

**Statement by Ambassador Mikhail Ulyanov,
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the International
Organizations in Vienna, Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation at
the “International Conference on Nuclear Security: Shaping the Future”
Vienna, 21 May 2024**

Distinguished Co-Presidents,

Dear Colleagues,

First of all, I would like to express my profound condolences to the Iranian delegation and the whole people of Iran in connection with the death of the Iranian President E.Raisi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs H.Amirabdollahian as well as other victims of the accident. This is a tragic and irreparable loss.

Russia attaches particular importance to the postulate that the responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of measures and mechanisms for ensuring nuclear security within a territory of the state rests entirely with that state. This is clearly stated in the fundamental documents of the IAEA and is an indisputable truth.

We note the central role of the Agency in the context of ensuring international cooperation on nuclear security. At the same time, the IAEA's priority should remain practical and technical assistance to the States in need in strengthening the physical protection of nuclear and other radioactive material and associated facilities, as well as the nuclear security culture. And this should be done exclusively upon relevant requests from States.

We call on all IAEA Member States to maintain an open, non-politicized and equal nature of discussions and cooperation within the framework of the Agency, without artificially introducing extraneous issues into the nuclear security topic that are not directly related to it and go beyond the scope of the IAEA's mandate. We firmly believe that any such interaction should be carried out with reliance on international law and with due respect for confidentiality. These principles also apply to the exchange of information through existing channels. At the same time, states themselves

bear responsibility for the accuracy, objectivity and exclusively technical nature of the information provided.

We are convinced that physical protection should remain the central element of nuclear security. The focus should not shift to other topics related to nuclear security, be it computer security issues or the use of new information and communication technologies, including artificial intelligence.

We recognize the special importance of maintaining the stability of the international legal framework in the area of nuclear security. We urge all countries that have not yet done so to accede to the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities. We express our principled support for the IAEA's efforts towards universalization of this core international instrument, as well as its assistance to interested Member States in implementing the provisions of the amended Convention.

We urge to refrain from the usage of the term «global nuclear security regime». Taking into account the different nature of threats in this area and the peculiarities of national legislation of different countries, we can only talk about national nuclear security regimes, the maintenance of which at a high level will contribute, in their entirety, to the strengthening of nuclear security on a global scale.

The Russian side does not share the aspirations of some countries to apply the so-called «holistic approach» to nuclear safety, nuclear security and safeguards by design. This concept is not universally agreed and requires careful expert analysis. Nuclear facilities should indeed be designed with due consideration for nuclear safety and security recommendations. We recognize the desire of the IAEA Secretariat to make nuclear facilities convenient for the application of Agency's safeguards. However, IAEA safety standards and nuclear security guidance are just recommendations. As for the safeguards, considerations of ease of their application should not be decisive in the design of facilities and should not affect their technical and economic efficiency. Therefore, this «holistic approach» should not and cannot be considered as something obligatory.

We emphasize the exceptional importance of implementing education and training programmes in the field of nuclear security. We give priority in this regard to the matters of professionalism, as well as considerations of equitable geographical distribution. In this regard, we note the work of the IAEA Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre, which became operational in 2023, and its complementary role in relation to national and international institutions for capacity-building in this area. We are glad to be among those Member States that contributed to the establishment of this centre.

Russia has always attached and continues to attach great importance to nuclear security, which is maintained at a high level in our country.

Russia is a party to all major international legal instruments in the field of nuclear security and all the relevant national rules and regulations are constantly being improved. All security measures we implement in relation to nuclear and radioactive materials, as well as to relevant facilities, not only meet the IAEA recommendations, but in many ways are even more scrupulous and stringent.

Our country supports the IAEA activities in the field of international cooperation on nuclear security, providing not only expertise, but also financial support. Since 2010 Russia has voluntarily contributed more than 14 million US dollars to the Agency's Nuclear Security Fund. These funds are used to implement projects related to both conducting training courses and workshops under the auspices of the IAEA on various aspects of nuclear security, and to provide assistance to interested countries upon their requests.

Distinguished Co-Presidents,

Dear Colleagues,

Let me assure you that the Russian Federation intends to continue to promote the strengthening of nuclear security around the world and to take an active part in relevant international efforts. Our country is committed to active and substantive work with both the IAEA and all interested states that share the goals and objectives of strengthening nuclear security.

We have to admit that three months of consultations on the draft ICONS

ministerial declaration did not yield results. We are grateful to the Co-Presidents, who led this process – the Permanent Representatives of Kazakhstan and Australia – for their efforts to organize this work. We believe that, in general, the Co-Presidents' joint statement reflects the results of the deliberations on the text of the declaration. However, the fact that consensus was not achieved is another confirmation that such a concept as the «Vienna spirit» (if, of course, we can still refer to it at all), is undergoing serious «test of strength». I want to believe that with joint efforts we would be able to return to work on the consensual basis. This requires political will, a willingness to take into account the priorities and interests of other countries, without imposing exclusively one's own agenda and avoiding situations when individual countries are backed into a corner.

Thank you.