AHMUN 8.0

Study Guide

International Atomic Energy Agency

OVERVIEW

MANDATE

BACKGROUND

TERMINOLOGIES

CASE STUDIES

CONCLUSION

AHMUN 8.0

“Addressing the Threat of Nuclear Terrorism with Special Emphasis on Illicit Trafficking of Radioactive Materials and Non-State Actors”

Committee Overview

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the world's leading intergovernmental organisation responsible for promoting the safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. Established in 1957 as an autonomous organisation within the United Nations system, the Agency was created in response to growing concerns regarding both the beneficial applications and potential military misuse of nuclear technology.

Guided by the principle of "Atoms for Peace," the IAEA seeks to maximise the benefits of nuclear technology for humanity while ensuring that nuclear materials and expertise are not diverted for the development of nuclear weapons or other malicious purposes.

Today, the Agency collaborates with more than 180 Member States to promote the peaceful use of nuclear technology, prevent nuclear proliferation through safeguards and verification, strengthen nuclear safety and security, monitor compliance with international agreements, and support the development of secure and sustainable nuclear infrastructure.

AHMUN 8.0

As the principal international authority in the nuclear field, the IAEA plays a critical role in fostering global cooperation while reducing the risks associated with the misuse of nuclear materials and technologies.

Mandate of the IAEA

Mandate:

The mandate of the International Atomic Energy Agency is derived from its Statute and various international treaties and agreements. Its primary responsibility is to ensure that nuclear science and technology are used exclusively for peaceful purposes while preventing their diversion for military or terrorist activities.

The Agency's core mandate includes:

- Safeguards and Verification: Conducting inspections and verification activities to ensure that nuclear materials and facilities are not used for the development of nuclear weapons.
- Nuclear Safety and Security: Establishing international standards and guidelines to protect people, the environment, and infrastructure from nuclear accidents, theft, sabotage, and illicit trafficking.
- Technical Cooperation: Supporting Member States in the peaceful application of nuclear technology for sustainable development, including medicine, agriculture, water management, and energy production.
- Emergency Preparedness and Response: Coordinating international assistance and information-sharing during nuclear or radiological emergencies.

- Capacity Building and International Cooperation: Facilitating research, training, and the exchange of scientific knowledge to strengthen global nuclear governance and security.

- Recommendations and International Guidance: Developing and recommending international standards, guidelines, and best practices to strengthen nuclear safety, security, safeguards, and the peaceful use of nuclear technology. The IAEA also advises Member States on improving national regulatory frameworks, promotes international cooperation and capacity-building, and, where necessary, reports cases of safeguards non-compliance to its Board of Governors for further consideration.

The IAEA functions as a neutral technical body, working in collaboration with Member States and international organisations to promote transparency, confidence-building, and the responsible use of nuclear technology.

AHMUN 8.0

Background to the Agenda

"Addressing the Threat of Nuclear Terrorism with Special Emphasis on Illicit Trafficking of Radioactive Materials and Non-State Actors"

Nuclear terrorism is widely recognised as one of the most significant emerging threats to international peace and security. Although no terrorist organisation has successfully detonated a nuclear weapon, several extremist groups have expressed interest in acquiring nuclear, radiological, chemical, and biological (CBRN) materials, raising concerns about the potential misuse of these technologies. The increasing interconnectedness of global trade, advances in technology, and the expansion of transnational criminal networks have further complicated efforts to prevent the unauthorised acquisition and movement of radioactive materials.

Radioactive materials are indispensable to modern society and are used extensively in medicine, industry, agriculture, scientific research, and energy production. Hospitals utilise radioactive isotopes for cancer treatment and diagnostic imaging; industries rely on them for radiography and quality control; and research institutions employ them for various scientific applications. Consequently, millions of radioactive sources are in civilian use worldwide.

AHMUN 8.0

The scale of global nuclear infrastructure underscores the complexity of ensuring comprehensive security. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprises over 180 Member States, with more than 30 countries operating nuclear power reactors and over 50 countries possessing research reactors. The widespread distribution of radioactive materials across civilian facilities presents significant challenges for monitoring, regulation, and physical protection.

