



The 69th IAEA General Conference

Vienna, Austria

GENERAL DEBATE STATEMENT

To be Delivered by Catherine Colthart

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good morning/afternoon.

Law enforcement agencies around the world are at the forefront of protecting communities from the misuse of nuclear and other radioactive materials. As the global representative of the law enforcement community, INTERPOL assists its 196 member countries in countering the threat of radiological and nuclear terrorism.

The global law enforcement community faces an ever-changing array of capable, mobile, and resourceful non-state actors with intent to attack vulnerable targets and misuse radioactive materials.

In 2024 alone, INTERPOL recorded 284 radiological and nuclear (RN) incidents ranging from unauthorized shipments and disposals to theft and cyber-related threats. Looking ahead, 2025 is expected to see a rise in cyberattacks, airspace breaches of nuclear facilities, and the continued proliferation of unauthorized possession of radioactive materials, with emerging technologies such as AI further facilitating illicit access and trafficking.

Combating these diverse and often unfamiliar *modi operandi* requires increased awareness, effective countermeasures, but also extensive communication among law enforcement agencies, and with other government agencies, regulators, academia, international and regional organizations as well as the private sector.

In this context, effective international cooperation and information sharing are crucial to mitigate the risk posed by emerging threats to nuclear security. INTERPOL's encrypted global

communication system, called **I-24/7**, facilitates the secure exchange of information among law enforcement worldwide.

INTERPOL core competencies lie in **police data management and analysis**. We collect, assess, and analyse information relevant to nuclear risks and inform member countries accordingly. We also support member countries with their ongoing investigations of radiological and nuclear threats. INTERPOL's **Geiger database** continues to collate law enforcement data on incidents involving nuclear and other radioactive materials as well as facilities including cyber incidents and insider threat cases. Notably, over 56% of incidents in 2024, and already more than 50% in 2025, were sourced through INTERPOL's own incident collection strategy under Project Geiger, surpassing external sources for the first time. INTERPOL's collection strategy includes working with four regions to enhance the information sharing on radiological and nuclear threats between law-enforcement stakeholders. Those four regions cover 36 countries in (1) Black Sea & Caucasus, (2) Central Asia, (3) Southeast Asia, and (4) Southern Africa regions.

INTERPOL collects data to ultimately assist member countries by issuing so called "notices" on individuals, modus operandi, intelligence or imminent threats involving radioactive materials. Currently, 81 issued notices involving nuclear or other radioactive materials remain valid. INTERPOL also circulated to all 196 Member Countries annual and regular incident specific analytical reports, digests and bulletin to inform law enforcement agencies of criminal trends and emerging threats.

Mr/Ms Chair,

The completion of a national-level threat assessment specific to radioactive materials is a gap in many countries' approaches to nuclear security. Therefore, INTERPOL has developed a three phase **Radiological Terrorism Threat Assessment Methodology** taking into consideration the actors and their motivations, the nuclear and other radioactive material and facility access and capabilities, and the conditions leading to a probable attack. Such a methodology will ultimately assist countries in completing their own radiological and nuclear-specific threat assessments.

Having a clear understanding of the threat assists policy makers and legislators in making well-informed decisions and supports the development of proportionate policies and criminal legislation. We encourage all States in this room, members of INTERPOL, to make use of INTERPOL's tools and data repository system in the field of nuclear security.

In addition, an effective response to nuclear security threats requires **specialised awareness and capabilities** that are not part of the traditional law enforcement skill set. In this regard, INTERPOL assists member countries in building their expertise. INTERPOL's unique knowledge of current, global, and regional radiological and nuclear incidents, especially in relation to the motivations and tactics of non-state actors involved in these incidents, and the investigation of

such incidents, is essential to provide effective assistance to countries. From first responder training courses, and practical exercises, to an integrated workshop on crime scene management and nuclear forensics taught jointly with the IAEA, INTERPOL has developed a range of specialised training materials.

Only in 2025 we delivered 11 training sessions to 256 individuals and successfully completed a three-year cycle of capacity building with Algeria, Colombia, Iraq, Malaysia, South Africa and Thailand. Four countries are currently benefiting from such capacity building process, following a thorough assessment of national capabilities and the development of country-specific Action Plans. We have also collaborated on over 26 joint international initiatives with our international and regional partners, aimed at avoiding duplication of efforts and maximizing the benefits for member countries.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States for their contribution and support to INTERPOL's Radiological and Nuclear Terrorism prevention activities, as well as our partners. INTERPOL and the IAEA have developed a strong working relationship over the years, with the development of key publications, training programmes, and increased participation in each other's activities. International cooperation benefits all countries by helping to build bridges between regulators, policymakers, operational front-line officers and law enforcement specialized investigators.

Law enforcement agencies play a critical role in understanding and addressing nuclear security threats. They are the first responders to situations involving radioactive materials, intervening in, or securing contaminated crime scenes, and apprehending terrorists or smugglers of radioactive material. INTERPOL remains dedicated to bringing the needs, perspectives, and on-the-ground experiences of law enforcement into the IAEA General Conference discussions. This is part of our collective response to transnational crime and the potential devastating misuse of nuclear and other radioactive material by criminal actors.

I thank you for your attention.