

Statement by Ambassador Marco Hennis

Resident Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the International Atomic Energy Agency

Tuesday 15 September 2015, Vienna

Mr. President,

Let me start by congratulating you on your presidency of the 59th General Conference. On behalf of the Netherlands, my delegation and I pledge you our full support.

We also wish to congratulate the new members of the IAEA: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, and Turkmenistan.

The Netherlands fully agrees with the statement made by Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. Allow me to make the following additional comments from a national perspective.

Non-Proliferation

Mr. President,

Non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are, and will remain, cornerstones of our foreign policy. This policy is firmly rooted in the international non-proliferation regime, of which the NPT forms the foundation.

In this regard, the IAEA plays an instrumental role. Not only as the global supervisor of the regime, but also as the central organization for the promotion of peaceful nuclear cooperation worldwide.

Allow me to reflect briefly on the impact of events at the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Mr. President, the Netherlands shares the disappointment felt by many at the inability to adopt a Final Declaration. For us, discussions have been productive; they inspire us to develop new ideas and initiatives.

Safeguards

Mr. President,

Reliable safeguards are essential to the goals of the non-proliferation regime. I wish to express our great appreciation for the way in which the Secretariat carries out its tasks as an impartial and effective supervisory organization. It is in this context that robust legal standards and agreements are crucial. The Netherlands therefore encourages the continuing development of the Agency's safeguards system. New procedures and techniques are essential for the IAEA to cope with a growing safeguards burden while maintaining its ability to effectively guarantee that States comply with their international obligations.

Yet the Secretariat cannot do this alone. It depends on the support of member states. The Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement was finalized in 1972. To put this into historical perspective, that was also the year the video recorder was invented. We as Member States must accept that times change, and accept that legal frameworks must change with them. The drafters of the NPT were very well aware of this point: they

considered verification standards under Article III to evolve with technological and political developments. This notion is also very important to the IAEA, which has developed its safeguards system accordingly.

The Netherlands therefore recognizes that the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement *with* an Additional Protocol constitutes the current verification standard of the non-proliferation regime. The full implementation of Article III of the NPT requires, in our view, the ratification of both a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and an Additional Protocol.

We also commend and support the Agency's efforts to maintain its capacity to verify the non-diversion of nuclear material by developing the concept of safeguards implementation at the state level. We are convinced that such state-level approaches, which have already been introduced in a number of member states, represent a more effective and efficient application of nuclear safeguards by the Agency.

The Netherlands supports these efforts. The implementation of safeguards and the review of safeguards-related information are primarily internal issues for the Secretariat; nevertheless, we recognize the importance of political support on this matter. In this light, we thank the Agency for its dedication in informing and consulting with Member States. We encourage the expanded application of improved safeguards concepts.

Last but not least, our commitment to safeguards and their implementation is reflected in our support for the Member State Support Program and for the Agency's efforts aimed at universalization of the Model Additional Protocol.

Mr. President,

Once again, the Agency's reporting on safeguards issues has been independent, technical and factual. Let me highlight the following cases.

IRAN

The Netherlands has wholeheartedly supported the process of negotiations between the E3+3 and Iran. We welcome the resulting Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which proves the virtues of international diplomacy and the rule of law. The plan's successful implementation would not only resolve lingering Iranian safeguards issues but also strengthen the applicable international legal framework. It would reaffirm the authority and continued relevance of the rights and obligations laid down in the NPT. And it would indicate a willingness to peacefully resolve any conflicts on this issue.

We must remain realistic, however, and note that such a scenario is not a foregone conclusion. Thus, we call upon Iran to implement and adhere to the terms of the agreement. The Netherlands considers the Agency an indispensable actor in the verification and ultimate success of the JCPOA. We commend the Agency for its efforts under the JPA and express our confidence in its ability to supervise the terms of the JCPOA. Yet in order to do so, it needs the support of its Member States – politically and financially. We stand ready to work with the Agency and have, in addition to our earlier contributions, committed another 600,000 euros to ensure effective verification of the JCPOA.

DPRK

In addition, Mr. President, the Netherlands would like to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report on the

situation in the DPRK. The Netherlands remains convinced of the Agency's essential role in verifying the application of safeguards in the DPRK and urges that country's government to allow the early return of IAEA inspectors. We remain deeply concerned about the lack of response and appropriate action by the DPRK leadership to the demands of the international community.