While the threat of nuclear terrorism demands robust international action, Member States remain divided on how best to balance security with the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Developed countries often advocate for stricter safeguards, export controls, and physical protection measures. In contrast, many developing nations emphasise that enhanced security requirements should not restrict their legitimate access to nuclear technology for development, healthcare, agriculture, and energy. This agenda therefore requires delegates to reconcile the need for stronger international cooperation against illicit trafficking and non-state actors with the principles of sovereign equality, technical assistance, and the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the international non-proliferation regime.

AHMUN 8.0

Basic Terminologies

Nuclear Terrorism

The term encompasses both nuclear attacks, involving the detonation of a nuclear device, and radiological attacks, which involve the deliberate release or dispersal of radioactive materials without a nuclear explosion. Although no terrorist organisation has successfully carried out a nuclear attack to date, the possibility remains a major concern for governments and international organisations due to the catastrophic consequences such an event would entail.

Radioactive materials

Radioactive materials are substances that emit ionising radiation due to the instability of their atomic nuclei. They are widely used for peaceful purposes such as cancer treatment, medical imaging, industrial radiography, scientific research, and electricity generation. Depending on their composition and enrichment, these materials pose varying levels of security concern.

Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) and Plutonium-239 are considered weapons-usable materials because they may be used in the construction of nuclear weapons if acquired by malicious actors. Other radioactive isotopes, including Caesium-137, Cobalt-60, Iridium-192, and Americium-241, cannot produce a nuclear explosion but may be used in Radiological Dispersal Devices (Dirty Bombs). Their widespread civilian use makes securing these materials a critical component of global nuclear security.

AHMUN 8.0

Illicit Trafficking of Radioactive Materials

Illicit trafficking of radioactive materials refers to the unauthorized acquisition, possession, transfer, sale, transport, or smuggling of nuclear and radioactive substances in violation of national or international laws. It poses a significant threat to global security as it increases the risk of these materials falling into the hands of terrorist organizations, transnational criminal networks, or other non-state actors.

Unlike nuclear weapons, many radioactive sources are widely used for peaceful purposes in medicine, industry, and scientific research, making them more accessible and therefore more vulnerable to theft or diversion.

Non-state actors

Non-state actors are individuals, groups, or organizations that operate independently of the authority or control of a sovereign state. Unlike governments, they are not parties to international treaties or legal obligations, making them particularly difficult to regulate and deter.

In the context of nuclear security, non-state actors pose a significant threat due to their potential interest in acquiring radioactive or nuclear materials for malicious purposes.

AHMUN 8.0

Major Nuclear Powers

Understanding the global distribution of nuclear capabilities is essential for delegates, as states possess varying levels of nuclear technology, infrastructure, and strategic influence. While the IAEA does not regulate nuclear weapons programmes directly, the capabilities and policies of these states significantly influence international nuclear security, non-proliferation efforts, and debates surrounding illicit trafficking and nuclear terrorism.

Country Relevance:

- *United States:* Possesses one of the world's largest nuclear arsenals and extensive civilian nuclear infrastructure.
- *Russia: It* holds the world's largest nuclear stockpile and extensive nuclear fuel cycle capabilities.
- *China:* Rapidly expanding both civilian nuclear energy and nuclear weapons capabilities
- *France:* Relies heavily on nuclear energy and maintains an independent nuclear deterrent.
- *United Kingdom:* Nuclear-weapon state with advanced nuclear technology and submarine-based deterrence
- *India:* Expanding civilian nuclear programme alongside an established nuclear weapons capability
- *Pakistan:* Nuclear- armed state with growing concerns regarding regional security and nuclear safeguards
- *North Korea:* Nuclear-armed state outside the NPT whose programme remains a major international security concern

Major Non-State Actors

Several non-state actors have demonstrated either an interest in acquiring radioactive materials or the capability to exploit illicit trafficking networks. While no terrorist organisation has successfully carried out a nuclear attack, intelligence assessments and past incidents demonstrate that the threat remains credible.

Organisation Relevance:

- I*SIS (Islamic State):* Captured radioactive materials in Iraq in 2014 and publicly expressed interest in unconventional weapons.
- A*l-Qaeda:* Sought information relating to weapons of mass destruction and has repeatedly expressed interest in acquiring nuclear capability.
- C*hechen Separatists:* Responsible for the 1995 Moscow Caesium-137 incident involving radioactive material.
- T*ransnational Organised Criminal Networks:* Facilitate the illegal movement of radioactive materials through existing smuggling routes, often overlapping with arms and drug trafficking networks.

