Statement by

Mr. Breifne O’Reilly
Director for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland

at the

Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Cluster III

New York, 5 May 2014

Check against delivery
Mr Chairman,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement by the European Union under this cluster. I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

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. During the Cluster II debate, we noted that a fundamental precondition for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is adherence to, and full compliance with, the non-proliferation and verification requirements of the Treaty. It is equally the case that the highest levels of safety and security must apply at all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle.

While nuclear applications can and do make very positive contributions in the areas of health, water management, agriculture, food safety and nutrition, energy needs and concerns, and the environment, they do raise very significant safety issues for each of us.

One of the most significant applications of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology is in the area of human health. As the Director General of the IAEA has correctly noted on numerous occasions, cancer kills more people globally than HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB combined. This is a particular issue of concern for many developing countries.

The IAEA’s Peaceful Uses Initiative has a key role to play in leading the fight against cancer, as it does in a range of other human health related areas and, indeed, in other fields.

Given the importance of the IAEA’s work in this area, and in accordance with Action 55 of the 2010 Action Plan, Ireland made an extra-budgetary voluntary contribution to the IAEA’s Peaceful Uses Initiative in 2013, specifically with regard to the IAEA’s Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy. This extra-budgetary support is to assist PACT programmes in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. My delegation would encourage other States Parties to consider pledging support for the IAEA’s Peaceful Uses Initiative, in particular the PACT programme.

Mr Chairman,

It is now more than three years since the Fukushima Daiichi accident, which reminded us of need to ensure that the highest possible standards of safety are in place. While
acknowledging that the prime responsibility regarding the implementation of such safety standards rests at the national level, Ireland is acutely conscious of the transboundary nature of nuclear events. This therefore underlines the need for international cooperation in this area.

Ireland warmly welcomes the international community’s improved focus on nuclear safety issues since 2011. Central to any international effort to improve the global nuclear safety regime will, of course, be the International Atomic Energy Agency. We commend and fully support the on-going efforts of the IAEA to coordinate and share lessons learned from Fukushima.

Mr Chairman,

As a coastal state, Ireland fully participated in the IAEA working group on voluntary and confidential Government-to-Government communication in the area of the maritime transport of radioactive materials. This dialogue, in which the IAEA was a key partner, was in accordance with Action 62 of the 2010 Action Plan, which called on States Parties: “to continue communication between shipping and coastal states for the purpose of confidence-building and addressing concerns regarding transport safety, security and emergency preparedness”.

We welcome the outcome document of this dialogue between the Coastal and Shipping States and look forward to ongoing cooperation in this area of key interest, in particular at next September’s IAEA General Conference.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman,

We are fully committed to this the third pillar of the NPT, as we are to the first and second pillars. My delegation must note that the lack of progress on disarmament over many decades has resulted in this third pillar bearing an undue burden. The main inducement to remaining compliant with non-proliferation obligations is access to peaceful uses of nuclear technologies. It is important that we protect this pillar with robust safeguards and stringent safety standards.

ENDS