Syria

We also welcome the report by the Director-General on Syria. We hope that Syria will respond positively to the DG's request to resolve all outstanding questions and bring into force an Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

Nuclear Security and Safety

Mr. President,

Nuclear security remains an important issue, and the role of the IAEA in this field is essential. It is crucial to raise political awareness to ensure that *all* Member States are fully informed of the risks and challenges involved.

The Netherlands hosted the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit, where leaders of 53 States engaged in discussions on a wide range of security topics and scenarios. Next year, the final NSS will take place in Washington, the results of which must be made available to all IAEA member states.

The Director-General's report concludes that adherence to the international legal instruments relevant to nuclear security has increased, and we applaud this development. Nevertheless, we are concerned that the amended CPPNM has not yet come into force. We welcome the ratification by 6 new members (Italy,

Qatar, San Marino, Singapore, Turkey, and the United States) and call upon all States that have not done so to ratify the amended Convention at the earliest possible date.

The Netherlands has been elected as coordinator of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Our partners are committed to strengthening global capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to nuclear terrorism. I would like to take this opportunity to invite all IAEA Member States to join this community by signing the initiative's Statement of Principles.

Mr. President, I wish to highlight the Joint Statement by 35 countries on Strengthening Nuclear Security Implementation. Together we have committed to embedding the objectives of the Nuclear Security Fundamentals in national rules and regulations, and to meeting the intent of the recommendations in specific Nuclear Security Series documents. Subscribing states have furthermore expressed the intent to contribute to the continuous improvement of nuclear security through a list of optional actions, such as contributing to the development of IAEA nuclear security guidance documents. We invite and encourage all IAEA Member States to subscribe to the Joint Statement, thus demonstrating the importance of strengthening nuclear security.

In November 2014 an IRRS mission visited the Netherlands. The implementation of the recommendations and suggestions contained in the team's final report will enable the Netherlands to further strengthen regulatory infrastructure and discharge its national and international responsibilities for nuclear safety and radiation protection in the best possible way. A follow-up mission is foreseen in 2018. The IRRS mission backed the decision taken by the government of the Netherlands to establish a new

independent regulatory body: the Authority for Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection.

The Netherlands participated actively in the last review meetings of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and will continue to do so. I would like to highlight the importance of the Convention *and* of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety, which was unanimously adopted by the Contracting Parties in February 2015, as part of the ongoing international effort to strengthen nuclear safety in the wake of the Fukushima-Daiichi accident in Japan. The national reports to be submitted to the 7th Review Meeting should explicitly consider the principles contained in the Vienna Declaration. We are convinced that this will lead to even more effective and stimulating review meetings.

Mr. President,

It is impossible to overstate the Agency's role in advancing peaceful nuclear technology to the benefit of all. The Netherlands believes the IAEA must have sufficient resources, and in this regard welcomes the programme and budget for 2016-2017.

The Netherlands is a strong supporter of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Program and will, as always, pledge its full target share to the Technical Cooperation Fund for the year 2016. Through the TCP, the Agency can make a unique contribution to sustainable national and international development, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Post-2015 development agenda. We would like to stress, however, the importance of rigorous implementation of safety, security and safeguards measures in the TCP.

Regarding the financing of TC activities, we support all efforts to make the TCP more efficient and effective. I would like to point out, however, that the current mechanism for setting targets results in unsustainable increases in target shares for states like the Netherlands. In order to ensure an equitable and reliable system – and in order that we can keep supporting the TCF – we invite the IAEA Member States to discuss ways of correcting this oversight.

So as to make more funds available to least developed countries, we encourage Member States who are in a position to do so, to reimburse the Agency for assistance received. We further encourage Member States to move away from receiving assistance as soon as their national situation allows – we have seen and welcomed such decisions by individual Member States in the past.

Mr. President,

My country is a candidate for a seat on the UN Security Council in 2017. This reflects our deep commitment to international peace, security, and development, principles that are also enshrined in the work of the Agency. As partners, we should continue our work towards these goals, facing today's and tomorrow's challenges and opportunities together.

Thank you, Mr. President.