

STATEMENT BY ESTONIA

International Conference on Nuclear Security

Mr Paul Teesalu

Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Vienna, 10 February 2020

Mr Chairman, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Estonia fully aligns itself with the EU statement delivered earlier by H.E. Isabella Lövin, Minister of Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden. I would like to make some additional remarks to highlight key points for Estonia.

At the outset, let me commend the Director General Rafael Grossi for convening this important and far-reaching conference. Strengthening nuclear security is crucial for ensuring the protection of people and environment. We would like to reaffirm that individual States bear the primary responsibility for nuclear security. It means that the Member States need to take necessary measures to prevent, detect and respond to unauthorized access to nuclear and other radioactive material, and to protect and safeguard sensitive knowledge and information. However, international cooperation and coordination in this domain remain essential.

Estonia recognizes the IAEA's central role in reinforcing the global nuclear security framework. There is no doubt that the Agency's work in promoting the implementation of international legal instruments, enhancing international cooperation and assisting States in nuclear security capacity building has made a significant contribution to global security.

We welcome the work by the Agency in the implementation of the Nuclear Security Plan for 2018-2021, which has enhanced nuclear security measures in several countries. Estonia contributes on a voluntary basis to the Nuclear Security Fund and continues to adhere to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its supplements.

Mr Chairman,

Deteriorating security environment is one of the main global challenges both for multilateral action and regional stability and Estonia is committed to strengthen the nuclear security also as the non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2020-2021.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Estonia supports universal and effective implementation of the NPT and underlines the Agency's safeguards system in reducing nuclear threats. As we approach the NPT Review Conference, we all have to do our utmost to uphold and further reinforce the Treaty's role as a key multilateral instrument of international security.

We emphasise the importance of the implementation of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendment, and look forward to its Review Conference in 2021. We would also highlight the importance of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which is the first international instrument to prevent non-state actors from obtaining access to weapons of mass destruction in a comprehensive manner.

As a member of the Agency's Board of Governors in 2019-2021, Estonia is in favour of the use and development of innovative nuclear technologies to help the Member States in ensuring energy security, while using nuclear science and technologies for socio-economic, medical, health and environmental benefits. While doing so, it is crucial to apply the highest levels of safety and security standards.

In the process of digitalisation, it is essential not to underestimate the need to improve cybersecurity of nuclear facilities and national databases. Cyberattacks on nuclear power plants or facilities with high activity sources pose serious threat with potentially catastrophic consequences.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, let me assure you that Estonia will continue to support the Agency's efforts in the area of nuclear security and recognizes the Agency's central role in strengthening the international nuclear security framework.

Thank you for your attention.