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Press Releases

Press Release 2005/03

States Agree on Stronger Physical Protection Regime

8 July 2005 | Delegates from 89 countries agreed on 8 July to fundamental changes that will substantially strengthen the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM).

IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei welcomed the agreement in saying "This new and stronger treaty is an important step towards greater nuclear security by combating, preventing, and ultimately punishing those who would engage in nuclear theft, sabotage or even terrorism. It demonstrates that there is indeed a global commitment to remedy weaknesses in our nuclear security regime."

The amended CPPNM makes it legally binding for States Parties to protect nuclear facilities and material in peaceful domestic use, storage as well as transport. It will also provide for expanded cooperation between and among States regarding rapid measures to locate and recover stolen or smuggled nuclear material, mitigate any radiological consequences of sabotage, and prevent and combat related offences. The original CPPNM applied only to nuclear material in international transport.

Conference President Dr. Alec Baer said "All 89 delegations demonstrated real unity of purpose. They put aside some very genuine national concerns in favour of the global interest and the result is a much improved convention that is better suited to addressing the nuclear security challenges we currently face."

The new rules will come into effect once they have been ratified by two-thirds of the 112 States Parties of the Convention, expected to take several years.

"But concrete actions are already taking place around the world. For more than 3 years, the IAEA has been implementing a systematic Nuclear Security plan, including physical protection activities designed to prevent, detect and respond to malicious acts," said Anita Nillson, Director of the IAEA's Office of Nuclear Security. The Agency's Nuclear Security Fund, set up after the events of 9/11, has delivered \$19.5 million in practical assistance to 121 countries since 2001. Under this programme fund, countries have been helped to carry out the very kinds of things which are called for under the amended CPPNM, whether it be in terms of helping States identify their vulnerabilities, training their staff or in carrying out physical protection work.

The IAEA will also actively assist Member States in their efforts to ratify and implement the obligations under the CPPNM.

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About the IAEA

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) serves as the world's foremost intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Established as an autonomous organization under the United Nations (UN) in 1957, the IAEA carries out programmes to maximize the useful contribution of nuclear technology to society while verifying its peaceful use.

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