

**Statement by Minister Fergus O'Dowd, TD**  
**Minister of State at the Department of the Environment,**  
**Community and Local Government**  
**IRELAND**

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to participate in this High Level Conference on Nuclear Security. I commend Director General Amano for convening this High Level Conference on Nuclear Security. It is proper that the Agency should have a central role to play in matters of nuclear security and Ireland is fully supportive of the Agency's contribution in this area.

May I also take this opportunity to thank you, Mr Chairman, for your hard work in preparing this conference. We have an interesting programme before us and I know that we are in good hands with you in the chair.

## *Ireland and Nuclear Energy and Technologies*

Mr Chairman,

Ireland fully recognises and respects the sovereign right of every state to develop nuclear technologies for the generation of energy and other peaceful uses. While Ireland maintains a policy of not using nuclear energy for the generation of electricity, we greatly value and benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies. We are, however, also conscious of the risks which may be associated with nuclear power and technologies, in particular the risk of malicious acts and of nuclear terrorism.

## *Ireland and the Agency*

Mr. Chairman,

Ireland believes in a strong international rule of law, and we have always been committed to effective multilateralism. This is the best way of achieving and upholding the rule of law, ensuring international

peace and security, and advancing international cooperation. My country has been associated in particular, from the outset, with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as **the** multilateral basis for achieving complete nuclear disarmament, preventing nuclear proliferation, and facilitating the peaceful uses of nuclear energy subject to strict international controls and standards.

Ireland has always been committed to, and has consistently called for, complete nuclear disarmament. Motivated by the appalling humanitarian consequences which would befall humanity from a nuclear detonation, whether by accident, miscalculation or design, we renew our call for progress towards nuclear disarmament. It is essential that the NPT is implemented in full and in a balanced way across all three of its pillars, and in relation to the Middle East. The Action Plan agreed to at the 2010 Review Conference offers a basis to achieve progress in a comprehensive manner across all three pillars. If we are to achieve the Treaty's non-proliferation objectives, we must demonstrate that we are serious about achieving progress on disarmament from all those who possess nuclear weapons. If we are

to ensure that trade in nuclear energy remains exclusively peaceful, we must demonstrate that we are serious about preventing nuclear weapons proliferation. We look forward to the High Level Meeting on nuclear disarmament at the UN in September which we hope will provide valuable impetus towards achieving this cherished goal.

Mr. Chairman,

The IAEA is central to the NPT's non-proliferation and peaceful uses objectives, and the Agency deserves our fullest support in this important work. I believe the Agency is an example of multilateralism at its best.

Since our admission as a member state in 1969, Ireland has greatly valued and benefitted from our membership of our membership of the IAEA. We attach enormous importance to the vital and unique role the IAEA plays in promoting safe, secure and peaceful nuclear technologies.

### *The Agency and Nuclear Security*

The IAEA has been a key support to States in the area of nuclear security over many decades. The Agency's recommendations in this area – entitled *The Physical Protection of Nuclear Material*, which were first issued in 1975 – are one of the clearest examples of the practical support which the Agency provides to States. I would like to take this opportunity to note that Ireland is at an advanced stage in ratifying the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and that we look forward to its entry into force at the earliest possible date.

The IAEA's role in the area of nuclear security is a critical and central element of the Agency's work. I note, in particular, the Agency's pro-active approach to addressing the threats posed by the illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive material. In this regard, I especially welcome the Agency's 1997 "Security of Material" programme.

The IAEA has also been to the forefront of efforts in combating the threats posed by malicious acts and by nuclear terrorism. I commend the Agency's work in this area, including its 2002 comprehensive action plan, as well as the two further Nuclear Security Plans approved in 2005 and 2009 respectively. Ireland fully supports the IAEA's work in the area, including the Agency's "Nuclear Security Plan for 2010 – 2013".

Enhancing global efforts in this area are a truly collective responsibility: shared between the Agency and the member states. As the Director General correctly noted in his introduction to the 2009 report on the Nuclear Security Plan: 2010 – 2013: "The risk that nuclear or other radioactive material could be used in malicious acts remains high and is regarded as a serious threat to international peace and security. It is well recognised that the responsibility for nuclear security rests entirely with each State and that appropriate and effective national systems for nuclear security are vital in facilitating the peaceful use of nuclear energy and enhancing global efforts to combat nuclear terrorism."

### *Other initiatives*

Other initiatives have the potential to inform and assist the work of the Agency. One such example is the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear terrorism (GICNT). For a number of years the GICNT has played an important role in strengthening global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to nuclear terrorism. Ireland was pleased to participate at the Initiative's most recent Plenary Meeting in Mexico City in May and we look forward to continuing our cooperation with our GICNT partners against the shared threat of nuclear terrorism.

### *Dialogue between Coastal and Shipping States*

Mr Chairman,

With your permission, I would like to make a few short remarks with regard to the dialogue on Government to Government communications between interested Coastal and Shipping states,

which has been underway here at the IAEA since late 2012. Ireland fully recognises that it is in the interest of all states that maritime transports of radioactive materials are conducted in as safe and secure a manner as possible. We are fully committed to this process of dialogue between interested Coastal and Shipping states with the common objectives of deepening trust between partners, while preserving and, indeed, enhancing the security of these transports.

My Government looks forward to a productive and positive outcome to this dialogue at the meeting of Coastal and Shipping states at next September's General Conference.

I attended the recent European Safety Conference and the difficulties in ensuring the correct balance between safety and security is still evident. However, transparency instils confidence and it is important that States continue to engage in dialogue and information sharing which can lead to greater transparency, trust and mutual understanding.



## *Conclusion*

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, it is entirely appropriate that we use the opportunity of this conference to take stock in assessing lessons learned in the area of nuclear security; to identify those areas for further action; and to act collectively for the common good.

We welcome the ongoing contribution which the IAEA is making in this area. I wish to assure the Agency of Ireland's full support in drafting and implementing the Nuclear Security Plan for 2014 – 2017.

I believe that, working together, we can continue to protect and strengthen our framework for the peaceful, safe and secure uses of nuclear energy.

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

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