

IAEA Nuklearsicherheitskonferenz, 5. Dezember 2016

Mr President,

Director General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me welcome all of you here in Vienna.

We are honoured to host the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The fact that so many Ministers have come reflects the importance of the issues of this conference.

Indeed, nuclear security has become a significant challenge.

Many of our citizens are concerned about their security.

And we know that they have good reasons for this.

The first is terrorism.

Terrorists can strike anywhere and at any time.

And we know that criminals are trying to get their hands on weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear material!

If we do not take care,

it is only a matter of time until they will succeed and a dirty bomb explodes somewhere.

Terrorism knows no borders.

This is why we need a strong international response.

No single State, no matter how powerful,
can deal with the problem on its own.

And we need to use more effectively our instruments, such as the Agency, the export control regimes or other initiatives.

I hope that this conference will take a close
look at what has worked well and
where we can still do better.

The second concern of our citizens is nuclear weapons.

We know that the main part of nuclear material in the world is used
for the production of weapons.

Over 16.000 nuclear warheads still exist –
distributed among 14 countries.

Many of them on high alert and ready for use on short notice.

One thing is clear: reducing the number of nuclear weapons would
improve nuclear security a lot.

Whatever value is given to nuclear weapons,
it must be seen in the context of the risks that these weapons carry.

Today we know more about these risks.

And as long as nuclear weapons exist, they could be used.

In such a scenario nobody would win, everybody would lose.

That is the reason why Austria is such a strong supporter of nuclear disarmament.

This is also why we – together with many other partners – have launched a process to prohibit nuclear weapons

But until disarmament comes, we will have to ensure that the weapons and the nuclear material are kept secure.

Finally, there is nuclear power.

In 2016 we commemorate 30 years of the Chernobyl accident.

Fukushima happened five years ago.

Similar accidents can happen anytime.

And the consequences of such accidents are not limited to the borders of the State that operates the nuclear power plant.

That is why the Agency plays such an important role in promoting nuclear safety, security and safeguards on an international level.

But beyond accidents, there is also the danger of an attack on installations. Cyber attacks have become a real possibility.

For all these reasons, Austria never produced nuclear power.

Some European countries now do the same, because alternative ways of clean, sustainable and less expensive energy production are available.

And we hope that more and more countries worldwide decide to go for these renewable energy sources.

In conclusion,

let me assure you

that Austria will continue to support the Agency's work, in particular in the area of nuclear security.

I wish you all a productive week in Vienna.

And thank you for your attention!