

Kingdom of the Netherlands Statement

International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS)

Vienna, 20-24 May 2024

Thank you, Mr Co-Chair,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. We would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands sincerely thanks Australia and Kazakhstan for their efforts to come to agreement on a Ministerial Declaration and we regret that no consensus was reached. We fully support, of course, the Joint Declaration of the Co-Chairs.

Mr Co-Chair,

Nuclear technology holds many promises for global sustainable development, in areas like agriculture, clean energy and medicine. The Netherlands is strong supporter of these peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We are home to the nuclear research reactor in Petten, for example, that produces medical isotopes for diagnosis and treatment that are used worldwide. And in the near future we will expand our nuclear energy production. But all of this cannot be accomplished without solid nuclear security measures in place.

As many on this stage have already stressed: nuclear security is of critical importance to all of us. The Netherlands, like all of you,

attaches great importance to strengthening nuclear security globally. But that is not enough.

We also need to strengthen global support for nuclear security. To do that, we need to broaden our perspective. Because for nuclear security it is not just important to make sure we keep nuclear material out of the hands of those that want to do harm. For nuclear security it is even more important to strengthen the hands of those that want to do good in keeping nuclear materials secure.

Nuclear security is impossible without a strong, independent and universally supported IAEA. The Netherlands has great appreciation for the Agency's continued efforts to improve nuclear security worldwide. We value the central role the IAEA plays in this regard and call upon all of you to ensure the Agency receives the respect and support it needs and deserves to fulfill its task.

States have a role to play, too. For nuclear security to be effective and comprehensive, States need to take a number of practical steps. These steps include bolstering physical protection and establishing systems

of accounting and control of all materials and sources. Since nuclear security remains a national responsibility, it is incumbent upon each State to commit to the effective and sustainable implementation of the principles of nuclear security and establish the appropriate legal framework, governance structure, and practical measures it deems fit to advance and ensure nuclear security. We should continue to work to mitigate the risk of accidents, theft or malicious acts involving nuclear or radioactive materials.

In this respect, the Netherlands remains concerned about the serious threats to nuclear safety and security of the ZNPP in Ukraine. The illegal seizure of another country's nuclear infrastructure is unprecedented. We urge Russia to immediately and completely withdraw from the ZNPP and return control to its rightful owner, Ukraine.

Mr. Co-chair

Peaceful uses of nuclear technologies are truly beneficial to our world. Upholding the highest standards of safety and security is essential to harness the benefits of this technology for all mankind, because a nuclear incident anywhere is a nuclear incident everywhere. In this regard, the Netherlands encourages all States to become party to, and implement, the Amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (A/CPPNM) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT). These instruments present concrete steps towards a more robust international framework, and implementing them will greatly enhance our collective ability to address current and emerging nuclear security challenges.

The Netherlands welcomes the expertise of the IAEA in assisting Member States with establishing and strengthening their domestic regimes. In 2023, we received a fifth International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) mission. The Netherlands also contributes to IPPAS by providing experts that can join IPPAS missions in other countries. The Netherlands would like to express its commitment to the IAEA Guidance on Import and Export of Radioactive Sources.

The Netherlands is committed to promoting gender equality and the role of women in the nuclear field. To encourage this, the Netherlands has contributed to the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship programme. Another example of our commitment to equal

opportunities is that, together with South Africa, Mrs. Annemiek van Bolhuis, chair of the board of our nuclear regulator, is currently co-chairing the International Gender Champions Impact Group on Gender Equality in Nuclear Regulatory Agencies. We continue to support an equal, diverse and inclusive environment.

The broad participation of IAEA member States here shows that we collectively recognize the need for continuous improvement of global nuclear security. It is in our common interest. And while much has been achieved, much still remains to be done. In order to share in the benefits of nuclear technology, we must work together to reach our common goals.

Thank you, Mr Chair.