



BELGIUM

Statement for Main Committee III (Peaceful Uses)

11th Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

New York, 27 April – 22 May 2026

Chair,

Belgium aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. Allow me to complement it with several points from a national perspective.

The founding fathers of the NPT understood the power of the atom and the need to distribute its benefits in an equitable manner. They however could not foresee some of the challenges the international community is facing today, nor could they imagine the many applications the use of the atom would generate, helping us to deal with those new challenges. Nuclear energy has not only become an appealing source of power generation, but also an ally in the quest to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Medical isotopes play a key role in cancer diagnosis and treatment; nuclear techniques help improve crop resilience in the face of disease and climate change; and nuclear-driven desalination supports the optimization of water management. Importantly, all these applications play a role in achieving sustainable development.

Ensuring equitable access to the benefits of nuclear science and technology depends on robust assistance and technology transfer. Belgium consistently and timely meets its voluntary assessed contributions to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Fund. In addition, we have provided tailored extrabudgetary contributions every year, supporting initiatives in agriculture, health, safeguards, security, and women's empowerment.

We must also learn from past mistakes. Nuclear accidents drove some States to abandon this type of energy. Safety and security are of paramount importance and should be factored in from the inception of projects. Safety and security hinge on certain procedures and equipment, but also on a fully independent regulator to make sure that corners aren't cut. This is an area where compromise is not warranted. The IAEA remains central in developing the relevant norms and guidance, facilitating peer reviews and providing advisory services.

Past experience also includes cases where technology transfers ended up fomenting military programs. Here too we should learn the lesson. Export controls are instrumental to prevent diversion of technology to non-legitimate purposes. Robust national legislation and international cooperation should be encouraged.

Chair,

We should engage the public and foster dialogue about the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Proactive and meaningful engagement with domestic audiences is necessary to dispel the lack of understanding of peaceful nuclear technologies and counter misinformation.

Chair,

At the national level, Belgium will continue to invest in nuclear energy and technology. We are extending the lifespan of our nuclear power generation capabilities while also supporting the development of new technologies, including Small Modular Reactors. Belgium remains one of the world's major producers of medical radioisotopes for cancer care, and we have successfully completed the conversion from HEU to LEU in molybdenum-99 production. Meanwhile, the Belgian Nuclear Centre (SCK CEN) is on track to become the world's first research reactor with high-performance fissile material based on low-enriched uranium. We are also advancing the construction of MYRRHA, an innovative accelerator-driven research reactor designed for cutting-edge applications.

Chair,

Europe's and Ukraine's nuclear safety and security continue to be threatened by Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. The unlawful occupation of the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant is particularly alarming, and the drone attack on the New Safe Confinement at Chernobyl further illustrates Russia's disregard for nuclear safety and security. We strongly support the continuous presence of IAEA personnel at all nuclear power plants in Ukraine. There remains only one viable solution to this situation: Russia's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from all occupied territories, including the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant, and the full restoration of control by the Ukrainian authorities.

Chair,

Belgium also welcomes the multilayered monitoring of the discharge of ALPS-treated water from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant into the

ocean. We support the critical role of the IAEA and have full confidence in its impartial scientific advice. The participation of independent experts from around the world increases transparency and international involvement. We reiterate our trust that the discharge is carried out in compliance with international safety standards.

Chair,

The peaceful use of the atom is not merely a technical domain. It is a promise—one we must continue to safeguard and expand for future generations.