Joint Statement on the Contributions of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) to Enhancing Nuclear Security
April 01, 2016

Since 2006, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) has grown into a partnership of 86 nations and 5 official observers committed to strengthening global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to nuclear terrorism. The GICNT continues to make valuable contributions to nuclear security, and has held nearly 80 multilateral activities that have demonstrated the GICNT’s unique ability to bring together policy, technical, and operational experts to share models and best practices and enhance partners’ capabilities to address difficult and emerging nuclear security challenges. We, the Co-Chairs of the GICNT (Russia and the United States), the past and present Implementation and Assessment Group (IAG) Coordinators (Spain, the Republic of Korea, and the Netherlands), leaders of the three IAG Working Groups (Morocco, Finland and Australia), and the Special Advisor to the IAG Coordinator for planning the GICNT’s Tenth Anniversary Event in 2016 (United Kingdom), wish to inform the states in attendance at the 2016 U.S. Nuclear Security Summit, as well as states who are members of other international organizations and initiatives with nuclear security-related mandates, on progress made by the GICNT since the Nuclear Security Summit hosted by the Netherlands in The Hague in March 2014.

Over 200 representatives of GICNT partner nations and representatives from all five GICNT official observers – the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the European Union (EU), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) – participated in the ninth GICNT Plenary Meeting, hosted by Finland in Helsinki on June 16-17, 2015. The Plenary selected the United States and Russia to continue as Co-Chairs of the GICNT for the term 2015-2019 and endorsed the Netherlands to serve a two year term as IAG Coordinator. The Netherlands announced the continuation of Australia and Morocco as Nuclear Forensics and Response and Mitigation Working Group chairs, Finland as the next Nuclear Detection Working Group chair, and the United Kingdom as Special Advisor to the IAG Coordinator for planning the GICNT’s Tenth Anniversary Event in 2016. Plenary participants also recognized the Republic of Korea for its leadership as IAG Coordinator. In this capacity, the Republic of Korea played a critical role in implementing the GICNT strategy
announced at the 2013 Plenary Meeting in Mexico City, which called for an increase in practical, topically- and regionally-focused activities.

The Nuclear Security Summits in Washington (2010), Seoul (2012), and The Hague (2014) recognized the GICNT’s contributions to advancing global nuclear security. GICNT activities and the partners that supported them have produced many valuable outcomes that have complemented the Nuclear Security Summit process and positioned the GICNT to continue to play an important role in strengthening the global nuclear security architecture.

The Implementation and Assessment Group held three IAG Meetings that advanced the GICNT strategy by reviewing and approving Working Group documents, planning future activities, enabling event hosts to present key outcomes and lessons learned, and promoting a policy-level dialogue on key nuclear security issues.

At the annual IAG Meeting hosted by the Republic of Korea in July 2014, partners discussed the GICNT’s Statement of Principles and developed proposed topics and themes for incorporation into the GICNT’s strategic planning to build upon past work and address new or continuing nuclear security challenges. Partners’ feedback contributed significantly to the development of the GICNT strategy for 2015-2017, and identified potential new focus areas, such as addressing challenges related to sustainability of expertise and promoting the exchange of best practices on legal and regulatory frameworks, for further consideration.

Morocco hosted a Mid-Year IAG Meeting in February 2015, where each Working Group held simultaneous sessions to finalize guidance documents, plan future activities, and discuss working group plans for 2015-2017. Partners also participated in the “Atlas Lion” tabletop exercise, which explored the interfaces across the three working groups from a higher-level policy perspective and identified the critical priorities that participants assessed their senior leaders would have in a real-world nuclear security incident. Senior leaders at the 2015 Plenary Meeting later discussed key outcomes from “Atlas Lion,” underscoring the GICNT’s unique ability to serve as a platform for cross-disciplinary exchanges among groups of experts in different fields and highlighting the value of cooperation among these different groups.

Finland hosted an IAG Meeting in June 2015 before the Plenary Meeting, where all five of the GICNT’s official observers briefed their programs of work and available assistance. The
outgoing IAG Coordinator from the Republic of Korea also made several important recommendations based on partners’ feedback from the July 2014 IAG Meeting that were endorsed by partners, including maintaining the GICNT’s three Working Groups; continuing cross-disciplinary work; developing thematic series of activities that increase in complexity to strategically build partnership capacity; and enhancing the utility of the Global Initiative Information Portal (GIIP). These themes, as well as recommendations for the GICNT to organize additional activities that promote regional cooperation and develop activities that focus on key fundamentals of exercise design, implementation, and self-assessment, are key components of the GICNT’s strategy for 2015-2017.

The Nuclear Detection Working Group (NDWG) completed its Developing a Nuclear Detection Architecture series, which focuses on addressing challenges inherent to successful implementation and enhancement of national nuclear detection architectures. The United States organized a workshop in April 2014 to complete the final technical review of Volume IV, Guidelines for Detection Within a State’s Interior, the final best practices guide in the series. Volume IV identifies challenges and mitigating strategies for building detection capabilities in the interior and provides options to mitigate those challenges by utilizing both technical and non-technical capabilities. The 2015 Plenary Meeting endorsed Volume IV as an official GICNT product.

The NDWG also developed the “Exercise Playbook” – a collection of realistic scenarios that illustrates key nuclear detection challenges. The “Exercise Playbook” is now available on the GIIP as a tool for helping partners to organize national-level exercises to promote practical implementation of nuclear detection best practices. The “Exercise Playbook” will also be utilized for developing future NDWG activities and may be further refined and updated over time to meet partners’ evolving priorities and integrate other key nuclear security issues.

