

IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Security
(ICONS 2024)

Statement of India

by Mr. Shambhu S Kumaran,

Ambassador & Permanent Representative

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Co-Presidents of the Conference,

Ministers, Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to convey condolences to our Iranian colleagues on the tragic incident on Sunday. Our thoughts and sympathies are with the people of Iran at this difficult time.

India welcomes the convening of the International Conference on Nuclear Security ICONS 2024. We compliment the organisers for their efforts.

Strengthening nuclear security is an important objective for all nations. ICONS provides an excellent platform for the international community to exchange views and synergise approaches to this key issue.

As in previous editions, ICONS 2024 provides a unique opportunity for a broad range of stakeholders, including national agencies, private business, research and technology entities, as well as international bodies such as the IAEA, to discuss priorities as well as pathways to ensure the shared objective of nuclear security. ICONS is also an important opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its strong interest in the maintenance of nuclear security globally and to encourage all countries to do their utmost in promoting it.

International cooperation, particularly in capacity building and to facilitate information sharing on recent developments in science, technology, and engineering play a crucial role in promoting nuclear security, especially in addressing evolving challenges including computer security. The difficult questions posed by rapid technological developments also require international consultations to move towards shared commitments and action.

Co-Presidencies,

While recognising the key role of international engagement and partnership, India believes that nuclear security is best advanced through the efforts of national governments, acting in line with their own legal imperatives and in keeping with their international commitments.

Emphasising that nuclear security is the domain of national action underlines the criticality of national responsibility and accountability. The growing salience of actors outside of government in the nuclear domain, especially the increasing role of the private sector, only reaffirms the importance of enforceable actions within national legal frameworks to safeguard nuclear security.

Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to update you on some key steps that India has taken since the last Conference on Nuclear Security in 2020 to bolster its nuclear security architecture.

India has recently placed 2 more nuclear facilities KKNPP-5 and 6 under IAEA safeguards, bringing the total under IAEA safeguards to 31.

As a part of Nuclear Detection Architecture, there are now 25 operational Radiation Emergency Response Centres across the country. India has also developed state of the art Radiation Monitoring Systems for search, detection and quick qualitative and quantitative assessment of large area radioactive contamination in case of nuclear and radiological emergencies.

A capacity building program viz. “Integrated Mission for Preparedness and Awareness-Cum-Training (IMPACT) on Nuclear & Radiological Emergencies (NRE)” has been introduced especially targeting state-level functionaries including decision makers/first responders and medical professionals.

In addition to robust regulatory measures by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) for security of nuclear and radiological material through continuous oversight, India also has stringent management for import-export of radioactive sources based on the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its supplementary guidance documents.

India is a party to all 13 universal instruments accepted as benchmarks for a state’s commitments towards nuclear security. India ratified the Amendment to CPPNM in 2016 and has amended its domestic law to implement provisions of CPPNM and its Amendment. Additionally, India has also brought in the provisions of ICSANT and UNSCR 1540 into domestic laws.

India has recently re-constituted an inter-ministerial Counter Nuclear Smuggling Team (CNST) to strengthen the nuclear security regime by covering prevention, detection, and investigation including forensic support, and prosecution of the act of smuggling, and to strengthen the inter-agency platform for the exchange of information, coordination, cooperation to counter nuclear smuggling incidents.

All these measures have enabled India to ensure full and effective security of nuclear and radiological materials at the national level, even as we aim to triple nuclear power generation capacity by 2030 from around 7500 MW at present.

At the same time, we continue to contribute to international efforts, including to the Nuclear Security Fund of the IAEA. Our focus has been, and will remain, capacity building for the Global South.

India’s GCNEP has inked MoUs with 16 countries and international organisations, inter alia to foster effective international cooperation to further strengthen nuclear security. India remains committed to expand our efforts in this direction.

Co-Presidencies,

Regrettably, despite vigorous efforts by you and the spirit of compromise by an overwhelming majority of delegations, including India, a consensus Declaration eluded us. This must not however dissuade us from taking forward our functional cooperation in this important domain. Accordingly, I am happy to confirm that India aligns itself with the Statement of the Co-Presidents.

We are confident that the outcomes of this meeting will reinforce the significance of national actions and the important supporting role of international cooperation in enhancing nuclear security in the face of ever evolving complex and dynamic threats, especially that of nuclear terrorism.

India reiterates its firm intention to be a strong partner in global efforts towards realising the vital objective of effective nuclear security.

Thank you.