

**Statement by Mr Raimonds Oškalsns,  
Director of the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs of the Republic of Latvia,  
at the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Shaping the  
Future  
IAEA Headquarters, Vienna, Austria, 20-24 May, 2024**

Mr. Co-Presidents,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Latvia fully aligns with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Presidents,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as Co-Presidents of this Conference. We would have been able to join the consensus on the Ministerial Declaration, which was so skilfully and inclusively negotiated by Co-Chairs on your behalf. However, given that the Declaration could not be adopted, Latvia aligns with the joint statement produced by the Co-Presidents.

Today, nuclear energy and civilian applications of nuclear technology are on the rise. As a result, there is a rapidly accelerating global need to ensure the highest levels of security and accountability for nuclear and radioactive materials. Responsibility for nuclear security rests with each individual State. We must stay vigilant. It means to take every effort to prevent, identify, and respond to unlawful access to nuclear and other radioactive material, as well as to preserve and secure sensitive knowledge and information.

Mr. Presidents,

And yet, we find ourselves in extraordinary circumstances due to numerous challenges to the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, and our common goals to ensure nuclear safety, security and peaceful uses.

Latvia condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. This war has already had many catastrophic consequences, including increased risks to nuclear safety and security by illegal seizure and militarization of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.

We are deeply concerned of the technical degradation of Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. Lack of sufficient, qualified and experienced Ukrainian personnel at the Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant undermines nuclear safety and security, and aggravates the risk of nuclear accident. Latvia commends IAEA for its tireless efforts to monitor the observance of the Director General's seven indispensable pillars and the five concrete principles.

Mr. Presidents,

With the benefit of the IAEA's support, and in the spirit of cross-border cooperation, Latvia ensures that the efficiency of its national nuclear security system is constantly upgraded. Multilateral initiatives like the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism make an important contribution here. Through expert training and projects, we continue to improve the risk assessment, physical protection of nuclear and radiological materials, and related facilities; to detect and respond to those risks.

We are concerned about existing and constantly evolving threat of nuclear and radiological terrorism. Latvia puts strong emphasis on the prevention of smuggling of nuclear, radiological and other-dual use materials across international borders. Along with other EU Member States, Latvia employs strict export and transit controls, and scrutinizes every transaction with states under international sanction regimes and arms embargoes with the aim to ensure that nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological material and their delivery systems does not fall into the wrong hands or be used for malicious purposes. Latvia welcomes the new IAEA Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre, which represents our shared commitment to this cause.

Latvia sees merit in emerging technologies to improve nuclear safety and security. These technologies have a tremendous potential. At the same time, we must also acknowledge that they introduce new vulnerabilities that can be exploited by malicious actors. Thus, international cooperation and proactive approach are essential to addressing these risks.

Mr. Presidents,

We recognize the indispensable role of the IAEA in addressing the multifaceted challenges surrounding nuclear security. The inclusiveness and well-established expertise of the IAEA makes it the appropriate body to oversee such a consensus-finding process.

Latvia will be running for the elected seat at the UN Security Council for the term 2026-2027. We will be promoting the highest standards of the rules-based international order, including on nuclear security. International community must maintain its efforts to prevent nuclear security challenges from escalating into nuclear crises. The core program and side events of this Conference are doing a tangible push to shape the future with a common understanding of nuclear security, and efforts to secure nuclear and radiological materials, and their associated facilities in a sustainable manner.

Thank you, Mr. Presidents.