

National Statement by Ireland:
General Conference of the IAEA: 14 to 18 September 2015

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Mr. President,

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

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-ninth General Conference.

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. Ireland unequivocally calls on those states that have not yet done so, to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states.

Mr. President,

This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of Ireland's membership of the United Nations. Since joining the UN, Ireland has been committed to playing a positive and constructive role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Support for the NPT is at the heart of Ireland's foreign policy. The NPT is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, and the central element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. Given the failure of the NPT Review Conference in May of this year, which Ireland deeply regrets, this General Conference marks an

important opportunity for us all to reflect, to take stock and to examine how we might best move forward.

Mr. President,

This year marks a particularly important and sombre milestone – it is 70 years since the end of the Second World War and the terrible devastation in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ireland is very grateful to the Governments of Norway, Mexico and Austria for their leadership in hosting major international conferences on the catastrophic humanitarian impact of a nuclear detonation.

Mr. President,

Since the last meeting of this General Conference, there has been major progress regarding Iran's nuclear programme. Ireland warmly welcomes the historic agreement reached on 14 July 2015 between the E3 / EU + 3 and Iran. We wish to pay tribute to all those who contributed to this successful outcome. This Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is entirely consistent with the principles of the NPT and underlines what can be achieved within the framework of the NPT. This agreement, which we expect to be implemented in full by all parties, confirms that diplomacy and dialogue are the only acceptable means of resolving differences between states. Ireland wishes to pay particular tribute to the work of the IAEA and its staff – especially the Director General and the Safeguards Department – in the monitoring and verification aspects of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Ireland stands ready to assist the Agency in fulfilling its responsibilities under the JCPOA and has already indicated that we will make an extra-budgetary contribution towards this.

Mr. President,

In contrast to the progress on Iran, it is a matter of particular regret for my delegation that the NPT Review Conference was not able to make any meaningful progress towards the long-overdue and much needed implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. 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 NPT, 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. It is important now for all sides to remain open to dialogue and engagement, and that every effort is made to avoid steps which will make this more difficult.

Mr. President,

Ireland greatly values its membership of the IAEA and we support the Agency’s ongoing efforts to enhance nuclear safety. Ireland regards the 5th Review Meeting of the Joint Convention on Spent Fuel Management and Radioactive Waste Management, which took place in May of this year as an important commitment by States of their support for the objective of achieving and maintaining a high level of safety worldwide.

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 was very pleased to have participated in a Table Top Exercise, which was facilitated by the Agency’s Incident and Emergency Centre, last June. We are grateful to the Secretariat for distributing the lessons learned from the exercise, as well as facilitating a briefing on the exercise, for the benefit of all IAEA members. Ireland would also like to thank both the out-going Chair of the dialogue, the Ambassador of Chile, and the new Chair of the dialogue, the Ambassador of Japan, for their excellent work in this regard. Ireland is especially pleased to note the many positive references to this dialogue at this year’s NPT Review Conference.

Ireland welcomed a team of senior international safety experts to Dublin at the end of August this year to carry out an Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission on behalf of the IAEA. The mission was formally requested by the Government of Ireland in September 2010 and its purpose was to review Ireland's regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety against international standards. The mission concluded last Wednesday the 9th of September and we look forward to receiving the final report of the review team which will allow Ireland to further develop the action plan which has already been prepared by the regulator as a result of the self-analysis undertaken in advance of the IRRS mission. The opportunity to have IAEA staff members and 10 senior regulators from 9 IAEA Member States review the regulatory framework for radiation safety in Ireland is an excellent example of the benefits which can be gained from membership of the Agency. Ireland would like to thank those Member States who provided experts for the mission as well as the staff of the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security at the IAEA for their assistance.

Mr. President,

I turn now to the benefits which nuclear science and applications can offer. As the Director General highlighted in his opening address, next week world leaders will meet at the UN Summit in New York to adopt 17 new Sustainable Development Goals. Ireland played a key role, as co-facilitator with Kenya, in the inter-governmental negotiations leading to an agreed outcome document. I wish to recognise the Agency's vital contribution to these new goals and the Agency's work in "Atoms for Peace and Development".

I would like to highlight the special contribution of the IAEA in one particular area: namely the Agency's work in the important field 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, in 2013 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 this contributions supports imPACT missions to Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique and Rwanda. We regret that similar imPACT missions to Burundi, Palestine and Sierra Leone were deferred due to unforeseen circumstances. I wish to pay tribute to the commitment by the Director General in highlighting this important aspect of the Agency's work. I note that the Agency is hosting a side event on the PACT programme, as part of this General Conference.

Before concluding, Mr. President, I wish to underline the importance which Ireland attaches to the promotion of gender equality within the UN system. Gender equality is not a women's issue, it is an organisation issue. We know that diversity is good for decision-making. While I note the Director General's remarks on progress, the progress made to date has been too slow. If the rate of change for the Agency remains at its current level it has been projected that gender parity will not be reached until 2037. We cannot afford to be complacent.

Thank you, Mr. President.

September 2015

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