

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ILLICIT NUCLEAR TRAFFICKING:
COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE AND THE WAY FORWARD
EDINBURGH, 19-22 NOVEMBER 2007**

PRESIDENT'S FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The Conference was convened to take stock of achievements in recent years, challenges in addressing the need to combat illicit nuclear trafficking, and avenues for future action. Particular attention was paid to where further actions of individual States and cooperative international actions might usefully be initiated. The Conference was hosted by the British Government and organized by the IAEA in cooperation with Interpol, Europol and WCO. Attendance by approximately 300 participants from some 60 States and 11 international organizations was testimony to the widespread recognition of the importance of the issue.

ILLICIT TRAFFICKING AND NUCLEAR TERRORISM

The IAEA Illicit trafficking Database (ITDB) was set up in 1995 to collect information on incidents of illicit trafficking and other unauthorized activities involving nuclear and radioactive material. Presently, 99 States participate, on a voluntary basis, in the programme. The ITDB, which is an authoritative, central, international source, provides evidence of persistent illicit nuclear trafficking, thefts and losses, and other unauthorized activities involving nuclear and other radioactive materials. The conference identified a need to distinguish better between “trivial events” and significant events as a way of improving the analytical work based on the data being collected.

There was broad consensus that terrorist groups have the intention of attempting to acquire and use nuclear or radioactive material for malicious acts. There was a strong sense that the possibility of an attempt is real. The Conference recognized that the ITDB can provide valuable information both on such attempts and on weaknesses and vulnerabilities which may be exploited to acquire the material.

The conference stressed that stopping the illicit movement of nuclear material, equipment and technologies that could be used for malicious purposes continues to be a global priority. Since the human, political and economic consequences of a successful malicious act involving nuclear or other radioactive materials could be far-reaching, the limited knowledge of direct attempts to acquire such material is no cause for comfort. The Conference recognized that a holistic approach, addressing both detection and prevention, is essential.

There was wide agreement among the Conference participants on the value of the ITDB database and encouragement for further expansion of the comprehensiveness and quality of the information and its analysis with a view to further enhancing understanding of illicit nuclear trafficking.

INTERNATIONAL BINDING AND NON-BINDING INSTRUMENTS¹ AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

The Conference noted the emergence of new and amended international instruments related to nuclear security, which require States to strengthen measures to combat illicit trafficking. Taken together, the provisions of these instruments, some binding, some voluntary, amount to a significant strengthening of the legal and guidance framework existing prior to 2001. The framework includes IAEA safeguards agreements and their additional

¹ The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and the Amendments to CPPNM
International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism
United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1373 and 1540
Code of Conduct for the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, and
The Supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources
Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols

protocols, in as much as these require accounting and control of nuclear material and the establishment of State systems of accounting and control.

The Conference saw a need to continue building the institutional framework that is necessary to implement these legal instruments, in particular by establishing the required technical and administrative systems. In that respect, model elements for a national legal framework to deal with illicit nuclear trafficking and IAEA assistance can play a useful role.

The Conference recognized that universal adherence to the amendment to the CPPNM and other international legal instruments will make a major contribution to enhancing nuclear security and combating illicit trafficking, including better cooperation and coordination in implementing the reporting obligations contained in the Early Notification and Assistance Conventions. The Conference noted suggestions that consideration be given to strengthening legally binding obligations in relation to the safety and security of radioactive sources.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Conference took note of the contribution made by initiatives such as the Global Initiative on combating Nuclear Terrorism and the EU strategy against the spread of weapons of mass destruction, as well as by organizations such as Europol, Interpol, WCO, ICAO and the UNODC. The Conference also noted positive developments in cooperation between these organizations and the IAEA and encouraged further efforts in this direction.

The obligation, included in legally binding international instruments, for States and the IAEA to interact on the recovery and return of stolen or seized nuclear and other radioactive materials was recognized.

The Conference stressed that international cooperation is essential for the understanding of trafficking circumstances, patterns and trends, and that continued efforts are required to strengthen existing networks, such as the IAEA ITDB point of contact system.

