

National Statement by Ireland:
General Conference of the IAEA: 26 to 30 September 2016

Mr. President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by the distinguished representative of Slovakia.

I have the honour to make this statement in my national capacity.

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the sixtieth General Conference, and to welcome the three new member states to the IAEA, an important step towards universality.

Ireland is fully committed to working with our partners in the international community – in particular the IAEA – in making progress in each of the three pillars of the NPT: **multilateral nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation** and the **peaceful uses** of nuclear technologies. We see the three pillars as interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and we welcome the 2015 General Conference nuclear security resolution, which draws attention to the link between nuclear security and multilateral nuclear disarmament, while stressing the urgency of the latter. The fact that a mere 17% of fissionable material worldwide is earmarked for civilian use speaks for itself.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of multilateral nuclear disarmament, and the central element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes.

We must not allow the situation to continue whereby significant progress is made in the areas of non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, while progress in the area of multilateral nuclear disarmament remains disappointingly limited. Ireland unequivocally calls on those states that have not yet done so, to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states.

Mr. President,

We look forward to the International Conference on Nuclear Security, to be held here in Vienna from 5 to 9 December, and welcome Director General Amano's initiative and leadership in this regard. Ireland was represented at ministerial level at the previous conference, in July 2013, and we hope to be represented at ministerial level at this year's conference. We hope that the Ministerial Declaration to be agreed at the conference will be ambitious and comprehensive, and address nuclear security in its totality. Ireland would note that there is a clear and irrefutable link between nuclear security and disarmament.

Mr. President,

Ireland warmly welcomes the historic agreement reached on 14 July 2015 between the E3 / EU + 3 and Iran, and the progress which continues to be made. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is entirely consistent with the principles of the NPT and underlines what can be achieved within the framework of the NPT.

In contrast to the progress on Iran, it is a matter of particular regret for my delegation that the DPRK has continued nuclear test explosions, and testing ballistic missiles, in flagrant violation of several UN Security Council resolutions. In 2016 so far the DPRK has conducted two nuclear test explosions and some 20 ballistic missile tests. This constitutes a significant and growing threat to peace and stability in the region, and has been universally condemned by the international community. Ireland fully shares the serious concern expressed by the Director General regarding the nuclear programme of the DPRK. Ireland again urges the DPRK to comply fully with all of its international obligations, to cease all nuclear testing and re-engage with the Six Party Talks on the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, immediately and without preconditions.

However, the international community can ask itself how convincing are our calls on the DPRK to cease nuclear testing in the absence of progress in bringing the CTBT/Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty into force. The CTBT was opened for signature back in 1996, but there are still eight Annex II countries preventing it from coming into force by not ratifying it. Ireland calls on those eight states to sign and/or ratify the CTBT as soon as possible, so that our message to the DPRK is coherent and unambiguous.

In May 2016 to underline the great importance which we attach to the CTBT, Ireland hosted, at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, a week-long National Data Centres Workshop in Dublin, to mark the 20th anniversary of the CTBT.

Mr President,

It is a matter of particular regret for my delegation that the 2015 NPT Review Conference was not able to make any meaningful progress towards the long-overdue and much needed implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. International peace and security would be significantly strengthened by progress towards the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, with due regard to the legitimate security concerns of all states in the region. This would not only promote regional security and stability, it would bolster the NPT. It is important now for all sides to remain open to dialogue and engagement, and that every effort is made to implement the 1995 resolution.

Mr. President,

For many years, the General Conference has also been the occasion of dialogue between coastal and shipping states interested in promoting greater communication in the area of the maritime transport of radioactive materials. As an island state, this area is of particular interest to Ireland. This dialogue is open to all members of the IAEA and I would like to commend the Agency for its support to the dialogue.

Ireland would also like to thank both the out-going Chair of the dialogue, the Ambassador of Japan, and the new Chair of the dialogue, the Ambassador of Portugal, for their excellent work in this regard.

Mr. President,

Ireland has had the honour to serve on the Board of Governors for the past two years. Ireland has underlined the importance of the Agency's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy, including by funding imPACT missions in a number of states. Last year, my predecessor participated in a PACT side event, on the occasion of the General Conference.

Before concluding, Mr. President, I wish to underline the importance which Ireland attaches to the promotion of gender equality within the UN system. Gender equality is not a women's issue, it is an organisation issue. We know that diversity delivers better decision-making, and this matter is particularly relevant in the present context. As our Minister for Foreign Affairs said in his recent UNGA speech:

"The disproportionate gendered impact of nuclear weapons and of illegal arms transfers and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, is also of great concern to us, as is the need to ensure greater gender balance in all disarmament discussions."

While our mandate as a Board member will soon conclude, please rest assured of Ireland's support for the Agency and its mandate.

Thank you, Mr. President.

28 September 2016

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