Access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is not only safeguarded by Article IV of the NPT, but ensuring safe, secure and sustainable access to nuclear energy may very well dictate whether the international community will be successful in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and mitigating the effects of climate change.

In order to maximise our ability to use nuclear energy and technology to advance these shared goals, Canada believes that countries should have strong nuclear safety and nuclear security measures in place to facilitate international cooperation with respect to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Ensuring high standards of nuclear safety and security directly facilitates the exchange of equipment and knowledge pertaining to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In turn, confidence that countries receiving nuclear expertise, equipment and materials have implemented and maintain strong domestic nuclear security and safety measures enables a higher volume of trade and cooperation than would otherwise exist.

It is in this light that Canada engages in, and finances, domestic and international efforts to increase nuclear security globally. We have contributed more than 42 million Canadian dollars to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Nuclear Security Fund since 2004 through Global Affairs Canada’s WMD Threat Reduction Program. Total voluntary contributions to the Agency’s activities since the Program’s inception exceed 65 million dollars.

Canada is providing funding to over 20 different nuclear security-related projects that are being implemented by the IAEA. Key activities include enhancing nuclear security regulatory infrastructure in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean; securing or removing high-activity disused sealed radioactive sources in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and Central Asia; upgrading the physical protection of nuclear facilities in South and Southeast Asia and the Middle East; strengthening nuclear security response capabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean; and supporting research and development to enhance cybersecurity for nuclear facilities. We consider these to be among our most strategic investments in the security domain. In that regard, the government of Canada approved in January 2018 the extension of the mandate of the WMD Threat Reduction Program, which will allow it to continue to strengthen nuclear and radiological security around the world well into the future.

We would like to highlight the key role played by the IAEA in ensuring the success of the peaceful uses pillar of the NPT. Given the increasing importance of the Agency’s work on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it is imperative that States refrain from requesting the Agency to take on a role in areas outside its mandate, such as disarmament or nuclear material used for military purposes. Though these are extremely important issues, Canada remains concerned that attempting to deal with them under the umbrella of the IAEA detracts from the Agency’s central role in upholding the NPT’s peaceful uses pillar. Instead, IAEA resources would be better directed to facilitating the safe and secure access of all States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as we collectively seek to reduce our impact on the environment, and to improve the quality of life for all.

Thank you.