I R P A 10

TOPICAL SESSIONS
Reports of Co-Chairmen for Highlight Sessions

T-20(1): Critical Issues and Alternative Approaches to Setting Radiation Protection Criteria

Thursday, 18 May 2000

Chair and Keynote: G. Webb Co-Chair: J. Lecomte

Progress towards new recommendations from ICRP

This session was started by Dr. Webb, who stated that it was a unique opportunity to contribute to the development of ICRP recommendations at a formative stage. He congratulated Dr. Clark on his bravery in initiating the “controllable dose” debate and the societies and individuals who had put in much hard preparations for this session.

Dr. Clarke set the scene for the discussions. He clarified that the main objectives of the exercise were to examine possibilities for changes in the philosophy and frame work of the existing system, where particular difficulties arose in understanding, clarity and operational implementation. The main endpoint for this was a system that would be simpler and easier to use, and most importantly one that would achieve greater public understanding and support. He reiterated that this was evolution not revolution and in many ways flowed from qualifications introduced in ICRP 60 and developed in subsequent publications. It was also necessary for changes in emphasis to be made to recognize the shift in societal expectations towards a more equity-based ethical system. Dr. Clarke then set out the key features of his proposed new system, highlighting the areas where he had already responded to comments on his original suggestions.

Following this introduction, presentations were made by the French, German/Swiss, USA, Nordic, South African, UK, Japanese and Spanish societies on the results of their preliminary consultations. A paper was also presented prepared by the CRPPH of OECD/NEA. Responses from the floor included delegates from Australia and New Zealand, Japan, the Netherlands, Hungary and India, and referred to further position papers that had been developed.

Although it was not the intention of the session to reach any consensus, nonetheless some early common themes emerged from the papers and discussions.

- The process and mechanisms for engaging the protection community through IRPA and the societies in the review of new ICRP proposals were universally welcomed and applauded.
- It was necessary first to concentrate on rectifying defects or weaknesses in the present system before introducing more radical changes or even a new

system of protection. In making such changes, it would be important to take account of the benefits and the costs of change.

- In several areas of the present system the fundamentals were appropriate, but there is still a lack of clear interpretation as to how they are applied in practice, in a manner that is transparent and acceptable to practitioners, workers, and the public. ICRP could help in this, but it is also a matter for organizations including IRPA, IAEA, and NEA.
- Other stakeholders including professionals, interest groups, and the public, need to be brought into the debate. Professionals were cautioned that they too often assumed knowledge of what concerned and confused the public and other non-specialist groups without checking this assumption. The mechanisms for wider consultation and involvement need to be developed and the role of IRPA and societies in these clarified.
- It will be necessary to integrate protection of the environment, including biota, in the new system, but much work needs to be done before this can be achieved.
- Great care is necessary with language, terminology and concepts, especially in not introducing new definitions unless they are absolutely necessary.
- More thinking and development is needed on the way in which quantities such as collective dose and concepts such as ALARA/ALARP are used in the new system.
- Whatever revisions to the current system are proposed, these should be carefully “road tested” for their application before being firmly adopted.

In conclusion, Dr. Webb said that all the presented papers, society position papers and statements would be transmitted by IRPA to ICRP with a summary of the discussions. Dr. Clarke advised that the next stage would be a revised draft from ICRP, taking account of all the comments and feedback received. It was likely that this second draft would not be entitled “controllable dose”.