

**National Statement by Ireland:
General Conference of the IAEA: 18 to 22 September 2017**

Mr. President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by the distinguished ambassador of Estonia.

I have the honour to make this statement in my national capacity, and begin by congratulating DG Amano on his reappointment for a further term. We very much appreciate his commitment and dedication, and are happy that the IAEA will be under his wise guidance.

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the sixty-first General Conference.

Ireland is fully committed to working with our partners in the international community – in particular the IAEA – in making progress in each of the three pillars of the NPT: **multilateral nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation** and the **peaceful uses** of nuclear technologies. We see the three pillars as interdependent and mutually reinforcing. In that spirit, Ireland is pleased to be taking over with Iceland responsibility for co-chairing the Missile Technology Control Regime for one year from mid-October next. We also welcome the 2016 General Conference nuclear security resolution, which was adopted by consensus. The resolution draws attention to the link between nuclear security and multilateral nuclear disarmament, and stresses that the latter is critically needed. The fact that a mere 17% of fissionable material worldwide is earmarked for civilian use speaks for itself.

In July this year, over 70 years after the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the United Nations has finally adopted a legally-binding instrument that, once and for all, outlaws the most lethal and indiscriminate category of weapons of mass destruction – nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons/TPNW is consistent with and complementary to the NPT, which obliges all States Parties to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. 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. The Prohibition Treaty is now a fact, which cannot be ignored and may, in time, have implications for our work in Vienna.

The determination on the part of North Korea to acquire nuclear weapon capability is an alarming prospect and one that reinforces our commitment to prohibit nuclear weapons

In reality, weapons of mass destruction do not enhance national or international security. They are, on the contrary, an existential threat to all peoples, and they have no place in the international security architecture that we envisage for the 21st century and beyond.

Ireland will sign the Treaty in New York today (if 20 September) and we look forward to its early ratification and entry into force. We call on all Member States to sign and ratify the TPNW, so that it comes into force as soon as possible. Following the adoption of the Prohibition Treaty Ireland sees the NPT and the CTBT not as less important, but as more crucially important than ever.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of multilateral nuclear disarmament, and the central element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes.

We must not allow the situation to continue whereby significant progress is made in the areas of non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, while progress in the area of multilateral nuclear disarmament remains disappointingly limited. Ireland unequivocally calls on those states that have not yet done so, to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states.

Mr. President,

We note with satisfaction that the Ministerial Declaration agreed at the International Conference on Nuclear Security here in Vienna on 5 December 2016, is ambitious and comprehensive, and addresses nuclear security in its totality. It reinforced the link between nuclear security and multilateral nuclear disarmament, as agreed by consensus in the 2016 General Conference Resolution on Nuclear Security.

Mr. President,

Ireland warmly welcomes the historic agreement reached on 14 July 2015 between the E3 / EU + 3 and Iran, and the progress which continues to be made. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is entirely consistent with the principles of the NPT and underlines what can be achieved within the framework of the NPT.

In contrast to the progress on Iran, it is a matter of particular regret for my delegation that the DPRK has continued nuclear test explosions, and testing ballistic missiles, in flagrant violation of several UN Security Council resolutions. As recently as 3 September the DPRK conducted its biggest ever nuclear test explosions and has been continuing regular ballistic missile tests. This constitutes a significant and growing threat to peace and stability in the region, and has been universally

condemned by the international community. Ireland fully shares the serious concern expressed by the Director General regarding the nuclear programme of the DPRK. Ireland again urges 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, but there are still eight Annex II countries preventing it from coming into force by not ratifying it. Ireland calls on those eight states to sign and/or ratify the CTBT as soon as possible, so that our message to the DPRK is coherent and unambiguous. Continued nuclear weapons testing by the DPRK makes it even more important that the CTBT enter into force as soon as possible.

Mr 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. 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.

Mr. 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, and we have therefore agreed to succeed Portugal as coordinator of the Coastal States. We participated in the Table Top Exercise which was efficiently organised by the Agency with Portugal last June, and we believe we will be able to draw useful lessons from such hands-on cooperation. We look forward to continuing our very good cooperation with the new coordinator of the Shipping States, the UK, and to considering if a further Table Top Exercise would be useful during our coordination of the Group. This dialogue is open to all members of the IAEA and I would like to commend the Agency for its

support to the dialogue. Ireland would also like to thank the out-going Chair of the dialogue, the Ambassador of Portugal for his excellent work in this regard.

Mr. President,

Ireland has underlined the importance of the Agency's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy, and was pleased to provide 125,000 euro in funding to PACT in 2013. We are giving active consideration to resuming funding in 2018 and will enter into consultations with the Secretariat with a view to establishing how we can continue our support for their important life enhancing work during this General Conference

Before concluding, Mr. President, I wish to underline the importance which Ireland attaches to the promotion of gender equality within the UN system. The proportion of women in the IAEA's professional and technical grades has increased from 23% to 29.4% in recent years. This is 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. As our Minister for Foreign Affairs said in his UNGA speech last year:

"The disproportionate gendered impact of nuclear weapons and of illegal arms transfers and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, is also of great concern to us, as is the need to ensure greater gender balance in all disarmament discussions."

We welcome the consideration which was given to this issue at the NPT Preparatory Meeting in May and look forward to further consideration at next year's preparatory meeting in Geneva.

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

Thank you, Mr. President.

14 September 2017

ENDS

