

**International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS) 2024: Shaping the Future
20–24 May 2024, Vienna
New Zealand Statement**

Check against delivery

Co-Presidents,
Excellencies,

At the outset, may I extend New Zealand's congratulations as you preside over ICONS 2024. I also wish to thank the IAEA and its Director General for hosting this significant event.

And New Zealand sends condolences to the Government of Iran following the helicopter crash, and loss of Iran's President, Minister of Foreign Affairs and accompanying delegation.

Our world is interconnected, and New Zealand, despite not having significant holdings of nuclear material or nuclear facilities, shares the concerns of others about inadequately secured nuclear material being accessed and exploited by groups wanting to terrorise our societies. The possibility of an attack involving nuclear or radioactive material, or an incident at a nuclear facility, is unfortunately very real. This is why New Zealand remains committed to supporting the IAEA's valuable nuclear security work.

Globally, the number of nuclear power plants, nuclear laboratories, and locations that handle nuclear and radioactive material is growing. And with more than 20 million packages containing radioactive material being transported worldwide each year, and this number set to increase, there is a need to remain vigilant to nuclear security during all transportation phases.

Co-Presidents,

The theme of this Conference, "Shaping the Future", is an opportunity for us to reflect on our current approaches to nuclear security and raise our awareness in areas that need more attention.

International events since the last ICONS in 2020 underscore the enduring importance of nuclear security. We are now into the third year of Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine. Russia's unlawful occupation of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is a stark reminder of the continued precariousness of a situation in which the risk of nuclear disaster remains a real possibility. As long as Russia persists with its ongoing aggression, the risk to the safety and security of Europe's largest nuclear power plant remains. New Zealand echoes the IAEA Director General's call for maximum restraint, and strict observance by all parties to the five concrete principles for the ZNPP, and the seven indispensable pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security in armed conflict, including avoiding any attack or military activity that could threaten the nuclear safety and security there. New Zealand strongly supports the IAEA's sustained close monitoring, including its continuous presence, at Zaporizhzhia.

Co-Presidents,

Although nuclear security is the responsibility of Member States, the transboundary risk of a nuclear or radiological attack is one that requires international cooperation, as would its effects. And the IAEA's role in this regard is indispensable.

We, as Member States, are fortunate to be able to draw on the technical expertise, practical assistance, equipment and trainings offered by the IAEA. New Zealand reaffirms the IAEA's central role in strengthening nuclear security and coordinating nuclear security cooperation. New Zealand is proud to be a regular contributor to the IAEA's Nuclear Security Fund. We encourage Member States to contribute to, and benefit from, the IAEA's services.

New Zealand is cognisant of the growing interest in small- and medium-sized modular reactors and the corresponding need to consider new approaches to nuclear security. We note that SMR innovations come at a time of significant advances in digital technologies, increased digital automation, and remote control. We emphasise the importance of nuclear safety and security, including in the design phase, and appreciate the IAEA's development of guidance, tools and human resources to ensure the safe and secure deployment of any SMR.

Co-Presidents,

We commend you on your significant efforts to help delegations produce a consensual and balanced Ministerial Declaration that would have reflected the shared priorities of all Member States. Throughout the negotiation process the co-Chairs consulted transparently, inclusively, and openly with all Member States. New Zealand regrets that one delegation could not agree to have a consensus declaration at this ICONS. New Zealand supports the Co-Presidents' Joint Statement.

Finally, as we look to "Shape the Future", we must also consider nuclear security in its broader context, and importantly, as we look toward the next Preparatory Committee of the NPT in Geneva in July.

Nuclear security is an integral and important part of the global non-proliferation architecture – there are clear linkages between nuclear disarmament and nuclear security. It remains New Zealand's view that complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament will be the greatest possible contribution to global nuclear security.

Thank you.

ENDS.