

Facilitating Adherence to the 2005 Amendment to the CPPNM

Opening Remarks

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Ambassadors, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues,

The threat of nuclear terrorism is real and immediate. Despite the progress made in recent decades, there is still too much nuclear and radioactive material throughout the world which is not properly secured.

Terrorists will quickly exploit the weakest link in any security system. The challenge is global and the response must be global. Shortcomings in the global nuclear security framework need to be addressed urgently.

The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials is one of the 18 international legal instruments used to combat terrorism. It covers the physical protection of nuclear material during international transport; the criminalisation of offences; and international co-operation and information exchange.

The CPPNM entered into force on 8 February 1987 and, as of today, 145 Parties have ratified it.

In July 2005, an Amendment was adopted by consensus, which, among other things, broadened the scope of the CPPNM to include domestic nuclear facilities and the physical protection of nuclear material in peaceful domestic use, storage and transport.

Five years have passed since the adoption of the Amendment, but it has still not entered into force because only 42 parties have so far ratified it.

Entry into force requires ratification by two-thirds of the States Parties to the CPPNM. At the current pace, with about 12 States ratifying every year, it could take another five years before the Amendment enters into force.

I believe we cannot afford to wait that long.

The importance of the Convention has been recognised over the years in UN Security Council resolutions and at the NPT review conference.

Strong adherence to the CPPNM and the Amendment is vital for effective global nuclear security. The reports of the IAEA's Illicit Trafficking Database show clearly that there are still too many incidents of illicit trafficking or other unauthorised activities involving nuclear or radioactive material.

Responsibility for nuclear security rests with each State, but adherence to the CPPNM Amendment can reduce the risk of nuclear material, facilities and transports falling into the wrong hands.

The purpose of this meeting is to enable us to get a clearer understanding of the problems that Parties to the Convention have experienced in adopting the Amendment and to learn from each others' experiences.

We in the Secretariat are ready to do all we can to assist you in living up to the commitments you have made.

The consequences of a major security failure would be extremely grave. It is in everyone's interest to ensure that this Amendment is brought into force as quickly as possible.

I encourage the Parties to the Convention and those States that wish to adhere to the Amendment to make full use of this meeting to work towards accelerating the Amendment's entry into force.

I wish you every success in your deliberations.

Thank you.