its Nuclear Energy Agency, and the European Commission. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the NWMO's mandate, and to explore research programs under way internationally and expertise that might provide relevant knowledge and resources for the NWMO.

6. Status Report – Follow-Up to Scientific Review Group Evaluation

Further to an Advisory Council request from the June meeting, the NWMO tabled a status report on the issues raised during the Seaborn Panel 's Scientific Review Group evaluation of AECL's Nuclear Fuel Waste Disposal Concept. The status report outlined research undertaken subsequent to the SRG's evaluation, and actions being taken by the NWMO. The status report notes that many of the issues raised by the SRG are site specific issues, and hence would be addressed more fully at a later stage, should deep geological disposal be the method selected by the Government of Canada. The AECL concept of disposal is but one of the methods that the NWMO must study. The Nuclear Fuel Waste Act requires that the NWMO, at a minimum, also study storage at nuclear reactor sites and centralized storage, either above or below ground. The President underscored the importance of ensuring the other methods also receive comprehensive study.

NWMO WORKPLAN

7. Review of Discussion Document 1

The President introduced Draft 1 of the Discussion Document that had been distributed to the Advisory Council for comment. The President invited Advisory Council views on the messages, the amount and presentation of information in the document, and any significant gaps. The President also invited advice on any editorial aspect of the paper, noting that it was still a very preliminary working draft.

Following those introductory remarks, the Chairman opened up the meeting for Council discussion of the draft Document.

The Advisory Council offered a number of suggestions in support of:

- Improving the clarity of the document in terms of language that will be readily understood by the public;
- Clarifying the messages intended to be conveyed by the document;
- Providing facts of a technical nature, and facts concerning history and context of nuclear fuel waste;
- Determining the appropriate level of detail for the document; and
- Ensuring that the “call to action” is clear in the paper, to emphasize that public comment is welcomed.

In terms of next steps, the President will be arranging for a revised draft of the Document to be distributed to the Advisory Council for a further discussion via conference call within the next two weeks.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

8. Next Meeting

The Chairman confirmed that the next face to face meeting of the Advisory Council is scheduled for November 27, 2003.

Council members will map out the 2004 meeting dates at the November 27, 2003 meeting.

The President indicated that the NWMO would be in contact with the Council members to schedule a conference call in October to review the next draft of Discussion Document 1.

9. Other Business

There was brief discussion on the extent of public inquiries and interest registered in the NWMO activities. Dr. Gilbert expressed interest in arranging a speaking opportunity for the President at Lakehead University.

The Chairman and President invited Council members to identify issues or topics that they wish to have discussed at the future meeting.

Termination of Meeting

The Chairman declared the meeting terminated at 3:00 p.m.

Dated the 19th day of January, 2004
Corporate Secretary