IAEA Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB)

The Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) is an information-sharing mechanism established by the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1995. Participating Member States voluntarily report incidents involving the loss, theft, unauthorised possession, illegal transport, discovery, or attempted sale of nuclear and radioactive materials.

The database enables governments and the IAEA to identify trafficking trends, assess vulnerabilities in national security systems, strengthen border controls, and facilitate international cooperation. It also serves as a valuable research tool by providing delegates with historical and current incidents involving illicit trafficking, allowing them to analyse recurring patterns, evaluate existing responses, and identify areas requiring further international cooperation.

AHMUN 8.0

Materials of Concern

Certain nuclear and radioactive materials present a heightened security risk due to their potential misuse by non-state actors.

Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU), defined as uranium enriched above 20% uranium-235 and generally above 90% for weapons-grade applications, can be used in improvised nuclear devices if obtained by malicious actors. Similarly, Plutonium-239, produced within nuclear reactors, is a principal component of many nuclear weapons and remains a material of significant proliferation concern.

In addition to weapons-usable materials, commonly used radioactive isotopes such as Caesium-137, Cobalt-60, Strontium-90, Iridium-192, and Americium-241 are widely employed in cancer treatment, medical imaging, industrial radiography, oil and gas exploration, and scientific research. While these isotopes cannot produce a nuclear explosion, they may be incorporated into radiological dispersal devices, commonly referred to as dirty bombs.

A dirty bomb combines conventional explosives with radioactive material to disperse contamination over a populated area. Although it does not create a nuclear explosion, it can generate widespread panic, long-term environmental contamination, disruption of essential services, and substantial economic losses, making it one of the most probable forms of radiological terrorism.

AHMUN 8.0

Illicit Trafficking and Emerging Trends

The illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials remains a persistent international security challenge. According to the IAEA Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB), more than 4,200 incidents involving nuclear and radioactive materials have been reported since 1993, including theft, unauthorised possession, loss, illegal transport, and attempted sale. Hundreds of these incidents involved radioactive sources that had fallen outside regulatory control, exposing vulnerabilities in national security and regulatory frameworks.

The growth of transnational organised crime has further intensified these risks. Criminal networks that facilitate the smuggling of drugs, conventional weapons, and human trafficking increasingly possess the logistical capabilities to transport radioactive materials across international borders. These black-market procurement channels may provide terrorist organisations and other non-state actors with access to dangerous materials that would otherwise remain under secure state control. Illicit trafficking networks frequently exploit established smuggling corridors, including the Black Sea route, the Balkan route, and transit routes through the Caucasus, where porous borders, geopolitical instability, and weak regulatory oversight create opportunities for the clandestine movement of radioactive materials. These routes underscore the importance of strengthening border security, customs cooperation, intelligence sharing, and international law enforcement coordination.

Political instability, corruption, armed conflict, and weak governance further increase the likelihood of illicit trafficking by reducing regulatory oversight and weakening border security. States facing such challenges often struggle to maintain effective control over nuclear facilities and radioactive sources, creating opportunities for theft, diversion, or unauthorised access.

An additional concern is the existence of orphan sources—radioactive materials that have been lost, stolen, abandoned, or otherwise fallen outside regulatory control. Often originating from hospitals, industrial facilities, or research institutions, orphan sources pose significant risks due to inadequate tracking, storage, or disposal mechanisms and have been responsible for several radiological accidents worldwide.

AHMUN 8.0

Basic Terminologies

The international community must address several interconnected challenges, including unauthorised access to nuclear and radioactive materials, sabotage of nuclear facilities, illicit trafficking through transnational criminal networks, and the growing threat posed by non-state actors seeking to exploit nuclear technology.

Unlike conventional weapons, even relatively small quantities of radioactive material can have consequences that extend far beyond immediate physical damage. Radiological contamination may persist for decades; incidents can affect multiple states simultaneously through environmental and economic impacts, and recovery and decontamination efforts require extensive financial and technical resources. Moreover, the psychological effects of a nuclear or radiological incident often exceed its direct physical consequences, amplifying public fear and undermining confidence in national security institutions.

