

Third Coordination Meeting of WHO Collaborating Centres
in Radiation Emergency Medical Preparedness and Assistance
(Leningrad, 21-24 May 1990)

WHO COLLABORATING CENTRES FOR RADIATION EMERGENCY MEDICAL
PREPAREDNESS AND ASSISTANCE

1. CRERMA - Collaborating Centre for Radiation Emergency Response and Medical Assistance (Buenos Aires, Argentina, Director - Eng. Mr. J. Skvarca)

The point of contact for this Centre is the Department of Radiation Health Physics of the Ministry of Health of Argentina.

The Centre is based on the existing structures of two institutions responsible by law for ionizing radiation in Argentina:

- a) Ministry of Health which, through its Radiation Health Physics Department on the national level and similar departments in the provinces, is responsible for X-ray sources and linear accelerators (protection, licensing, education, training etc.).
- b) National Atomic Energy Commission (CNEA) which is responsible for nuclear plants and all radioactive materials (protection, training, etc.).

These two organizations work very closely together. In 1984 both institutions together with the Municipality of the City of Buenos Aires which coordinates the Civil Defense for the entire country, agreed by a special convention to establish a system called SAMARI (System for Medical Preparedness and Assistance to persons overexposed from radiation). This agreement covers three important items:

- a) Distribution of duties in response to a radiation accident, including assignment for radiological emergency facilities and equipment;
- b) Elaboration of emergency plans for a radiation accident, which should describe its typical features and measurements to be taken;
- c) Identification of the experts and hospital facilities for preparedness and response.

The National Atomic Energy Commission has the capability to provide physical reconstruction of the accident, means of decontamination, instrumentation including whole-body counter units, stationary and mobile laboratories for environmental measurements and biological dosimetry.

The Health Ministry will provide hospital facilities. There are two national hospitals in Buenos Aires having special sterile rooms and other facilities such as a unit for treatment of burns. The Ministry will also provide the National Emergency Communication and Transportation Network (DINES) which has representatives in provinces.

At the international level, particularly for countries in Latin America, we have a strong and fast contact in coordination and cooperation in this field through the Programme of HSD of PAHO from Washington.