Finland hosted the nuclear detection workshop and tabletop exercise, “Northern Lights,” in January 2015 to focus on the integration of traditional law enforcement techniques and radiation detection capabilities toward investigating illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials. “Northern Lights” highlighted the importance of a coordinated, whole-of-government effort to detect and respond to illicit trafficking activities involving nuclear or other radioactive
materials and promoted the practical implementation of best practices outlined in Guidelines for Detection Within a State’s Interior.

In May 2015, the European Commission hosted “Radiant City,” which featured a tabletop exercise and a series of hands-on demonstrations by the Joint Research Centre, Institute for Transuranium Elements, focusing on nuclear detection capabilities, radiological crime scene management, and traditional forensic and nuclear forensic laboratory analysis. “Radiant City” built upon the successful outcomes of “Northern Lights” by bringing together the nuclear detection and nuclear forensics communities to identify strategies for how their respective expertise and capabilities could be leveraged in support of an ongoing law enforcement investigation into stolen nuclear or radioactive materials.

The Nuclear Forensics Working Group (NFWG) completed Exchanging Nuclear Forensics Information: Benefits, Challenges and Resources, a GICNT best practices document that aims to increase awareness of the benefits and challenges of exchanging nuclear forensics information associated with a nuclear security event and identifies potential mechanisms for enabling information exchange. Lithuania hosted a nuclear forensics workshop in April 2014 to review this document, and it was subsequently endorsed at the June 2015 Plenary Meeting as an official GICNT product. The GICNT is continuing efforts on the topic of exchanging information through the May 2016 event on International Communication and Assistance Requests in Sydney, Australia. The three-day workshop and exercise will be complemented by an IAG meeting hosted by Australia the same week.

In October 2014, Hungary hosted the workshop and tabletop exercise, “Csodaszarvas: Mystic Deer,” which engaged participants on nuclear forensics policy-level considerations and decisions related to national-level authorities, such as interagency coordination, roles and responsibilities, communication, and domestic information sharing during the investigation of a nuclear security incident. The event showcased and promoted the practical application of core capabilities outlined in the GICNT document, Nuclear Forensics Fundamentals for Policy Makers and Decision Makers.

The Netherlands hosted the International Conference and Mock Trial on Nuclear Forensics, “Glowing Tulip,” in March 2015 to address the role of nuclear forensics experts in the investigation and prosecution of nuclear security events, the admissibility of nuclear forensics
expert evidence into judicial proceedings, and the importance of pre-incident coordination and communication among scientific, law enforcement, and prosecutorial elements.

The Response and Mitigation Working Group (RMWG) completed Fundamentals for Establishing and Maintaining a Nuclear Security Response Framework: A GICNT Best Practice Guide, which provides a strategic-level reference and key considerations for the development of a national response framework for preparing to respond to and mitigate the impacts of a radiological or nuclear terrorism incident. An RMWG workshop hosted by France in April 2014 played a key role in reviewing the document, which was endorsed as an official GICNT product at the 2015 Plenary Meeting.

Argentina and Chile co-hosted the Radiological Emergency Management Exercise, “Paihuen,” in August 2014, which demonstrated national-level plans and capabilities for responding to radiological security incidents and coordinating bilaterally to address shared threats. In addition, the exercise promoted interagency communication and coordination of best practices and demonstrated key policies and procedures for sharing information among agencies and with regional and international partners, appropriate international organizations, and the public.

In April 2015, the Philippines hosted the Public Messaging for Emergency Management Workshop, “Sugong Bagani: Envoy Warrior,” which identified and promoted mechanisms for improving capabilities to develop and disseminate public messaging during nuclear security events, particularly concerning the need to ensure messaging consistency, effectively convey technical information, issue life-saving directions, and manage and assess public risk perception.

In November 2015, the United Kingdom hosted the Workshop and Exercise, “Blue Raven,” to uplift models for national coordination of response and crisis management resources following a nuclear security event. This workshop focused on good practices for supporting senior leadership decision-making, ensuring common operational information, and effective coordination between local responders and national authorities. Blue Raven was the first workshop in a series focusing on national response frameworks, and will be followed by workshops addressing international considerations and other key aspects for developing sustainable national response frameworks.
In February 2016, the United Arab Emirates hosted the Nuclear Detection and Response Exercise “Falcon.” This 3-day workshop and tabletop exercise focused on key aspects of nuclear detection and response intended to promote and enhance interagency national coordination, regional cooperation, and information sharing. Building on the recommendations made at the 2015 Plenary Meeting, this exercise promoted key fundamentals of exercise design, implementation, and self-assessment, and identified and promoted a regional approach to addressing key nuclear security challenges.

Looking forward, the GICNT leadership remains committed to working with GICNT partner nations to develop and implement practical activities, such as experts meetings, workshops, exercises, and senior-level policy dialogues, that promote capacity-building across the areas of nuclear detection, forensics, and response and mitigation and to explore potential new areas of work that would benefit from GICNT focus. The GICNT leadership also remains fully committed to working with its five official observers to ensure that GICNT activities continue to complement and support their programs of work.

As the GICNT celebrates its 10th Anniversary since being launched by the United States and Russia in 2006, the Netherlands has agreed to host a High Level Anniversary Meeting in The Hague (Netherlands) on 15-16 June 2016. The aim is to provide a retrospective view, demonstrating the unique contributions of the GICNT to nuclear security since 2006, while also facilitating a forward-looking view and discussion, identifying nuclear security challenges over the next decade (2016-2026), and the actions GICNT may take to address these challenges.