Addressing these challenges requires strengthened international cooperation, enhanced border security, improved physical protection of radioactive materials, effective regulatory frameworks, intelligence sharing, and robust mechanisms for accounting, recovering, and securely disposing of vulnerable radioactive sources. As the peaceful use of nuclear technology continues to expand, ensuring that these materials remain secure from terrorist exploitation will remain a critical responsibility of the international community.

AHMUN 8.0

I. *Nuclear Terrorism*

Forms of Nuclear Terrorism

Nuclear terrorism can take several forms depending on the type of material acquired and the intended objective of the perpetrators. The most common forms include:

- Radiological Dispersal Device (Dirty Bomb): A conventional explosive combined with radioactive material to disperse contamination and create fear rather than a nuclear explosion.
- Improvised Nuclear Device (IND): A crude nuclear weapon assembled using illegally acquired fissile material such as Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) or Plutonium-239.
- Sabotage of Nuclear Facilities: Deliberate attacks on nuclear power plants, research reactors, storage facilities, or the transportation of radioactive materials with the intention of causing radioactive release or widespread disruption.

II. *Illicit Trafficking of Radioactive Materials*

Materials Commonly Involved

The materials most frequently associated with illicit trafficking include both weapons-usable nuclear materials and radioactive sources.

Weapons-usable materials such as Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) and Plutonium are of particular concern due to their potential use in nuclear weapons or improvised nuclear devices. Although they are subject to stringent international safeguards, attempts to illegally acquire these materials have been documented.

More commonly, trafficked radioactive sources include Cesium-137, Cobalt-60, Strontium-90, Iridium-192, and Americium-241. These isotopes are routinely used in hospitals for cancer treatment and medical imaging, in industrial facilities for radiography and quality control, and in research institutions for scientific applications. Their widespread civilian use makes effective security and accounting measures essential.

Radioactive Materials Commonly Involved in Illicit Trafficking

Illicit trafficking frequently occurs through cross-border smuggling, where radioactive materials are concealed within legitimate cargo, transported using false documentation, or moved through criminal courier networks. Weak border controls and corruption further facilitate these activities, allowing traffickers to exploit gaps in customs and security systems.

Another major pathway is the black market, where organized crime groups, brokers, intermediaries, and potential terrorist buyers engage in the illegal trade of radioactive materials. These networks often overlap with existing routes used for trafficking drugs, weapons, and other contraband, making detection increasingly difficult.

Contributing Factors

Several factors contribute to the persistence of illicit trafficking. Weak border security, inadequate radiation detection equipment, limited technical expertise, and the high volume of international trade create opportunities for smuggling. Corruption, including the bribery of customs officials and the use of forged transport documents, further undermines enforcement efforts. In regions affected by political instability or armed conflict, weakened regulatory oversight and reduced institutional capacity increase the likelihood of radioactive materials being lost, stolen, or diverted.

III. ***Non-State Actors***

Types of Non-State Actors:

Terrorist Organizations

Terrorist organizations represent the most prominent non-state actors of concern in the field of nuclear security. Groups such as Islamic State (ISIS) and Al-Qaeda have publicly expressed interest in acquiring weapons of mass destruction and conducting high-impact attacks designed to maximize casualties, fear, and political influence. They often exploit regions affected by conflict, weak governance, or limited regulatory oversight to pursue their objectives.

Real-life example: In 2014–2015, ISIS captured territory in Iraq containing radioactive materials used for research purposes. Although the materials were not suitable for producing a nuclear weapon, the incident demonstrated how terrorist organizations can gain access to radioactive substances and highlighted the importance of securing such facilities during armed conflicts.

Organized Crime Networks

Transnational organized crime groups play a crucial enabling role in nuclear terrorism by facilitating the illegal movement of radioactive materials. Their activities include smuggling, arms trafficking, money laundering, document forgery, and black-market procurement, providing established networks that could be exploited by terrorist organizations seeking radioactive substances.

Real-life example: Several cases recorded by the IAEA Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) have involved criminal networks attempting to illegally transport or sell radioactive and nuclear materials across international borders, demonstrating the intersection between organized crime and nuclear security threats.

Extremist Cells

Extremist cells are typically smaller, decentralized groups with limited resources but significant potential to cause disruption. Rather than attempting to acquire a nuclear weapon, these groups are more likely to seek radioactive sources that could be incorporated into a radiological dispersal device (dirty bomb), requiring comparatively less technical expertise and material.

