

National Statement by Ireland:
General Conference of the IAEA: 22 to 26 September 2014

Mr. President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by the distinguished representative of Italy.

I have the honour to make this statement in my national capacity.

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

I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge, with appreciation, the work of your Predecessor-in-office, Ambassador Mr. Mabhongo of South Africa.

Ireland wishes to welcome the three new member states that have joined the Agency since the last General Conference: the Bahamas, Brunei Darussalam and San Marino.

Mr. President,

This General Conference marks an important stage in our collective preparations for the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. Support for the NPT is at the heart of Ireland's foreign policy.

As a means of countering the proliferation of nuclear weapons and achieving complete nuclear disarmament, the NPT provides a unique framework within which states can develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes subject to binding international standards of safety, security and verification. In advance of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, Ireland unequivocally calls on those states that have not yet done so, to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states.

Ireland is fully committed to working with our partners in the international community – in particular the International Atomic Energy Agency – in making progress in each of the three pillars of the NPT: **disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful**

uses of nuclear technologies. We must not allow a continuation of the situation whereby significant progress continues to be made in the areas of non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, while progress in the area of disarmament has been disappointingly limited.

Mr. President,

While Ireland has opted not to use nuclear energy for the generation of electricity, we recognise the sovereign right of every State to decide upon its own energy mix. However, any State seeking to assert its entitlement to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the terms of the NPT must, **without exception**, demonstrate that all of its nuclear activities are peaceful in nature. Full cooperation with the IAEA is an essential element of this, and adherence to the Agency's strengthened safeguards system, based on safeguards agreements and additional protocols, remains the most effective means of enabling the Agency to offer credible assurances to the international community that the development of nuclear power is not leading to nuclear weapons proliferation.

Mr. President,

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**. This would not only promote regional security and stability, it would bolster the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was extended indefinitely in 1995 as part of a "package deal" of agreements that also included the Middle East Resolution. Following 15 years of inaction on that resolution, the 2010 NPT Action Plan offered a new basis for taking this important process forward and my delegation is pleased to have played a part in brokering the deal which made this possible.

We strongly commend the work of the facilitator appointed to arrange a Conference to consider next steps towards such a zone, Under Secretary of State Jakko Laajava of Finland, and his team. We share his disappointment that it has not been possible to convene a conference within the timeframe envisaged. We commend those states of the region which have worked constructively with the facilitator and the co-conveners to try to create conditions conducive to a successful conference in which all states of the region can participate. We understand the genuine frustration that this has not yet happened and we urge all sides to stay the course. We all know that the process of creating a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East will not be quick or easy. What is important is that all sides remain open to dialogue and engagement, and that every effort is made to avoid steps or gestures which will make this more difficult.

Mr. President,

The Agency plays a unique and central role in international efforts to achieve effective safety and security in the use, storage, and transport of nuclear or other radioactive material, and in the security of associated facilities and activities. The considerable threats posed to nuclear security, including the threat of terrorism, demand our ongoing vigilance and planning. In this regard, I am happy to announce that, on Monday, I had the privilege to deposit Ireland's instrument of ratification of the **amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material**. We fully endorse the Director General's assessment that the amendment's entry into force is the single most important step which we can take collectively to improve the safety and security of nuclear materials at international level.

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. 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 welcomes the report of the **Working Group on government to government communications in the area of the maritime transport of radioactive materials**. In particular, I commend the Agency for circulating this report as an Information Circular among all IAEA member states, to ensure that they are fully informed of the progress which continues to be made in this area. The progress achieved to date underlines the benefits which we all derive from working together for the common good of all stakeholders.

I wish to express my delegation's appreciation to the out-going chair of the Coastal and Shipping States' dialogue – Ambassador of France – for chairing the dialogue in the past year, as well as the support provided by her team. Ireland will continue to work to ensure that we all benefit from this process. I look forward to working with the Permanent Representative of Chile, who will now chair the dialogue.

Mr. President,

I turn now to the benefits which nuclear sciences and applications can offer in areas such as human health, food safety and food quality, water resource management, agriculture and the environment. These benefits improve our daily quality of life and promote sustainability in very real and immediate ways.

I will highlight one area, in particular: the Agency's work in the important area of radiation medicine. **Cancer** kills more people every year than HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined. As the Director General has rightly noted, 'Cancer is increasingly treatable in developed countries, but many developing countries lack the equipment and human resources to respond effectively to the growing epidemic of this terrible disease'.

In recognition of the Agency's important contribution to international efforts to support low and middle income IAEA Member States in the development and

implementation of national cancer control programmes, last year Ireland made a voluntary contribution of €125,000 to the IAEA's **Peaceful Uses Initiative**, in support of the Agency's **Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy – or PACT**. I am pleased to note that one imPACT mission to Mozambique has been successfully concluded, with two further missions to Rwanda and Burundi due in the next few months. I look forward to the successful implementation of imPACT missions to both Palestine and Sierra Leone, once circumstances allow these to proceed. I wish to pay tribute to the commitment by the Director General in highlighting this important aspect of the Agency's work.

Mr. President,

At the beginning of my statement, I noted that this Conference marked a key stage in our collective preparations in advance of the 2015 NPT Review Conference. I would also highlight one other key event in advance of the 2015 Review Conference: the hosting by Austria in December of a further conference on the **Humanitarian Consequences of a Nuclear Detonation**. Ireland participated in the conferences in **Oslo** and **Nayarit**, Mexico. I would like to encourage all IAEA Member States to attend this conference. Ireland's appreciates Austria's initiative in hosting this conference, which is as timely as it is essential, especially in light of recent research into the ever-present risks of a nuclear detonation and into international response capacity in such an event.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

The statutory objective of the IAEA is to 'accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.' The Agency is to be commended for the dedicated and professional manner in which it has pursued this objective for over five decades. Ireland is due to join the Board of Governors at the conclusion of this General Conference. I wish to assure the Director General and

all our partners, that Ireland will be a firm friend in ensuring that the Agency is supported in fulfilling its mandate during our membership of the Board.

Thank you Mr. President.