International Atomic Energy Agency

Statement by Tracy Brown
Acting Representative of the Director General of the IAEA to the United Nations

On the occasion of the Informal Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly
To mark the 2015 Observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests
~High-Level Interactive Panel, *Towards Zero: Resolving the Contradictions*~

10 September 2015, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Ms. Moderator, Distinguished Panelists, Excellencies, and Delegates:

On behalf of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr Yukiya Amano, I commend the Government of Kazakhstan for being a leading voice for peace and nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Having experienced the devastating effects of nuclear testing on its own territory, it is understandable that Kazakhstan should be at the forefront in promoting the observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

Last month, Director General Amano signed an agreement with Kazakhstan to establish an IAEA low-enriched uranium bank in the country. This will give countries confidence that they will be able to obtain LEU for the manufacture of fuel for nuclear power plants in the event of an unforeseen, non-commercial disruption to their supplies. The bank is one of a number of mechanisms to establish an international framework for assurance of supply of nuclear fuel.

Ms. Moderator,

The IAEA aims to support the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, while guarding against its misuse. Nuclear applications offer enormous benefits in areas such as

human health, food security, water resources management, environmental protection, and energy. The IAEA helps to make this technology available to developing countries through its technical cooperation programme. We help countries to establish effective cancer control programmes, to increase food production by developing robust new varieties of crops using nuclear techniques, and to manage scarce water supplies. These are just a few examples of our work.

It is essential that this technology is used safely and securely. Nuclear safety and security are national responsibilities, but the IAEA serves as the international forum in which countries work together to share best practices and develop safety standards and security guidance.

A core IAEA function is to verify that countries are not working to acquire nuclear weapons. Agency inspectors conduct verification at nuclear facilities all over the world. They bring back samples which are analyzed for possible traces of nuclear material. The IAEA independently verifies the correctness and completeness of declarations made by States about their nuclear material and activities. Safeguards provide credible assurances that States are fulfilling their international obligations not to develop nuclear weapons. They also make it possible to detect any misuse of nuclear material or technology in a timely manner by alerting the world to potential proliferation. Safeguards are therefore a vital component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Safeguards agreements are currently in force with 182 States, of which 174 are NPT non-nuclear-weapon States with comprehensive safeguards agreements. However, twelve countries have yet to conclude and bring into force a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency. For these States, the Agency cannot draw any safeguards conclusions. The Agency continues, therefore, to urge all remaining NPT States parties to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements as soon as possible.

The number of States with additional protocols in force continues to rise. It now stands at 126. This is encouraging as the implementation of an additional protocol significantly increases the Agency's ability to verify the peaceful use of all nuclear material in States with comprehensive safeguards agreements in force. The Agency encourages all States to bring additional protocols into force as soon as possible.

Last month, our Board of Governors agreed to a request from the Security Council for the Agency to undertake verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed between Iran and the P5+1 countries. In July, the Agency agreed to a *Road-map* with Iran for the clarification of past and present outstanding issues regarding Iran's nuclear programme by the end of this year. As Director General Amano told the Board: "There is now a historic opportunity to resolve the Iran nuclear issue."

In recent years, world leaders have paid increasing attention to the need to ensure that nuclear and other radioactive materials do not fall into the wrong hands and are not used to threaten human life, or international peace and security. The IAEA plays the central role in helping the world to act in unison against the threat of nuclear terrorism. We provide nuclear security training, help countries to improve the physical security of facilities at which nuclear materials are held, and maintain the most authoritative global database on illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials.

The most important area of unfinished business in nuclear security is the need to bring into force the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. The Amendment was agreed in 2005, but has still not entered into force because not enough countries have adhered to it. The original Convention protects nuclear material only while it is in international transport. The Amendment would expand its coverage to include the protection of nuclear

material in domestic use, storage and transport, and the protection of nuclear facilities against acts of sabotage. While significant progress has been made – in July, the US, Italy, and Turkey ratified it – adherence by 14 more countries is needed for the Amendment to enter into force. It is very important for this instrument to come into force as soon as possible.

Finally, let me note that the IAEA continues to assist States to characterize residual radioactivity in areas affected by nuclear weapons tests to assess whether the safe use of such land is possible, or remedial actions are needed. For example, the IAEA has for many years helped the Government of Kazakhstan to assess the radiological contamination of land affected by nuclear tests at the Semipalatinsk site and surrounding areas. The Agency is currently implementing a technical cooperation project focused on strengthening national capabilities to assess the feasibility of releasing parts of the Semipalatinsk Test Site to normal economic use. This work will continue in the years to come, and serves as a reminder of the long-term poisonous effects of nuclear testing. The IAEA attended the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna in December 2014, where we shared our experience in the remediation of areas where nuclear testing was conducted.

Ms. Moderator,

Seventy years after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the IAEA will continue its efforts to contribute to a world free of nuclear weapons and nuclear tests. The IAEA's work on credible verification and effective nuclear security is essential towards this end.

Thank you.

* *** *