

Speech by foreign minister Frans Timmermans at the Nuclear Security Conference in Vienna

Just imagine that two activists break into a nuclear power plant and climb on top of a nuclear reactor to protest against the dangers of nuclear waste to our national environment. That is exactly what happened in the Netherlands in 2005. The two people in question were absolutely harmless. They had no ill intentions; they just wanted to protest against the effect of nuclear waste on the environment. Just imagine that these people *had* intended to do serious harm. They could certainly have done so. This prompted my country to re-examine the issue of nuclear security in 2005. And of course we looked immediately to the IAEA and its excellent expertise in this field. We were the first country in the world to ask the IAEA to send an International Physical Protection Advisory Service mission and we have had two follow-up missions to both since then. They were extremely successful because they led us to amend our legislation, to bring it into line with the necessity of nuclear security.

Perhaps this can help us convince our partners here, those who are still hesitating to follow the same path, because such a step does help to make your societies more secure. We believe this is essential because only secure nuclear centres can be trusted by our populations. It is of global importance and the IAEA has a leading role to play. I believe this role should even be strengthened in the next couple of years. That is why I have decided to ensure that we will make a new contribution to the Nuclear Security Fund of €1 million for the next three years.

I listened very carefully to our colleagues from different parts of the world this morning. In particular, I took note of the very strong plea for nuclear disarmament by our colleagues from Brazil and Argentina. Clearly, if we want to address the issue of nuclear security, it cannot be dissociated from the issue of nuclear disarmament. I want to tell you that, as a member of NATO and as a country committed to international security, the Netherlands will seek out partners worldwide to move forward the nuclear disarmament agenda. We feel very much encouraged by President Obama's speech last week in Berlin. We should really take up this agenda and move it forward in the next couple of years. I think our colleagues from Brazil and Argentina had a very strong point indeed in this regard.

At the same time, we still need to improve our nuclear security. That is why the IAEA is an important permanent forum for this debate, where technical expertise, political commitments and diplomatic skills all come together. We will try to do our best to strengthen its role in the next couple of years. This ministerial conference is an excellent first step in that direction. But we need to continue our efforts at every possible level in the next couple of years. It is

important that, as member states, we are prepared to take the second step and advance to the next level. It is good that we have about 1,000 people present here this week to pool all the ideas that have been developed in our member states and to make sure that the Nuclear Security Plan is the best plan ever so that we can work on that in the next couple of years.

Please be ambitious. That would be my plea to all the delegates today. I think the IAEA has done a marvellous job in a number of fields. The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its amendments are a wonderful contribution. We fully support that. The Nuclear Security Plan is great; we fully support that too. And we support the upgrading of the nuclear security office to a division, making its importance even clearer. Unfortunately, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material amendment of 2005 is still not in force. We would like to have the amendment ratified and we would like to support countries that are still looking to ratify it. I hope that today and in the coming days many states will announce that they will ratify the amendment shortly. We need this. And speaking as president of the Third Nuclear Security Summit next year in The Hague, the Netherlands would like the amendment to be in force by then.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As far as I am concerned, today's meeting and this week's gathering are intended to increase the IAEA's ability to create a stronger international fabric to make sure that nuclear security is at the top of our agenda and that nuclear energy is safer tomorrow than it is today, and also safeguarded from misuse by people who want to harm others.

Let me reiterate that I fully understand the point made that this should always be linked to an ambitious agenda of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Netherlands will support those working on such an ambitious agenda, in terms of both nuclear security and also non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

Thank you.