

# Joint Statement

## InfoArena 2012 Nuclear Waste and Safety Conference

- meeting point Sellafield **1 June 2012**

### *A joint conference continuing the dialogue towards trust and confidence*

Guardians of our Common Seas (Lofoten mot Sellafield), Bellona and Sellafield Ltd have held their latest conference on nuclear waste and safety. Concerns from Nordic states were heard and reassurances received from Sellafield Ltd about the safe operation of the UK nuclear site.

The joint conference in Sellafield continued a programme of positive and constructive dialogue that commenced in 2003 that led to a 95% reduction from Sellafield of sea discharges of Technetium 99. The dialogue has also created a very effective forum for information exchange, understanding concerns, hearing different perspectives and building trust between Sellafield and Nordic states. Over the years the dialogue has revealed that the culture and traditions of the Nordic and the British people have much in common.

The conference was attended by elected parliamentary representatives and members of local communities from the UK, Iceland, Greenland, Norway and Sweden, as well as technical experts, safety regulators - including Nuclear Radioactive Protection Authority (NRPA -Statens Strålevern) and the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), the NDA and NMP the new shareholders of Sellafield Ltd.

The conference focused on nuclear safety and environmental impacts of operations at Sellafield. The information exchanged gives the Nordic participants confidence that their concerns are being taken seriously. Sellafield Ltd hope that the Nordic participants now have greater confidence that operations at Sellafield are being carried out safely and effectively.

Audun Garberg political adviser of the Norway Ministry for the Environment said that the reprocessing and related treatment facilities has historically had a poor safety record. He went on to acknowledge the improvements reported at the conference, and that constructive dialogue has achieved important results. He also stressed the need to reduce the hazard from highly active liquor (HAL) to a minimum as soon as possible and that meeting the targets for the vitrification plant are crucial to ensure that this happens. Mr Garberg also expressed that the Sellafield Plan timelines need to be met and that he would welcome an analysis of the consequences of uncertainty associated with the plans for the reduction of HAL. He welcomed Sellafield Ltd's drive to improve the safety culture at the site but needs assurance that improvements will continue.

Arne Ivar Mikalsen, member of the board of Venstre, Norway's social liberal party, said that he was very pleased with the progress being made in the safety culture at Sellafield. He welcomed the possibility of the continuance of an open dialogue because he believes that there is still work to do and he will continue to monitor and hope the improvements at the site will continue.

Members of Nordic Council complimented the organisers of this conference and

expressed their support for the continuation of a dialogue on nuclear safety issues between politicians, public authorities and organisations. Kim Kielsen, Álfheidur Ingadottir and Jan Lindholm from the Nordic Council recognised the many safety improvements that have been made in recent years. However, the risk has not been completely eliminated. They are of the opinion that reprocessing nuclear waste is a potential threat and therefore all efforts should be made to find an alternative solution that includes final storage solutions. It is their view that reprocessing should not be part of the future management of spent nuclear fuel. They drew comparisons with Sweden and Finland, both of which have nuclear power production but choose not to reprocess as part of their waste management programme. Therefore they believe that reprocessing should not be used at Sellafield in the future. The Nordic Council welcomes the proposal made by the NDA and its intention to close operations in Thorp in 2018 and not to enter into new contracts for reprocessing spent fuel. Nordic Council expressed also that the Irish Sea has been described as one of the most contaminated marine ecosystem in the world with high level inventories of various long-lived radionuclides in sediment on the seabed.

Ingar Amundsen from the Norwegian NRPA expressed that following the monitoring of plutonium in the North Sea, levels had remained constant, despite the fact that discharges into the sea have over the years been reduced to a minimum. In this context he noted that monitoring results in Norway for other radionuclides in marine products had generally shown a decreasing trend. He also presented the impact to Norway of a hypothetical accident, of low probability, at the HAL tanks in Sellafield that could lead to very serious consequences for Norway.

Bellona and Guardians of our Common Seas will investigate having radioactive seabed deposits as a part of the agenda for InfoArena 2013.

All participants agreed that this unique approach, through cooperation, ensures openness and transparency at Sellafield. This will provide a rigorous basis on which future discussions can take place about strategy, plans and safety performance, in particular the progress being made in reducing HAL stocks and the reprocessing programmes. It was agreed that dialogue will continue to maintain the productive relationships between Sellafield Ltd., Guardians of our Common Seas and Bellona and the involvement of politicians, regulators and local stakeholders. It was agreed that annual conferences will be the focus for information exchange with the next event being held in Oslo during June 2013. Guardians of our Common Seas (Lofoten mot Sellafield), Bellona and Sellafield Ltd. have been focused on the safety of nuclear installations at Sellafield since 2001.

Together we can do it!