



IRELAND

Cluster 3

Statement by
Ambassador Tom Hanney
Head of Delegation

at the

2017 Preparatory Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-
Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

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Mr Chairman,

I wish to associate my remarks with those of the European Union, the New Agenda Coalition and the Vienna Group of 10, as well as with the Working Paper presented by the group of Coastal and Shipping States. (I will deliver a shortened text and the full version will be lodged and available online.)

Ireland believes strongly in an international order, based on the rule of law, and we are committed to effective multilateralism as the best way of achieving and upholding the rule of law, thereby ensuring international peace and security and advancing international cooperation. Consistent with this approach, we are fully committed to working with our partners in the international community, including here in Vienna with the IAEA, in making progress on the three pillars of the NPT – disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technologies. It is our considered view, as stated earlier in this Prep Com, that we must not permit any further continuation of the unbalanced situation, in which we continue to record steady progress under the non-proliferation and peaceful uses pillars of the NPT, while progress under the disarmament pillar remains disappointingly limited.

We welcome the Ministerial Declaration agreed by consensus at the International Conference on Nuclear Security in December 2016, which recognised that nuclear security contributes to international peace and security and which stressed that nuclear disarmament is critically needed. Bearing in mind the considerable risks which have been discussed here, and which we have raised in both our National and NAC statements and Working Papers, we would, however, have wished for this statement to go further and have an explicit recognition of the clear link between nuclear security and nuclear disarmament.

The fact that only a limited proportion of fissionable material worldwide is used for civilian purposes speaks for itself.

In this regard, I would like to draw attention to the important and timely report prepared by UNIDIR, and other experts including Chatham House, on “Understanding Nuclear Weapons Risk”, including the lessons drawn from the assessment of nuclear power plant risks, as well as the threat posed by non-state actors and potential cyber-attacks. These issues have been raised by many delegations here. We do need to open a conversation about the whole risk equation and the pertinent variables, both natural and intentional, which are linked to a potential nuclear weapons detonation. We agree with the Report’s authors that these related risk and security issues are ones on which Nuclear Weapons States and Non-Nuclear Weapons States should engage.

The IAEA has been a strong resource for States in the area of nuclear security over many decades, with a proud record of providing support and expert advice. In his opening address to this Prep Com, DG Amano outlined some of the ongoing practical support mechanisms which the Agency provides to States. These range from the key security instrument, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), to the on the ground training of police and border guards. Ireland will continue to support the DG and the Agency in this vital work. In particular, I wish to express our appreciation for the IAEA’s work, and the leadership of Director General Amano, in promoting adherence to the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, which Ireland ratified in 2016. Implementation of the amended Convention will help to reduce the risk of a terrorist attack involving nuclear material which would have catastrophic consequences.

For many years, the IAEA has promoted greater communication in the area of maritime transport of radioactive material primarily through supporting dialogue between coastal and shipping states. As an island state, this area is of particular interest to Ireland and is coherent with the Agency's pro-active approach to addressing the threats posed by illicit trafficking in nuclear material. We are fully committed to this process of dialogue between interested Coastal and Shipping States, with the common objectives of deepening trust between partners, while preserving and, indeed, enhancing the security of these transports. We also look forward to participating in the planned table top exercise (TTX) in Lisbon in June of this year, and would like to thank the Chair of the Dialogue, our colleague the Ambassador of Portugal, for his excellent work in this area. We fully support the new Working Paper submitted to this Preparatory Committee by the countries participating in the Informal Dialogue.

I also wish to acknowledge Director General Amano's personal commitment to the promotion of nuclear science and technology in supporting sustainable development, in particular in improving access to effective cancer treatment in developing countries. The IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy, or PACT, helps countries devise comprehensive cancer control programmes. The third of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals aims by 2030 to ensure healthy lives and promote well being for all at all ages. This is a huge challenge which relates directly to the work of the PACT. With its long history of working for peaceful applications of nuclear technologies, the IAEA is well placed to guide and support its Member States to a healthy and productive future. Ireland plans to enter into further discussions with the IAEA in support of the PACT programme. We will participate in the forthcoming International Conference on

the IAEA Technical Cooperation Conference where we will place particular emphasis on the importance of the PACT programme.

Ireland fully recognises and respects the sovereign right of every state to develop nuclear technologies for the generation of energy and other peaceful uses, in accordance with Article IV of the NPT. While Ireland maintains a policy of not using nuclear energy for the generation of electricity, we are conscious of, and greatly value, the societal benefits from the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies. We are, however, also conscious of the risks which may be associated with nuclear power and technologies - risks which have increased dramatically in recent years. If countries choose to use nuclear power then it is essential that it is used safely and securely. We continue to attach the utmost importance to the worldwide implementation and continuous improvement of nuclear safety and we greatly appreciate the crucial role played by the IAEA in this regard.

Thank You.

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