

Statement by

**H.E. Alexander Schallenberg**  
**Federal Minister for European and International Affairs**  
**of the Republic of Austria**

at the 64th IAEA General Conference  
General Debate

Mister President,  
Director General, dear Rafael,  
Excellencies,

This year's general conference is taking place under extraordinary circumstances, as we all together are facing the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19.

The pandemic has required great flexibility from all of us. But the international family in Vienna, with at the core UNOV and the IAEA, has risen to the task and ensured the continuity of its services.

Thank you for that!

Our meeting this year is of particular significance, coming **75 years** after the dropping of atomic bombs on **Hiroshima and Nagasaki**.

At commemorative events across the world, we are reminded of the devastating **humanitarian consequences** caused by these weapons.

We need to make sure that nuclear weapons are never used again.

Some years ago this might have been considered a theoretical issue.

But it is not!

Quite the contrary – it is increasingly relevant today, as we observe a climate of **growing proliferation pressures**.

In order to counter these pressures, we need to reinforce **mutual trust and transparency**.

That is why Austria considers the strategic dialogue between the United States and the Russian Federation to be so essential.

We are pleased to continue hosting these talks in Vienna and hope that they will contribute to advancing our joint commitment to arms control and, finally, to a general and complete disarmament of nuclear weapons.

An objective already enshrined in the **NPT**.

In this context let me point out, that the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** is now only a couple of ratifications away from entry into force.

Once this has happened, I look forward to hosting the first meeting of States Parties here at the UN in Vienna.

Our ambition and aim is clear: to lay the foundations for a **world free of nuclear weapons**.

Excellencies,

I know that in this room there are quite diverging views on the role of **nuclear power and climate change**.

While we recognize the need for compromise language, Austria's stance on this issue remains unchanged: We do not consider nuclear fission power a sustainable way to generate electricity or to fight climate change.

On the contrary: **Chernobyl and Fukushima** have proven the enormous risks and costs of this technology for the population and the environment.

However, as long as it is still used, we have to ensure that the highest standards on **nuclear safety and security** are applied.

I therefore very much welcome the Agency's efforts in this regard.

And I can assure you that Austria will continue to be actively engaged in the IAEA framework.

May I take this opportunity to point out that Austria has presented its **candidature to the IAEA Board of Governors**. We would be grateful for your support.

Thank you for your attention.