

**Statement on behalf of Ireland to General Conference of
the International Atomic Energy Agency by HE Mr Tom
Hanney, Resident Representative of Ireland**

Vienna, 17 September 2019

**National Statement by Ireland:
General Conference of the IAEA: 16 to 20 September
2019**

Madam President,

May I congratulate you on your assumption of office and, in the spirit of the San Patricios, offer you our full support.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and makes the following statement in a national capacity.

Ireland expresses its deepest condolences to the family of late Director General Yukiya Amano. This is a great loss for the Agency and for the international community as a whole. We were honoured to receive the late DG Amano on a successful visit to Ireland in May of last year. We were always impressed by his wise and far-seeing leadership of the IAEA.

This General Conference is the last before the NPT Review Conference in May 2020. It is a moment to reflect on the indispensable contribution the International Atomic Energy Agency makes to the effective implementation of the objectives of the NPT across all three of its pillars, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses.

As we intensify our preparations for the Review Conference, we should take into account the important recent and upcoming multilateral discussions and negotiations under the aegis of the IAEA. The Declaration agreed at the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology in November 2018 is an important reflection of the consensus view of the international community on the scope and relevance to sustainable development of the work of the IAEA on nuclear applications and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In particular we welcome the recognition in the Declaration of the need to attract more women into the field of nuclear

sciences and for the IAEA to continue to support equal opportunities in the implementation of its activities.

The forthcoming International Conference on Nuclear Security in February 2020 should adopt a Ministerial Declaration which will build upon the 2016 Declaration and further strengthen nuclear security globally. The 2016 Ministerial Declaration drew attention to the link between nuclear security and multilateral nuclear disarmament, and stressed that the latter is critically needed. The fact that a mere 17% of fissionable material worldwide is earmarked for civilian use speaks for itself.

While we recognise that nuclear security is a matter for each member state on a national basis, any serious breach of security involving nuclear material will immediately have an international dimension, affect the entire spectrum of nuclear activity and have serious implications for nuclear non-proliferation. The only feasible way of ensuring the strongest possible system of nuclear security is through international action supported by the guidance, expertise and professionalism of the IAEA.

The IAEA's safeguards system which has developed significantly since the entry into force of the NPT goes to the very heart of the global non-proliferation regime. We firmly believe that Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with the Additional Protocols are the current verification gold

standard and should be universalised without delay. Ireland also supports the improved efficiency and effectiveness of Safeguards implementation through implementation of State Level Approaches.

Madame Chair,

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons/TPNW, is an historic and ground-breaking agreement, supported by 122 Member States of the United Nations. Two years ago, this Treaty was opened for signature. In the short period since then, 70 States have signed and 26 States have ratified the treaty. It is thus already more than half way to the 50 ratifications needed to bring it into force. There will be a further signing ceremony on 26 September 2019 at UN Headquarters in New York where we look forward to even more signatures and ratifications. Ireland signed on 20 September 2017 and is currently passing priority legislation to enable ratification as soon as possible.

As the NPT makes clear, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are inextricably linked. We are therefore of the firm view that progress in nuclear disarmament is very relevant indeed here in Vienna.

The new treaty complements and strengthens the NPT in at least two ways. First of all, it provides a legal framework for the implementation of Article VI of the NPT. In addition, the TPNW strengthens the IAEA safeguards system based on the NPT. It reaffirms the safeguards standard enshrined in NPT Article III, obliges States which already have a higher standard in place to maintain it as a legal obligation, and encourages all States to further raise their level of commitment in terms of safeguards.

The new instrument strengthens the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, including the NPT and IAEA safeguards derived therefrom, the Treaties establishing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, and the CTBT.

Madam President,

Ireland continues to regard the JCPOA as a major achievement of multilateral diplomacy and an important contribution to nuclear non-proliferation. We regret Iran's continued incremental breaches, including the recently announced expansion of its centrifuge R&D activities prohibited under the terms of the Agreement. We urge Iran to return to immediate full compliance. We do not accept the argument that the Agreement is a quid pro quo and that observance of its terms can be traded, varied or modified on a unilateral basis.

Ireland welcomes the fact that some progress has been made in the DPRK over the past two years, but it is not sufficient. We urge 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, over 23 years ago, but there are still eight Annex II countries preventing it from coming into force by not ratifying it. The countries in question are the US, China, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Israel, Iran and the DPRK. Ireland calls on those eight states to sign and/or ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

Madam 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. We welcome the EU's decision to finance a UNIDIR project on efforts to resolve this crucially important problem since the 1995 Resolution. 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.

Madam 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. We succeeded Portugal as coordinator of the Coastal States last year. We would like to thank all colleagues for their continued fruitful cooperation in the group, and we look forward to continuing our very good cooperation with the new coordinator of the Group, France. We organised a workshop in Dublin in May this year to draw lessons from the useful Table Top Exercise efficiently organised by Portugal in 2017. This dialogue is open to all members of the IAEA and I would like to commend the Agency for its support to the dialogue.

Madam President,

Ireland has underlined the importance of the Agency's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy and has in the past provided financial support for the Programme. Following the Secretariat's implementation of measures to tackle the shortcomings identified by the OIOS in the programme, we are now positively considering a fresh contribution.

Before concluding, Madam President, I wish to underline the importance which Ireland attaches to the promotion of gender equality within the UN system, and to acknowledge your own role as Joint founder and President of the Group of Friends of Women in Nuclear. We welcome the late Director General's undertaking in 2017 to reach gender parity in his senior management team by 2021. We hope that this commitment will continue to be implemented by the new Director General. The proportion of women in the IAEA's professional and higher grades has increased from 23% to 30.2% in recent years. This represents some progress, and Ireland wishes to see it continued and, indeed, accelerated. 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. The continued and intensified pursuit of gender mainstreaming will be important to the Agency's efforts in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 5 to achieve gender equality and to empower all women and girls.

Madam President, I wish to assure you of Ireland's continued support for the Agency and its mandate.

Thank you, Madam President.

17 September 2019

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