

**2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

Cluster III

Statement by the Republic of Austria

delivered by

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Counsellor

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Mr. Chair, Congratulations on your election.
You have our full support.

Austria aligns with the EU and the VG10 statements.

Mr. Chair,
We fully respect the inalienable right of all Parties to the NPT to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as stipulated by the Treaty.

Indeed, there is a huge and growing array of non-power applications of peaceful nuclear science and technology and ongoing work to enable more countries to benefit from them. Austria fully endorses and supports this.

The IAEA plays a central role in helping to ensure that the benefits of nuclear technology are utilized for peaceful purposes.

Austria values the IAEA's work under the ZODIAC initiative, "Rays of Hope", NUTEC Plastic's or Atoms4Food. Furthermore we support the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship and Lise Meitner Programmes in empowering women in the nuclear field.

Austria supports the IAEA and Member states in these activities including through the co-financing of the IAEA nuclear applications laboratories in Seibersdorf/Austria.

Chair,

When it comes to nuclear energy, our position is well-known. This position is rooted in a serious concern for environmental safety and the risk for socio-economic consequences of any nuclear incident.

In that spirit, for those countries who rely on nuclear power production, maintenance and the continuous improvement of nuclear safety have to be guaranteed, including, adequately addressing physical ageing and obsolescence of concepts and technology.

Climate change requires our utmost attention, but we must not be short-sighted in our attempts to mitigate its negative effects. Nuclear power is not the answer. Sustainability is not limited to greenhouse gas emissions.

The comparatively low CO₂ emissions of nuclear power do not compensate for disadvantages inevitably connected to nuclear power, for example:

1) The safe and permanent disposal of spent nuclear fuel remains unresolved. Even if such repositories would become operational in the foreseeable future, today's knowledge can hardly guarantee the safe enclosure required for hundreds of thousands of years.

2) As history has shown us, we cannot exclude severe accidents from nuclear power plants involving large and early releases of radionuclides with significant adverse consequences, including contamination even on the territory of other countries. These are important concerns in relation to cross-border and long-term environmental and health impacts of nuclear accidents.

3) There is only a limited supply of uranium and thorium available worldwide and a nuclear "fuel cycle" does not exist so far. If there would be such a cycle, it would trigger additional challenges regarding safety, security and safeguards.

Many more exist and they all underline a central point: In Austria's view nuclear power is not compatible with the concept of sustainable development. Both the polluter-pays principle and the precautionary principle are grossly violated in nuclear power use.

Mr. Chair,

As nuclear applications – power and non-power - are rolled out more widely, risks to peaceful nuclear installations from armed attack also increase.

Such attacks pose a serious threat to nuclear safety and security and could result in radioactive releases with grave consequences within and beyond the boundaries of the State which has been attacked.

We urge all Parties to abstain from attacks on nuclear facilities and to avoid compromising nuclear safety, security and safeguards in light of the possible consequences.

We recall the importance of upholding the IAEA's seven pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security in armed conflicts and in the case of Russian attacks on Ukraine also highlight the DG's five principles to prevent catastrophic events. We call upon States to refrain from such actions, in accordance with international law.

We note the relevant IAEA General Conference resolutions regarding armed attacks against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes, in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter, the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols thereto. This call is further elaborated in WP55 by Austria and other states.

We are grateful for the IAEA's untiring work to fulfil its mandate close to the very frontlines in Ukraine at great risk to and hardship for its staff. Since its illegal and unproved invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the occupation of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Russia has consistently violated international law as well as IAEA safety standards and nuclear security guidance. Attacking nuclear power plants or other nuclear facilities can have catastrophic consequences, rendering these acts illegitimate under international humanitarian law. Hence, we continue to urge Russia to withdraw its military equipment and all personnel from the ZNPP, and to restore full control over the facility to Ukraine, its rightful owner, as well as to henceforth refrain from any such dangerous and flagrantly illegal acts.

Chair,

Let me conclude by reiterating that Austria stands ready to engage constructively in the deliberations of the pillar III at this NPT Review Conference.

Thank you!