



**Statement by Ambassador Barbara Žvokelj, Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the International Organizations in Vienna, at the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts, Vienna, 11 February 2020**

*Co-Presidents,*

Let me start by congratulating the Director General, H.E. Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, for convening this important conference. I would also like to commend the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania and Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Panama, for assuming their roles of the Co-Presidents of the Conference. In addition to what has already been said on behalf of the European Union, I would like to make several remarks in my national capacity.

*Co-Presidents,*

In the past years, we have witnessed considerable progress in nuclear security. Yet, significant challenges remain. Today the severe risk of nuclear terrorism and other malicious acts involving nuclear material and other radioactive substances is more complex and unpredictable and require our continued efforts to keep pace with these and other evolving challenges and threats both on global and national levels.

On the global level, Slovenia recognizes the central and leading role of the Agency, which provides the Member States with various guidances, peer reviews, training opportunities, reports and e-learning tools. Slovenia, as a country closely involved in the preparations of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, is looking forward to a successful outcome of the review conference in 2021. We hope this important event will steer the global efforts to additionally invigorate nuclear security and offer positive input for the forthcoming Nuclear Security Plan 2022-2025.

Slovenia participates in global efforts also in many other ways. We send our experts to the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee (NSGC) and to different technical meetings and missions related to cyber security, and we contribute to the International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) with peer reviewers, as well as to the Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB).

In 2017, my country joined the Nuclear Security Contact Group. A year later, we endorsed two Joint Statements; namely, on strengthening the security of high activity radioactive sources (INFCIRC/910) and countering nuclear smuggling (INFCIRC/918). These and possible new pledges demonstrate our commitments to stronger nuclear security practices and nuclear security regime, internationally and at home.

*Co-Presidents,*

I would like to turn now to our efforts on the national level. As one of only thirty countries with a fully-fledged civilian nuclear program, Slovenia stays strongly committed to continuously enhancing its national nuclear security regime. Physical protection-related efforts and combatting illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive material are in the forefront of our activities.

Furthermore, the issue of security of radioactive sources has been recently elaborated in more detail in our national legislation. We have also revised the “Nuclear Act”, on issues of background checking and security vetting of foreign nationals. In 2019, the Slovenian Nuclear Safety Administration organized our first national exercise on cyber security at nuclear facilities. Such exercises will be upgraded in the future. The next one will follow already in autumn this year, bringing together all key stakeholders in domestic nuclear sector as well as other member states and selected international organizations. It is also within this context that I wish to welcome the adoption of our Ministerial Declaration, since it pays due attention also to this important issue.

However, our activities of enhancing national preparedness do not end here. Our dedicated staff from the Slovenian Nuclear Safety Administration and the Ministry of the Interior regularly takes part in trainings and other meetings abroad as well as in regional networking. Cooperation within the European Nuclear Security Regulators’ Association (ENSRA), together with the IAEA represent an indispensable tool for sharing national expertise, good practices and insights.

*Co-Presidents,*

Before concluding, I would also like to underline the importance of human resources and expertise as well as security culture. Nuclear security is an enduring responsibility, with a number of interfaces. It is an enabler of peaceful uses of nuclear technology. By harnessing the experiences and achievements, Slovenia will continue to work actively with relevant international partners to assure that both nuclear and radioactive materials remain secure.

Finally, I would like to express my firm belief in the success of this conference and my high hopes that its results will help us strengthening momentum in fostering nuclear security worldwide. It is important that we stay ambitious and live up to our expectations and of multitude of people who depend on the effectiveness of our work.

*Thank you.*