AHMUN 8.0

Legal Basis Of the Agenda

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) does not create criminal laws or independently prosecute individuals involved in nuclear terrorism or illicit trafficking. Instead, it derives its authority from international treaties, its founding Statute, and the domestic laws of Member States. The Agency monitors compliance, conducts inspections where authorised, develops international safety and security standards, and reports cases of non-compliance to its governing bodies or, where necessary, the United Nations Security Council. Understanding these legal instruments is essential for delegates, as they define both the powers and the limitations of the IAEA in addressing this agenda.

IAEA Statute (1957)

The Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency serves as the Agency's founding document and establishes its objectives, functions, and powers.

- Article II states that the objective of the IAEA is to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy while ensuring that nuclear assistance is not used to further any military purpose.
- Article III authorises the Agency to establish safeguards, conduct inspections where applicable, provide technical assistance, and encourage international cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

- Article XII empowers the IAEA to report cases of safeguards non-compliance to the Board of Governors, which may subsequently refer serious matters to the United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly.

These provisions collectively form the legal basis for the Agency's monitoring and verification activities.

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, providing the legal framework within which the IAEA carries out many of its safeguards activities.

- **Article I** prohibits nuclear-weapon States from transferring nuclear weapons or assisting others in acquiring them.
- **Article II** prohibits non-nuclear-weapon States from receiving or developing nuclear weapons.
- **Article III** requires non-nuclear-weapon States to conclude safeguards agreements with the IAEA, allowing the Agency to verify that nuclear materials remain dedicated to peaceful purposes.
- **Article IV** recognises the inalienable right of all States to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, provided they comply with their non-proliferation obligations.

These provisions illustrate the balance between preventing nuclear proliferation and protecting the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

National Laws

While international treaties establish global obligations, the investigation and prosecution of offences such as theft, smuggling, illegal possession, and trafficking of radioactive materials primarily fall under the domestic criminal laws of individual States. National authorities are responsible for securing radioactive materials, regulating their transport, maintaining border security, investigating criminal offences, and prosecuting offenders. The IAEA supports these efforts through technical assistance, guidance, training, and international cooperation, but does not replace national law enforcement agencies.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Moscow Caesium-137 Incident (1995)

In November 1995, Chechen separatists concealed a container containing Caesium-137 in Moscow's Izmailovsky Park before informing the media of its location. Rather than detonating the material, the group intended to demonstrate that it had access to radioactive substances and to generate widespread public fear through the threat of radiological terrorism. Russian security services located and safely recovered the container before any radioactive contamination occurred. Although the incident caused no casualties, it remains one of the earliest publicly documented cases in which a non-state actor deliberately used radioactive material as a tool of intimidation, highlighting the growing concern over the misuse of civilian radioactive sources by extremist groups.

Case Study 2: Pelindaba Nuclear Research Centre Security Breach (2007)

In November 2007, the Pelindaba Nuclear Research Centre in South Africa experienced a major security breach when two groups of armed intruders entered the facility through separate routes in what appeared to be a coordinated operation. The research centre stored significant quantities of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU), making it one of the country's most strategically important nuclear facilities. During the intrusion, one security employee was shot and injured, while the attackers remained inside the site for approximately forty-five minutes before escaping.

Although no nuclear material was reported stolen, the incident attracted international attention due to the vulnerability of a facility housing weapons-usable material and raised concerns regarding the physical protection of nuclear installations.

Case Study 3: ISIS Access to Radioactive Materials in Mosul (2014)

In 2014, following the capture of Mosul in northern Iraq, the Islamic State (ISIS) gained control of facilities containing radioactive materials used for educational, industrial, and scientific purposes. While the seized materials were not suitable for the production of a nuclear weapon, Iraqi authorities informed the International Atomic Energy Agency because of concerns that they could potentially be incorporated into a radiological dispersal device, commonly known as a dirty bomb, or used to spread fear and intimidation. The incident occurred in the context of weakened governmental control and reduced regulatory oversight during the armed conflict, demonstrating how instability and territorial occupation can increase the risk of radioactive materials falling into the hands of non-state actors.

