



STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE

TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR SECURITY:

SUSTAINING AND STRENGTHENING EFFORTS

THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

DELIVERED BY

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SECTION FOR RELATIONS WITH STATES

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Distinguished Co-Presidents,
Mr. Director General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor of delivering this Statement in the name of His Excellency, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for the Holy See's Relations with States. At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for their organization of this Third International Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts (ICONS 2020).

In his address on Nuclear Weapons at the Atomic Bomb Hypocenter Park (Nagasaki) on 24 November 2019, Pope Francis stated: "One of the deepest longings of the human heart is for security, peace and stability. The possession of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is not the answer to this desire; indeed they seem always to thwart it. [...] A world of peace, free from nuclear weapons, is the aspiration of millions of men and women everywhere. To make this ideal a reality calls for involvement on the part of all: individuals, religious communities and civil society, countries that possess nuclear weapons and those that do not, the military and private sectors, and international organizations."¹

The Holy See is, therefore, most pleased to attend this Conference, and to thereby lend its support to the advancement of nuclear security.

Co- Presidents,

The Holy See calls for a collective commitment to improve nuclear security at the national, regional and global levels, being vigilant about the threats to nuclear security, putting in place concrete measures to protect against malicious acts involving nuclear or radioactive material, being cognizant of the need to support the central role of the IAEA.

The efforts to ensure nuclear safety and security have been greatly improved thanks to the IAEA's strategies of expanding capability and capacity in nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety, and also in emergency preparedness and response, and the Holy See takes this opportunity to thank the Director General and the entire staff of the Agency for their labours in this regard. These efforts have to be continued because the promotion of nuclear security faces significant challenges, including the limited, insufficient and often stalled actions to prevent proliferation and move toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

The broader goals of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament, and the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, each depend upon these crucial IAEA

¹ Cf. Pope Francis, Address of Holy Father on Nuclear Weapons, 24 November 2019.

strategies, and the Agency's success in fulfilling its responsibilities depends on the commitment of Member States to live up to their legal and ethical obligations.

Furthermore, the Holy See supports the continued and patient efforts of the international community to promoting peace and security and help to build up a climate of confidence in place of mutual recriminations.

Co- Presidents,

The Holy See signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons with the aim of moving beyond nuclear deterrence to a world entirely free of nuclear weapons, and affirmed that nuclear weapons are arms of mass and environmental destruction.²

As Pope Francis has said, “The security of our own future depends on guaranteeing the peaceful security of others, for if peace, security and stability are not established globally, they will not be enjoyed at all.”³ [...] “If we take into consideration the principal threats to peace and security with their many dimensions in this multipolar world of the twenty-first century as, for example, terrorism, asymmetrical conflicts, cybersecurity, environmental problems, poverty, not a few doubts arise regarding the inadequacy of nuclear deterrence as an effective response to such challenges.” [...] “Similar cause for concern arises when examining the waste of resources spent on nuclear issues for military purposes, which could instead be used for worthy priorities like the promotion of peace and integral human development, as well as the fight against poverty, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”⁴

Co-Presidents,

The Holy See supports the international nuclear security instruments such as the development of Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plans (INSSP), taking into account advisory services, education, training, and the new and changing priorities of Member States.

In conclusion, the Holy See reiterates its sincere gratitude and affirms its unwavering support for the IAEA's many contributions to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as to the safe, secure, and peaceful, development and operation of nuclear technologies.

Thank you.

² Cf. Statement of the Holy See to the 62nd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, 17 September 2018.

³ Cf. Pope Francis, Message of His Holiness Pope Francis on the Occasion of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, 7 December 2014.

⁴ Cf. Pope Francis, Message of His Holiness Pope Francis to the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination, 27 March 2017.