



European Union

Opening Remarks

Online regional workshop on the universalization and effective implementation of ICSANT for English-speaking African countries not party to ICSANT

20 September 2023

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The peaceful use of nuclear technology and nuclear material is not limited to power generation these days. Even in those countries, among them many African ones, which do not rely on nuclear power, the use of nuclear technologies is widespread on various fields. It is used in medical diagnostics and cancer treatment, plant breeding and insect pest control for the sake of food security, land and water management, environmental research, and many others. These applications are instrumental in reaching many of the Sustainable Development Goals. A number of the recent programs of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), like the Rays of Hope, focusing on African countries, aim to further increase the use of nuclear technologies around the globe for this purpose.

In the meantime, one of the challenges we are facing today is the risk of nuclear and other radioactive material falling into the wrong hands. This underlines the growing importance of safety and security of nuclear facilities and nuclear material, as well as of the relevant international instruments.

The International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) is a fundamental instrument in this regard and a cornerstone of the rules-based international order. It ensures that the peaceful use of nuclear technologies remain peaceful and only those entitled have access to nuclear material. Since its creation more than 15 years ago, it has gathered 121 States Parties and has evolved into a key instrument that helps us reduce the risks linked to nuclear proliferation by non-state actors.

Over the past 20 years, the European Union has been actively working on measures to combat such proliferation and to enhance nuclear security through multilateral approaches. We have been a proud and profound supporter of ICSANT and its many projects building on the vast experience accumulated by the IAEA, UNODC and UNOCT. Since 2018, the EU has been supporting the universalisation and effective implementation of ICSANT, allocating 5 million euros in 2018 in project funding to help

the ICSANT community grow and improve the implementation of the Convention. An additional 4 million Euros have been recently allocated for this purpose for the period of 2023-2026.

EU funding has helped to launch the ICSANT website, providing, among others for a collection of good practices and model legislation in all States Parties, scholarly articles, and other information. The EU has also supported ICSANT through funding of additional projects such as the Manual on Fictional Cases related to Offences under the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the tailor-made e-learning modules as well as other training and capacity-building activities. These contain useful information and know-how for those countries willing to join the Convention, and not only for the accession process, but also for its implementation.

We are fully convinced that these efforts will pay off by reducing the likelihood of nuclear material falling into wrong hands and thus being involved in a terrorist attack. It is our common interest that fear of such events do not hamper the peaceful use of nuclear technologies in key areas to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and improve life conditions in many parts of the world, including Africa. Therefore, I can only reiterate the call to join the Convention and help us in progressing with our common goal of universalisation of ICSANT and strengthening the nuclear security architecture, culture, and practice across the globe.

The EU hopes to see this community grow even further in the time to come. We count on your partnership in that.

I thank you.