



### Ensuring safe, secure, and successful decommissioning

While decommissioning has been undertaken since the very early days of the nuclear industry, only in recent times has its role been seen as increasingly important to the future success of nuclear power generation.

Why is this? The public view of the nuclear industry is that it is neither economic nor safe. Indeed, the thought of decommissioning a large nuclear power reactor at the end of its commercial life is seen as impossible to do in a manner that does not threaten the safety of the public, or the environment.

In addition, the costs of actually undertaking the work required are believed to be impossibly high. There is also the issue of what are we going to do with the arising radioactive wastes.

Those of us involved in decommissioning have a major part to play in helping to ensure the future of the nuclear industry.

We have the responsibility for decommissioning redundant facilities in a way that ensures both the safety of the public and the environment, and also to do this in an acceptable and cost-effective manner.

Industry skeptics say it is not possible to achieve these objectives. However, in response to this we can quote our experience that leads us to the view that decommissioning has come of age. After the research and development programs undertaken in many countries, we have now reached the stage where we can undertake such activities with confidence. There is still a role for R&D, and this is to continue to develop the available technology and techniques.

In order to promulgate best experiences and practices in the field of decommissioning, the industry is successful in holding open and frank exchanges of information on the regulatory requirements, as well as the technology and techniques available.

This exchange is organized through various international groups such as the EC, OECD/NEA and IAEA as well as the professional institutes involved. It is necessary to reach as wide an audience as possible for this exchange of knowledge and experience to be successful, with conferences and seminars being key to this.

The UK Institute of Mechanical Engineers and the British Nuclear Energy Society have organized an international conference every two years to enable up-to-date experiences to be shared in decommissioning.

The next conference in this series – “Nuclear Decom 2001” is to be held in London on October 16–18 of this year. The conference theme for this event is “ensuring safe, secure and successful decommissioning”, with papers being presented from many countries on regulation and compliance, contract management, liabilities management, implementation, innovation and public acceptability.

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