



**Egypt's Statement to the International
Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS) 2024
20 – 24 May 2024**

**To be delivered by
Ambassador Mohamed ElMolla,
Ambassador & Permanent Representative of
the Arab Republic of Egypt in Vienna**

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Esteemed Co-Presidents, Distinguished participants,

At the outset, Egypt expresses its sincere sympathy and condolences to the People and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the untimely demise of the President and the Foreign Minister of Iran in the helicopter crash which occurred yesterday. May their souls rest in peace.

Egypt also wishes to reiterate that it attaches the greatest importance to Nuclear Security and to the important work of the International Conferences on Nuclear Security, which present an opportunity to further global interest in Nuclear Security and reflect upon the latest developments pertinent to this field. In this context, Egypt wishes to express its utmost appreciation for the efforts exerted by Australia and Kazakhstan in their capacity as Co-chairs of ICONS to attempt to bridge views on the draft Ministerial Declaration, which regrettably could not garner consensus in the end.

Egypt reiterates the importance of the cardinal principle that the responsibility of Nuclear Security in a State rests entirely and exclusively with that State, and that the Agency's activities and support provided to Member states shall be guided by the IAEA's mandate, while reaffirming our commitment to the widely accepted principle that Nuclear Security considerations shall not hamper international cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In this context, Egypt believes that conversation regarding Nuclear Security that does not address Nuclear Disarmament remains incomplete, as the majority of nuclear material, specifically fissile material, worldwide is used for military purposes. Therefore, Egypt believes that achieving the common goal of Nuclear Disarmament will have an indispensable and positive impact on Nuclear Security. This also applies to all Highly Enriched Uranium minimization activities, which should not be focused exclusively on HEU for civilian purposes. We believe that any future declaration or resolution on nuclear security should bear these elements within it and reiterate Egypt's unwavering commitment to achieving a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and ultimately a World free of Nuclear Weapons.

Esteemed Co-chairs,

Nuclear security is an ever-evolving field, with important developments that we must remain cognisant of as we carry out our national duties to strengthen nuclear security. The most prominent of which pertains to Computer and information security, which has become of increasing relevance in our digitalized world. The need to cope with the technological developments and the ensuing emerging threats is of equal importance. However, international cooperation in this regard should be pursued without prejudice to Member States sovereign rights and with due consideration to the established principle of national responsibility. Egypt takes positive note of the IAEA's

efforts in strengthening computer and information security, we however stress that priority shall be accorded to physical protection as the key element of nuclear security.

In a similar fashion, advanced nuclear technologies and reactors, including SMRs, promise a brighter, cleaner and greener future for all. Egypt hopes that these reactors represent a true shift in how nuclear energy is perceived and ultimately increase access of the Global South to Nuclear Energy and contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. Nonetheless, we need to collectively ensure that the consideration of nuclear security for these reactors respects the national obligations and commitments of each State and in a manner that neither contravenes the principle of the responsibility of nuclear security nor proves to be an impediment to access to nuclear energy, thereby inadvertently leading to further conditionality for States that seek to benefit from these technologies.

In the same vein, while Egypt pays due regard to the possible interfaces between Nuclear Security and Nuclear Safety, where appropriate and in line with the relevant General Conference resolutions, we deeply believe that any attempt to integrate the three disciplines of Safety, Security and Safeguards, even for harmonization or coordination purposes, shall be addressed with extreme caution given the different, and in some aspects, contradictory legal and statutory frameworks that govern each of them.

As for the nuclear security fund, Egypt reiterates its gratitude for the financial support provided by the donors in this regard. However, we reaffirm our principled position shared by many States that financing the Agency's activities in the field of Nuclear Security, shall not be conducted in the same manner as with IAEA statutory activities, and must be fully kept separate of the regular budget.

In the same vein, Egypt welcomes the inauguration of the Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre in "Siebersdorf" in October 2023 and looks forward to benefiting from the various opportunities provided by the Centre, which is an unparalleled turn-key institute for technical and hands-on training. We commend the efforts of the IAEA and the Donors that made this vision a reality, namely from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States among others.

Nationally, Egypt wishes to highlight some of the milestones achieved during the past few years. The signing of the Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan (INSSP) between Egypt and the Agency in 2014 and its renewal in 2018 have laid the foundation for successful partnerships, through which Egypt has benefited from the assistance provided by the Secretariat in establishing, managing and sustaining its national Nuclear Security regime. A new INSSP review meeting was convened in August 2022 in Egypt, as another paragon of the constructive cooperation with the Secretariat in this field. The Division has also accepted Egypt's request to provide

assistance in the implementation of nuclear security systems and measures within the framework of COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh in November 2022. We therefore believe that cooperation between Egypt and the Agency in the field of nuclear security has never been better and is on an upward trajectory.

Esteemed Co-chairs,

I would like to say a few remarks about the ongoing humanitarian situation in Gaza, which has deteriorated to unprecedented levels. We strongly call to end the indiscriminate and disproportionate killing of innocent Palestinian Civilians and call for an immediate ceasefire to end this horrifying situation. We also call for allowing immediate access for humanitarian aid to relief the civilian population which has endured insufferable agony. The international community should speak in a collective voice of conscience to end this suffering and to stop the invasion of Rafah as well as condemn any threats of further violence against Palestinian civilians, including the statements made by the Israeli heritage Minister about the use of a nuclear weapon against Gazans.

In conclusion, Egypt strongly believes in the importance of nuclear security and renews its continued commitment to work with all parties to exchange best practices and maximise the potential benefits of joint and collective cooperation in this critical field.