

NUCLEAR SECURITY SUMMIT FACT SHEET

What is the Nuclear Security Summit?



In 2009, President Obama announced a major new effort to prevent catastrophic nuclear terrorism by securing vulnerable nuclear materials around the world. He called for the United States to host a "global summit on nuclear security," and a year later, in 2010, more than 47 world leaders gathered at the first Nuclear Security Summit in Washington. It was the largest gathering of heads of state since the founding of the United Nations, and it elevated the issue of nuclear materials security to the head-of-government level.

The 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul sustained this high-level attention to the urgency of securing the materials that could be used by terrorists to build a nuclear weapon. A third summit, hosted by the Netherlands, will be held March 24-25 in The Hague, and a fourth—and perhaps final—summit has been announced for 2016 in the United States.



Through the Nuclear Security Summits, states have committed to a range of steps, including:

- Reducing or eliminating their quantities of materials
- Signing and ratifying key international legal agreements
- Supporting global efforts to improve nuclear security (e.g., by contributing to the International Atomic Energy Agency or the World Institute for Nuclear Security)

These commitments have helped enhance international cooperation and have had a positive effect on nuclear security globally. In just the past two years, seven states have completely eliminated these dangerous materials from their territories, bringing to 25 the number of states with weapons-usable nuclear materials. That's down from 50 in 1992, so there has been measurable progress.

The summit process, however, has not yet delivered what the world needs to achieve real and lasting security: an effective global system for securing nuclear materials that covers all materials and holds all states accountable to a common set of standards and best practices.

The 50+ world leaders gathered in The Hague this March 24-25 should agree that nuclear materials security is a shared responsibility that will require cooperation. At the 2014 summit, they should agree on the key principles for an effective security system and plan for a follow-on process to enable states to continue cooperation beyond the 2016 summit.