Cluster III
Statement by

Ambassador Tom Hanney

Permanent Representative of Ireland to the International Organisations in Vienna

At the
2018 Preparatory Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Geneva, 1 May, 2018

Check against Delivery
Mr Chairman

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered within this Cluster by the European Union and the Vienna Group of 10. We would like to add the following brief comments in a national capacity.

Ireland believes strongly in an international order, based on the rule of law, and we are committed to effective multilateralism as the best way of achieving and upholding the rule of law, thereby ensuring international peace and security and advancing international cooperation. Consistent with this approach, we are fully committed to working with our partners in the international community, including with the IAEA, in making progress on the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) – disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technologies. Ireland views the three pillars as being interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

While Ireland has chosen not to include nuclear power in its energy mix, we nevertheless recognise the right of all State Parties to the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under Article IV of the Treaty. As a strong advocate of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Ireland recognises that it is only through equal implementation of each of the three pillars of the NPT that our shared objective of a world free of nuclear weapons will be realised. As the 2010 Review Conference noted, the NPT provides a framework of international confidence and cooperation within which the peaceful uses of nuclear energy can take place. This framework is not just confined to Article IV, but applies to all of the three pillars, which must be implemented in their entirety.
Ireland emphasises the importance of promoting the equal, full and effective participation of both women and men in nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We are an active member of the Vienna-based GFWIN/Group of Friends of Women in Nuclear, which is growing and now represents 23 Member States. Ireland is convinced that achieving gender parity is not just a women’s issue, but an issue closely linked to overall effectiveness.

Mr Chairman

While Ireland maintains a policy of not using nuclear energy for the generation of electricity, we are conscious of, and greatly value, the societal benefits from the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies. The application of nuclear technologies can and do make very positive contributions in the areas of health, water management, agriculture, food safety and nutrition, energy and more broadly to the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ireland continues to be strong supporters of the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme, including through the Technical Cooperation Fund and the Peaceful Uses Initiative. We strongly support the activities of the Agency to develop radiation and nuclear related science and technologies and to promote their application in the service of the SDGs. Ireland welcomes the upcoming IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology to be held in Vienna in November this year. We think this conference offers an important opportunity to highlight the contribution of nuclear technologies and their applications to attaining the SDGs.
I also wish to acknowledge Director General Amano’s personal commitment to the promotion of nuclear science and technology in supporting sustainable development, in particular in improving access to effective cancer treatment in developing countries. Ireland has made financial contributions in support of the PACT programme in previous years, and we are examining the potential of supporting the work of PACT again this year.

The IAEA’s Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy, or PACT, helps countries devise comprehensive cancer control programmes. The third of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals aims by 2030 to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages. This is a huge challenge which relates directly to the work of the PACT. With its long history of working for peaceful applications of nuclear technologies, the IAEA is well placed to guide and support its Member States to a healthy and productive future.

While we recognise the societal benefits that can accrue from the application of nuclear technologies, we are, however, also conscious of the risks which may be associated with nuclear power and technologies - risks which have increased dramatically in recent years. If countries choose to use nuclear power then it is essential that it is used safely and securely. The NPT has established a rigorous and successful framework for the transfer of nuclear power and technologies in support of socio-economic development.
Mr Chairman,

Ireland believes the successful and responsible application of nuclear technologies must be based on three crucial underpinnings: safety, security and safeguards. Nuclear safety and security must remain a fundamental component of all technical cooperation projects and the strict adherence to international agreements, norms and guidance, such as those developed under the auspices of the IAEA are essential for the peaceful use of the atom. Ireland strongly believes that further improvement in the implementation of nuclear safety, security and safeguards when developing technical co-operation projects can be achieved, and should be constantly sought. The IAEA is the major player to guarantee that countries choosing to develop their capacities in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy do so under the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions. We continue to attach the utmost importance to the worldwide implementation and continuous improvement of nuclear safety and we greatly appreciate the crucial role played by the IAEA in this regard.

The 2017 IAEA General Conference Resolution on Nuclear Security (GC(61)/RES/9), and the Ministerial Declaration for the 2016 International Conference on Nuclear Security provides us with a solid foundation from which all States can continue this work.

The IAEA has been a strong resource for States in the area of nuclear security over many decades, with a proud record of providing support and expert advice. These range from the key security instrument, to Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), and its Amendment to the on the ground training of police and border guards. Ireland will continue to support the Agency in this vital work. For many
years, the IAEA has promoted greater communication in the area of
devise transport of radioactive material primarily through supporting
dialogue between coastal and shipping states. As an island state, this area
is of particular interest to Ireland and is coherent with the Agency’s pro-
ductive approach to addressing the threats posed by illicit trafficking in
nuclear material. We are fully committed to this process of dialogue
between interested Coastal and Shipping States, with the common
objectives of deepening trust between partners, while preserving and,
indeed, enhancing the security of these transports. With our UK
colleagues, Ireland is co-chairing the Coastal and Shipping States Group
in Vienna for the period 2017-2019. Ireland will continue to be committed
to the highest standards of security and safety, both in the transport of
nuclear material and in general.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.