Submission to IRPA15 Associate Societies Forum

SRP and its Partner Societies* congratulate IRPA on rising to the challenge of developing an online approach to holding the General Assembly, in these Covid difficult times. Given the time constraints for discussion of ASF issues, we have not sought to develop detailed proposals. However, we thought it would be useful to identify areas that we would like to see considered for inclusion in IRPA's programme of work. In brief these are given below.

1. *Developing standards for the profession* – IRPA has previously published Guidance on Certification of a Radiation Protection Expert; however, the profession and its needs evolve, therefore it would be appropriate to revisit the underlying standards for the profession. Here we believe it important that the standards should be inclusive of all those who work in the field of radiation protection, (not just the radiation protection expert), for instance those who may be health/medical physics technicians or come from apprenticeship backgrounds. For example, SRP has developed a set of standards that cover three levels of professional attainment; and created an independent Registration Authority called the Radiation Protection Council (RPC) which will hold and operate the Professional Register. Importantly, this starts with a standard for a Technical Radiation Protection Professional, followed by standards that allow career progression to a Chartered status. We believe it important that IRPA look at how this and similar systems can help develop the profession across all the Associate Societies.

2. *Education and training to further professional standards* - In order to ensure we have the appropriate mix of RP skills for a country's needs, ASs/IRPA need to work with national and international authorities to make sure the necessary educational and training capabilities are available for our profession. These include appropriate RP Degrees and Apprenticeships, professional recognition arrangements (see 1 above) that facilitate mobility across borders. Continuing professional development opportunities are also important (see 3 below and Conclusion)

3. *Use of Digitals Tools and Social Media* – Use of these digital platforms would allow IRPA to reach a much wider professional audience across the globe including those who cannot afford or have the time to attend IRPA Congresses. As an example, the recent SRP / AURPO Webinar Programme launched as a result of COVID-19 has seen 8 event sessions so far, attracting 200 – 400 attendees for each session.

4. *Governance and Communication to support transparency and equality* - The ongoing expansion of IRPA, brings with it the need for development of governance of the various processes and development of stronger links for communication with all societies, particularly with new Associate Societies or ones where there is no local or regional executive representation. Here there are linkages with many of the other points in this submission.

5. *Learning from our COVID experience* - This links in to work started by the IRPA YGN to understand how COVID-19 has impacted the radiation protection profession. There are clear parallels and lessons to be learnt in the Medical Sector, Emergency Planning Arena and Communication of Risk Arena from the pandemic and it would be useful to see that learning captured and taken into account within the RP Profession.

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6. *Taking forward Radiation Safety Culture* - An IRPA TG covering this subject in the Higher Education and Research (HERT) sector has been established with an aim to produce guidance and "tools" for radiation protection practitioners to improve the radiation protection safety culture in the sector. We consider this an important piece of work as it will influence how the students of today foster the same approach in their future careers as the scientists and engineers of tomorrow. There may also be opportunities for other sector specific guidance. (see also links to 7 below)

7. *Continue development with the international community of the understanding and practical implementation of "reasonableness".* - IRPA's development of a draft statement on this has helped bring into focus the various issues underlying the implementation of "reasonableness". The second draft is currently out for consultation, but it is clear that, as identified in the document, there is need for further reflection and development, particularly in relation to De Minimus and Value for Society. The draft also identifies important cross linkages with other key aspects of radiation protection, such as Communicating Risk, Safety Culture and Stakeholder Engagement (see https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1361-6498/abd348). Overall, this stream of work is considered to be an important pillar in the IRPA work programme.

8. *Public Outreach* - There are many different aspects to this. The recent IRPA publication on Practical Guidance on Engagement with the Public on Radiation and Risk, provides a significant contribution to Public Outreach, but it would also be desirable for IRPA to facilitate learning from experiences across the ASs. Another aspect is Outreach to those in school to make science, and radiation protection in particular, both interesting and a potential career opportunity. This can also lay the groundwork for a greater understanding of risks and associated issues in adulthood.

Conclusion

Whilst the above points provide potential foci for specific IRPA work streams, it will be noted that there are many cross linkages. Many of these have been brought together in a keynote presentation by our President, Peter Bryant, at the IRPA 15 session on "The Future of our RP Profession"

We believe the issues covered above and in more detail in the paper provide relevant input to discussions on IRPA's future programme of work.

* SRP's Partner Societies are:
Association of University Radiation Protection Officers (AURPO)
British Institute of Radiology (BIR)
British Nuclear Medicine Society (BNMS)
Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM)
Royal College of Radiologists (RCR)
Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR)

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