Statement by
H.E. Ms. Anne Anderson
Permanent Representative

at the

High Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security

New York, 22 September 2011

Check against delivery
I commend the Secretary-General for his initiative in convening this special meeting on nuclear safety and security. The accident last March in Fukushima has powerfully reminded us of the need for the global community to work together to achieve higher standards of nuclear safety worldwide. I would like to express my Government’s deepest sympathies with the people of Japan and to pay tribute to the courage and determination of the workers at the Fukushima plant.

Nuclear safety is a matter for all. While specific safety provisions remain, in the first instance, a matter for each country, the potential transboundary impact of a nuclear accident means that nuclear safety in any one country is a matter of concern to all others. Multilateral co-operation is essential to ensure that the right safety measures are in place and that they are effectively implemented. The provision of assurance to the public worldwide is also facilitated by such co-operation.

It is critical that we place an appropriate emphasis on coherence in developing and implementing our responses to these lessons, to ensure that they add value and make a real contribution to nuclear safety worldwide. The International Atomic Energy Agency has the key role in international cooperation on nuclear issues. In his address to the Agency’s General Conference earlier this week, Ireland’s Minister for the Environment underlined the central role of the Agency in driving the international response to the lessons learned from Fukushima. The IAEA’s safety standards, as supported and enhanced by international peer review and knowledge sharing, should form the basis for these efforts. Ireland is pleased to support the IAEA’s Nuclear Safety Action Plan to guide the work of the international community in this area, and as an important step to strengthening nuclear safety globally.

Ireland stresses the importance of the full and robust implementation of this Action Plan. An element of particular interest from our perspective is the increase in transparency envisaged in the Plan. It is Ireland’s view that increased transparency can make a very real contribution to strengthening nuclear safety.
It is important that an effective framework for the cooperation of relevant international organizations is in place before any future accident. We welcome the strengthening of the joint radiation emergency plan of international organizations to enhance our response to future nuclear and radiological accidents and emergencies.

Mr President,

Given its work in assisting peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and in the verification of safeguards commitments by its member states, the IAEA plays a significant role in advancing the objectives and implementing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which is a core foreign policy priority for Ireland.

We also look forward to the Summit on nuclear security that the Republic of Korea will host next year, following up the important work started by President Obama in Washington in 2010.

Mr. President,

Nuclear technology in coming years will impact on our daily lives in increasingly sophisticated ways. This will increase the complexity of the challenges facing the international community in its efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation, including its efforts in the areas of safety and security. Ireland remains committed to working with member states in attaining these common goals.

Thank you.