

NSS2014, General Debate

REMARKS BY MR. SAULI NIINISTÖ
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NUCLEAR SECURITY SUMMIT, GENERAL DEBATE
THE HAGUE, 25 MARCH 2014

Mr Chairman,

Since the Seoul Summit further progress has been made in securing nuclear materials, in strengthening national systems and in enhancing international cooperation. This is largely due to the political will mobilised through the Nuclear Security Summit process.

In the preparations of The Hague Summit Finland has emphasised the importance of an independent national regulator, of cyber security and of nuclear security culture. These are among the key factors in pursuing our common goal.

First, a right balance has to be found between political decision makers, nuclear industry and the national authority responsible for nuclear security standards, monitoring and enforcement. Safety and security cannot be compromised by commercial or political pressures. The regulator shall not be isolated from the rest of the state administration but it needs to be effectively independent to avoid any undue influence.

Secondly, information and cyber security has been a cross cutting theme throughout the preparations of this Summit. We begin to realise the magnitude of the challenge. If not adequately addressed, vulnerability to cyber attacks grows as nuclear facilities move to digital systems. This threat does not respect the distinction between civilian and military use of nuclear materials. Terrorists and criminals can be as powerful as national states.

Third, nuclear security culture is about the human and organisational factors in our effort. A developed security culture in the nuclear field means that the entire chain of national actors is able to prevent risks and to respond to them. There will be increased trust in the system and less need for detailed norms and heavy control. An enhancing nuclear security culture generates operational efficiency and reduces costs.

A working inter-agency cooperation is part of good nuclear security culture. I believe this is one of the strengths of the Finnish national system. Finland has recently designed a model of a nuclear security detection architecture, which is based on the right combination of personnel, technology and an integrated timely operation of all authorities involved. Information on this inter-agency model will be available, and we are very willing to discuss it further with any interested partner.

Another national project relevant to the agenda of this Summit is the safe and secure disposal of nuclear waste. Finland is currently licensing a final underground repository for spent fuel that will meet strict and appropriate security requirements and that will also make use of advanced technology. Large part of the new technology has been developed in Finland. The encapsulation and final disposal process of spent fuel will start in 2022. The experimental underground facility is already under construction.

National nuclear security systems will not reach their full potential without cooperation at the international level. A good start would be to strengthen our common normative basis through two existing legal instruments. Finland promotes wider ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and, further, bring into force the Amendment made in 2005 to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. This amendment would make the Nuclear Material Convention decisively more effective but it has not entered into force because the stipulated number of ratifications is not yet there.

We should all make better use of peer reviews of national nuclear security systems (IPPAS), of IAEA nuclear security guidance as well as of other international resources that have been established to help us in serving our citizens in the field of nuclear security.

The number of peer review missions is growing. Until now, 62 missions in 40 countries have taken place. This is good development. However, we do not make full use of this opportunity if there is no follow-up mission in which the progress accomplished is observed and confirmed.

Threat of nuclear terrorism and the need to address it through international cooperation has been in the focus of the Summit series from the very beginning. Finland takes part in this endeavor and has agreed to host in Helsinki in 2015 the next Plenary meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT).

This global initiative supports the efforts of the IAEA and other international institutions. In Finland we have found that sharing best practices and participating in exercises in the GICNT framework is useful and in our national interest.

We welcome to Helsinki also those countries who have not yet joined the Initiative. The Finnish Government is ready to work closely with all of you to make the GICNT meeting a productive one.

I thank you.