

2nd International Symposium on Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) Minimization

Statement

by

H.E. Ambassador Dr. Helmut Böck
Permanent Representative of Austria

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Austrian host of this Symposium on the Minimization of Highly Enriched Uranium, I would like to welcome you in this historic location. We meet here in the former Oriental Academy founded in 1754 by Empress Maria Theresa to train the diplomatic service of the Habsburg monarchy. Today, we are sitting in a modern institution, a postgraduate professional school, training and preparing university graduates for international careers. And their training is not restricted to traditional areas of diplomacy. In modern times, international training includes many scientific and technical aspects. Although we are not conducting a training seminar at this symposium, I nevertheless hope that we will all listen to each other and thus take home all the information gained and lessons learned. We may also come out convinced to take extra steps in HEU minimization in the future.

The topic of HEU minimization has been on the “minds” of states for a long time. In Austria, we have endeavoured to take a precautionary approach for many years. Not engaging in the most sensitive parts of the

nuclear fuel cycle has been our approach of avoiding the risks associated with highly enriched uranium. But even as a country without nuclear power plants and related facilities, we can do more, and we can also assist progress at the international level. In this vein, Austria is supportive of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and in particular of its action 61 regarding HEU. Although not a participant, Austria also welcomes HEU minimization efforts within the context of the Nuclear Security Summit process.

I would like to thank our co-organizers, Norway and the Nuclear Threat Initiative, for their excellent cooperation, the IAEA for its support and of course all of you for having accepted our invitation. Your expertise justifies our optimism, that this symposium will be a success.

As a host, I would also like to make sure that all the panelists and participants feel comfortable and find the necessary working conditions for a fruitful symposium. Thus, after this opening session with the keynote speech, you will be served light refreshments in the adjacent room to give you strength for the rest of the afternoon.

Our symposium will follow the agenda that was distributed. The moderators of each panel will also be the “masters of ceremony” for their particular session. For the opening, I have taken upon me this responsibility and would thus like to invite Ms. Corey Hinderstein from the Nuclear Threat Initiative, to make her welcoming remarks.