The Conference welcomed recent progress in the development of radiation detection instruments and that international interaction, including through coordinated research and development, has contributed significantly to those achievements. The Conference encouraged continued and strengthened mechanisms to facilitate development of new technologies and strategies, in particular for the detection of fissile materials noting that the private sector can play an important role in technology development.

The Conference heard of significant advances in nuclear forensics technologies which can be used to trace and preserve evidence related to seized radioactive materials and which permit ever more accurate identification of the origin of interdicted material. The Conference hoped that these capabilities would be put at the disposal of States that do not have access to them and that more would be done to expand and improve reference data necessary for nuclear forensics to achieve its full potential.

Regional Cooperation

The Conference stressed the benefits that can accrue from strengthening cooperation at the regional level, especially in the areas of detection and response. It took note of some encouraging developments in this regard.

NATIONAL EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH DETECTION AND INTERDICTION CAPABILITIES

States are increasingly recognizing their responsibility for controlling unauthorized movement of nuclear and other radioactive material. Efforts have been made to secure national borders through the installation of radiation detection equipment and to ensure that law enforcement officers have adequate training, skills and support to detect unauthorized radioactive materials and to respond to seizures and detection alarms. Recent years have seen dramatic improvements in equipment and methodologies for detecting and characterizing illicitly trafficked material.

Many States reported on their national efforts to enhance measures to combat illicit trafficking, demonstrating a widespread awareness of the problem. The Conference welcomed reports about advanced capabilities being deployed in many States. However, there were also indications of significant disparities between capabilities in different States. The Conference recognized that some States need continued assistance from the IAEA and other donors. The Conference was encouraged by indications of enhanced cooperation within States between relevant organizations with responsibilities for different aspects of combating illicit trafficking.

The Conference noted that there was a need for increased sophistication in strategies for deploying and implementing detection capabilities which take into account all aspects of the risk, including that posed by unguarded borders. In particular, the hosting of major public events would call for assurance that radioactive material could not be used in a malicious way to disrupt the event.

The Conference emphasized the importance of States developing strategies to ensure the sustainability of national prevention and detection systems and their scientific and technical support. In that respect, it recognized the function of nuclear security support centres.

The Conference recognized the importance of formulating effective communication strategies to avoid adverse public reactions to nuclear or radiological incidents.

ROLE OF THE IAEA

The conference acknowledged with appreciation the overarching goal of the IAEA's Nuclear Security Plan for 2006–2009 (Plan) to strengthen nuclear security worldwide. A key objective of the Plan is the development of an internationally accepted nuclear security framework, in which IAEA guidance complements the binding and non-binding legal instruments with recommendations and guides on their implementation, to be published in the IAEA Nuclear Security Series. The Conference supported the key function of the IAEA in the development of an internationally accepted nuclear security framework.

The Conference encouraged the IAEA to play a central role in encouraging better reporting and coordination based on requirements contained in the Nuclear Terrorism Convention, the amendments to the CPPNM and the Early Notification and Assistance Conventions, as well as the exchange of information, notably between IT databases, and to strengthen the ITDB point of contact system. It also saw a need for effective analytical capacities and strengthened interaction between international organizations, within their mandates, for that purpose.

The Conference welcomed IAEA services and assistance, e.g. with assessment and evaluation of existing systems, technical advice related to improvements, human resource development programmes and — to a limited extent — the technical equipment that is required for improved security. The Conference also welcomed efforts to make available nuclear security support centres.

The Conference recognized with appreciation, the contribution made by bilateral assistance programmes in the establishment of technical systems to prevent and detect unauthorized movement of nuclear and other radioactive materials. It encouraged effective coordination by the IAEA to ensure complementarity and efficient use of resources, and recognized that IAEA Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plans, as established for individual countries, could be a useful tool for that purpose.

The Conference encouraged the IAEA's central role in promoting and coordinating research and development in the field of detection and response to illicit nuclear trafficking as part of effective nuclear security systems.

NEXT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Conference recommended that the IAEA convene a further conference on illicit nuclear trafficking in 2010 to assess progress.

The Conference concluded that illicit nuclear trafficking remains an international concern, with potential for serious consequences for human life, health, property and the environment, efforts must continue to establish effective systems, technical and administrative, to control movement of nuclear and other radioactive materials, and to prevent and detect their uncontrolled and unauthorized movement.