Case Study 4: Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (2022–Present)

Since March 2022, the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in southeastern Ukraine has remained at the centre of the ongoing Russia–Ukraine conflict. As Europe's largest nuclear power plant, its occupation by Russian forces and continued military activity in the surrounding area have generated widespread international concern regarding nuclear safety and security. The facility has experienced repeated disruptions to external power supplies, shelling in nearby areas, and operational challenges that have complicated efforts to maintain safe working conditions.

Although no act of nuclear terrorism has been confirmed, the continued military presence around the plant has heightened concerns regarding the risks of sabotage, accidental radiological release, and restricted access for international inspectors. The International Atomic Energy Agency has maintained a continuous presence at the site to monitor safety conditions and assess developments as the conflict continues.

Case Study 5: Takeshi Ebisawa Nuclear Trafficking Case (2022–2025)

In 2022

Japanese organised crime figure Takeshi Ebisawa was arrested following a multinational undercover investigation led by United States authorities. Prosecutors alleged that Ebisawa conspired to traffic nuclear materials, including uranium and weapons-grade plutonium believed to have originated in Myanmar, while simultaneously engaging in international narcotics and arms trafficking. According to investigators, the materials were intended for sale through transnational criminal networks, with discussions involving their potential transfer for use in a nuclear weapons programme. The investigation involved cooperation between authorities in the United States, Japan, Thailand, and Indonesia, highlighting the increasingly transnational nature of illicit nuclear trafficking. In January 2025, Ebisawa pleaded guilty to charges relating to nuclear material trafficking and other organised criminal activities, making the case one of the most significant contemporary examples of the intersection between organised crime, illicit trafficking, and global nuclear security.

AHMUN 8.0

Suggest Moderated Caucus Topics

1. The Militarisation of Nuclear Infrastructure During Armed Conflicts and Its Implications for Global Nuclear Security.

2. The Convergence of Terrorist Organisations, Organised Crime Syndicates, and Black-Market Networks in the Illicit Trafficking of Radioactive Materials.

3. The Limits of State Sovereignty in Cases of Nuclear Security Non-Compliance and Cross-Border Radiological Threats.

4. Emerging Threats to Global Nuclear Security: Cyber Warfare, Insider Threats, and the Misuse of Dual-Use Nuclear Technologies.

5. Strengthening International Detection and Disruption Mechanisms for Illicit Nuclear and Radiological Trafficking.

6. Enhancing Global Standards for the Security of Civilian Radioactive Sources and Critical Nuclear Infrastructure.

7. Expanding the Role of the IAEA in Preventing Nuclear Terrorism Through Capacity-Building, Technical Assistance, and International Coordination.

AHMUN 8.0

Key Challenges & Conclusion

As nuclear technology continues to advance and become increasingly accessible for peaceful applications, the international community must also address the evolving risks associated with nuclear terrorism, illicit trafficking of radioactive materials, and the growing capabilities of non-state actors. Weak border security, political instability, corruption, insider threats, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and transnational organised criminal networks continue to create opportunities for radioactive materials to fall outside effective regulatory control. At the same time, the expanding use of radioactive sources in medicine, industry, agriculture, and scientific research makes it essential to strengthen security measures without restricting legitimate access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Another significant challenge lies in balancing national sovereignty with international oversight. While Member States retain primary responsibility for securing nuclear and radioactive materials within their territories, effective prevention of nuclear terrorism depends upon timely information-sharing, robust international cooperation, harmonised regulatory frameworks, and sustained capacity-building efforts. The technical, financial, and institutional capabilities required to implement comprehensive nuclear security measures also vary considerably among States, further complicating global efforts to address these threats.

Within this context, the International Atomic Energy Agency serves as a neutral technical organisation that supports Member States through safeguards, nuclear security guidance, technical assistance, capacity-building, and international cooperation. However, the Agency does not possess independent enforcement powers and relies upon the cooperation of Member States to effectively fulfil its mandate. Consequently, addressing the challenges presented by this agenda requires realistic, practical, and internationally acceptable solutions that strengthen existing mechanisms while respecting state sovereignty and the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Delegates are therefore encouraged to examine the root causes of illicit trafficking, evaluate the effectiveness of existing international legal and institutional frameworks, consider the evolving nature of threats posed by non-state actors, and propose feasible measures that enhance global nuclear security. Successful deliberation will require balancing security, international cooperation, technical feasibility, and the developmental needs of Member States while remaining within the mandate of the International Atomic Energy Agency.