



**Workshop on Nuclear Security:
From Political Commitment to Practical Implementation**

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I would like to thank Ambassador Istrate and the EU for inviting me to participate in this workshop and for their recognition of the important role that the NGO community plays in contributing to this dialogue.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is seen by its Member States as the “global platform” for nuclear security efforts, with a “central role” in facilitating international cooperation in the field. This role evolved after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in 2001, following which the IAEA produced its first Nuclear Security Plan, expanding its activities from providing support in the physical protection of nuclear facilities and nuclear materials to include the broader issues of nuclear security writ large.

This evolution has not been effortless, and universal acceptance by Member States of nuclear security as a vital component of the IAEA’s role in global nuclear governance remains elusive.

This does not mean that nuclear security is not taken seriously by all Member States of the IAEA. However the fact that the nuclear security activities of the Agency are funded through extra-budgetary means, and that only a small percentage of Member States contribute to the Nuclear Security Fund, is an indication that Member States do not attach the same value to the Agency’s nuclear security role.

Another bone of contention among Member States is the role of nuclear security as it relates to peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear applications. The Group of 77 and China, in their official statements to the Board and when negotiating on nuclear security, caution that measures to strengthen nuclear security should not hamper international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities. Conversely, other Member States emphasize the role of nuclear security as enabling peaceful nuclear activities.

These different perspectives are most apparent when Member States are engaged in political negotiations, whether on the IAEA’s budget, the nuclear security resolutions in the General Conference or the Nuclear Security Ministerial Declaration.

So how do we build consensus on nuclear security if we have different perspectives on something as fundamental as the role of the IAEA and the relationship between nuclear security and peaceful uses?

While the Agency holds technical conferences focused on specific topics within nuclear security, these events are geared more towards technical experts, including nuclear regulators, rather than diplomats. Moreover, diplomats from smaller delegations, who often cover all of the activities of the IAEA in addition to other portfolios, have to prioritise the meetings at the IAEA they can attend.

We have considered this question at the VCDNP and are of the view that, in general, diplomats rarely have the opportunity to engage substantively on nuclear security outside of policy and budget negotiations. We believe therefore that increasing the opportunities for diplomats to engage on these issues will contribute to building consensus within the IAEA.

One of the things the VCDNP has done to contribute to a better understanding of the role of nuclear security in nuclear applications and the support provided by the IAEA to its Member States is to develop a platform for dialogue between diplomats and Member State experts responsible for the application and use of nuclear and other radioactive materials. The idea is to give diplomats an opportunity to interact substantively with experts on their efforts to use these materials in a safe and secure manner and to offer them a first-hand understanding of how the Agency is supporting them.

To expand support for nuclear security we also need to appreciate how nuclear security is perceived by different Member States and particularly why nuclear security and Technical Cooperation are perceived as competing priorities.

The concept of “security” evokes a different response depending on one’s country or region of origin. What I have learned is that many developing countries associate “increasing security measures” with building higher walls, increasing military spending, reducing development cooperation and restricting the movement of people, technology and the flow of information. Add to this the emergence of nuclear security in the Agency as a response to the 9/11 attacks and it is not hard to understand how nuclear security has become disconnected from peaceful uses and, as such, Technical Cooperation.

In 1979 all Member States agreed to guiding principles and general operating rules to govern the provision of Technical Cooperation¹. One of the guiding principles is that “the Agency’s recommendations regarding physical protection shall be applied to nuclear facilities, equipment and materials relating directly to the technical assistance programme”. In other words there was a time when security, like safety, was considered to be an integral part of Technical Cooperation.

Another perception that has contributed to the “separate development” of nuclear security within the Agency is the aversion among Member States to sharing information about their nuclear security activities. Transparency on nuclear security is perceived as a threat to proliferation sensitive information and to national security. However more transparency around the efforts made by Member States to secure their materials and related facilities and the support provided by the Agency will enhance trust. It will also improve the understanding of Member States on how nuclear security, like safety and safeguards, creates an enabling environment in which nuclear and other radioactive materials can be used and nuclear technology can be applied.

International efforts to increase security measures for radioactive materials after 9/11 resulted in unforeseen consequences that contributed to the perception that nuclear

¹ INFCIRC/267: The Revised Guiding Principles and General Operating Rules to Govern the Provision of Technical Assistance by the Agency

security can hamper access to nuclear material and technologies. Between 2003 and 2013 denials and delays of radioactive shipments affected the delivery of radioactive materials and medical isotopes used in lifesaving applications for cancer diagnosis and treatment. Perceptions by some carriers, seaports and airports of *possible* radioactive hazards rather than to actual safety and security concerns were identified as a reason for this crises. Another reason was the lack of harmonisation of regulations between States and variations in how regulations were applied.² More knowledge regarding the actual risks related to the transportation and use of radioactive materials would reduce such incidences, as would better coordination between policymakers and regulators.

A zero growth, exacerbated by the perception that the funding of the Agency's Technical Cooperation and its nuclear security activities is a zero-sum game, pits nuclear security against Technical Cooperation. Attempts by the Agency to regularize the Nuclear Security Fund have met with resistance from the G77 Member States who fear that this would result in a reduction of support to the Technical Cooperation Fund. Many countries are also concerned that they would not be able increase their financial contribution to the regular budget.

On the other hand, concerns prevail regarding extra-budgetary fund for nuclear security creating separate donor and recipient classes. This arrangement also suggests that nuclear security is a concern only of developed countries. This is not healthy for the long-term "ownership" of the nuclear security challenge and the sustainability of efforts to deal with it. Financial constraints on major donors and donor fatigue can imperil the Agency's work at short notice. A further constraint is the tendency of donors to place conditions on their contributions, such as directing them to particular activities, projects, states or regions. A better understanding of the support provided by the Agency to Member States and the implications of this support being provided through extra-budgetary means may assist in facilitating discussions on this matter. However, the reality of financial constraints faced by most Member States must be taken into account.

Consensus on the importance of security and the role of the IAEA is necessary to address current and evolving challenges to nuclear security. A nuclear security incident, by its nature, knows no boundaries: In addition to the humanitarian and environmental impact of such an incident, trust in the government of the country in which the incident takes place will be undermined. Public trust worldwide in nuclear energy will also be reduced and could even be lost. If an incident occurs in any of our countries, we could stand to lose the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear applications.

Nuclear security's evolution in the IAEA as a competing priority to Technical Cooperation makes it difficult, if not impossible, to achieve this consensus. Nuclear security, nuclear safety and safeguards create an enabling environment in which nuclear and other radioactive materials can be used and nuclear technology can be applied. Nuclear security should be seen as an integral part of delivering Technical

² Director General's remarks to the March 2011 Board of Governors meeting.

Cooperation, as opposed to competing for scarce resources with Technical Cooperation.

To summarise: The best way to change the narrative on nuclear security and Technical Cooperation is to close the gap between the political and the technical by creating more opportunities for the relevant stakeholders to engage on substantive issues. More information about the Agency's support to Member States in the area of nuclear security will help Member States better evaluate the needs of the Agency. We also need to foster open dialogue on the legitimate concerns of Member States. Ultimately consensus on nuclear security will enable the IAEA to continue to provide critical support to countries that need it and ensure that we benefit from the peaceful uses of the atom for many years to come.