

IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security
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Statement made by Her Excellency
Ms Doris Leuthard
Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation

Mr. President,
Mr. Director General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2013 we have gathered for the first time for an IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Security with the aim to reinforce our commitment and support for a continuous strengthening of nuclear security. Today, three years later and after several months of intense and difficult negotiations on the Ministerial Declaration, we must ask ourselves did we reach our goal to send a clear, ambitious and forward-looking message to the international community.

Let me first address the context in which we are today, especially when it comes to the enhancement of global collaboration on different nuclear security challenges. Since our last conference three years ago, several countries have been affected by severe terrorist attacks. This growing threat has sadly emphasised, if ever needed, the significance of unity and determination in this area. Now we have to maintain the political momentum and address the remaining gaps in the global system. Our response to this challenge can only be successful if we address nuclear security in its global context and in a comprehensive approach encompassing all of its aspects.

Mr President,

Did we reach this objective with the 2016 Declaration we will adopt in a few hours? Does it reflect the necessity of unity which is needed to confront the growing threat of nuclear terrorism? Does it finally address the remaining gaps in the global system of nuclear security?

Our feelings are mixed. The declaration certainly contains elements that represent a clear improvement and achievement. The text with respect to the common goal of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy sets the right context in which we have to address nuclear security and its contribution to international peace and security.

Equally, the link established between nuclear disarmament and nuclear security is to be seen as a success.

While recognizing the fundamental responsibility of States for nuclear security however, we cannot ignore one of its essential components, namely nuclear material used for military purposes. Nuclear material used for military purposes constitutes - with around 85% - the large majority of all worldwide existing nuclear material. It represents in most cases very sensitive material being Highly Enriched Uranium and separated Plutonium. Finally, such material remains outside of any international nuclear security agreements. These are undisputable facts.

Although the Declaration adopted in 2013 by consensus explicitly mentioned nuclear material for military purposes, the absence of such a specific reference in the Declaration on the table today does not make the problem disappear. On the contrary, it does not reflect the reality of the problem and sends to the international community the wrong message that, when it comes to nuclear security, the only problem is the 15% represented by the nuclear material used for civilian purposes. The Nuclear-Armed States have a particular responsibility to secure all of their nuclear materials, including those under the label "military". It remains an obligation to all of us in order to underscore the unambiguous, complete and comprehensive commitment to nuclear security. The current formulation constitutes a considerable set-back and raises serious doubts as to the willingness of the Nuclear-Armed States to take their responsibility.

Mr. President,

Switzerland has spared no efforts during the long months of negotiations to bring this Declaration to the political and visionary level expected for Ministers. I would like here to personally thank the many States which have supported us. As I said in the beginning, the outcome of the long-lasting negotiation process leaves me with mixed feelings. Being equally unhappy should never be satisfactory when it comes to nuclear security, because here only the highest standards must be acceptable to us. The threat of a terrorist attack using nuclear material remains a reality. That's why my country remains committed to continuously maintaining and further strengthening nuclear security of all nuclear material, whatever its purpose.

Mr President,

I would like to conclude with some words on the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Agency is the best platform for enhancing comprehensive efforts in nuclear security and coordinating the various existing initiatives due to its almost universal membership and its unique expertise. Switzerland will continue to support the important work done by the Agency in this field and it is

my pleasure to announce that my country will provide an extraordinary contribution to the Nuclear Security Fund.

I thank you for your attention.