IAEA Input for the report pursuant to resolution 77/55 “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control”

MSCFP and LMP

The IAEA is implementing two programmes aimed at attracting, retaining and developing more women in the nuclear sector. Through its Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme (MSCFP) and Lise Meitner Programme (LMP) the IAEA actively promotes gender equality and diversity and contributes to the establishment of an inclusive workforce within the nuclear industry.

Acknowledging the vital role of education in developing a vigorous pipeline of young professionals, in 2022-2023 the MSCFP continued to support young women studying in nuclear related fields relevant to the IAEA’s mission to advance the safe, secure, and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology such as nuclear engineering, advanced reactor designs, nuclear physics and chemistry, nuclear medicine, isotopic techniques, radiation biology, nuclear safety, nuclear security and non-proliferation, nuclear la, to mention just a few.

The IAEA MSCFP provides annually scholarships and internships to a growing number of female students from the IAEA Member States to enter nuclear related fields in the nuclear industry sector, thus contributing to gender balance and to technological and economic advancement. Internship opportunities facilitated by IAEA allow for tangible application of knowledge, and ability to effectively address and respond to technological and scientific needs in the nuclear field, following participation in MSCFP.

Since its launch in 2020, MSCFP has received 2271 applications. 560 students have been selected representing 121 Member States, studying in 72 countries worldwide. In 2023, 200 students were selected - the largest number per application cycle to date.

34 students are supported from the area of safeguards/non-proliferation and six interns are placed at the IAEA’s Department of Safeguards.

Under the MSCFP, by end of April 2024, 203 students completed their master’s programme and 110 have been placed to pursue internship facilitated by the IAEA. The internships take place across the IAEA Technical Departments and at IAEA Collaborating Centres, at private sector companies and other partner organizations. Out of the remaining graduated, 93 have obtained employment or have continued on to PhD studies.

As of April 2024, the MSCFP has received pledges amounting to €11.9 million as well as in-kind contributions sponsoring 73 students. Donors include the European Union, 23 Member States, 2 Member State Institutions, Industry (2 private sector partners) and 1 Academic Institution.

The MSCFP is envisaged as a long-term initiative, funded by extra budgetary contributions, including in-kind contributions. As such, there is a reoccurring need to raise sufficient funds for the duration of the programme, for targeted number of scholarships and internships as well as for direct project management costs on annual basis.

Additionally, in 2023 the IAEA launched an IAEA Lise Meitner Programme (LMP) to develop and retain women in the nuclear field. LMP provides early and mid-career women professionals with opportunities to participate in a multiweek visiting professional programme to advance their technical and soft skills. The visiting programme lasts between two to four weeks gathering 10 to 15 visiting professionals per cohort.

In 2023 and early 2024 the IAEA implemented three visiting professional programmes, two in the United States of America and one in the Republic of Korea. 36 early to midcareer women professionals
participated in the LMP visits focusing on nuclear power operations, nuclear reactor modelling and simulations and related activities.

The LMP is fully extra budgetary and envisaged as a long-term initiative and as such, there is a reoccurring need to host visiting professional programmes in various areas of nuclear field on annual basis.

The IAEA’s MSCFP and LMP support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for empowering women in nuclear, through targeted activities, including education and training and they are aligned with the United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women.