

GICNT – June 2019 UK National Statement

Mr Chairman, Co-Chairs, Colleagues,

The UK aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

It is a great pleasure to be here in Argentina and I would like to express the United Kingdom's sincere thanks to our hosts, and to our American and Russian co-chairs. I would also like to express our particular thanks to Ambassador Jari Luoto as IAG Coordinator and to the three Working Group Chairs for the excellent work they have done over the past two years.

GICNT plays a unique role in bringing experts together to address the threat from nuclear terrorism, and it remains an integral feature of the nuclear security architecture.

It is the practical, hands on nature of GICNT's work that makes it stand out. Only by practitioners and experts sharing best practice and conducting exercises to test our assumptions, can we effectively address the ever evolving threat and find solutions to the common challenges we face when strengthening our detection, response and investigative capabilities.

Last year, the use of a nerve agent in Salisbury tested the UK's ability to respond to these types of situations. There are clear parallels that can be drawn in planning for how to respond to a nuclear or radiological attack by a terrorist group. We had to act quickly while insuring close coordination across a broad array of government departments and agencies. Indeed, it was the UK's Counter Terrorism branch of the police that led the investigation.

Initial priorities included identifying the agent used, and then quickly disseminating advice to the public, first responders and healthcare workers setting out the necessary safety measures. Other elements of the response took longer – it took a year to complete the painstaking decontamination of the sites, and the police investigation continues to this day.

There are clear lessons that can be drawn in thinking about how to respond to a radiological or nuclear terrorist attack. And GICNT plays a key role in this by allowing us all to plan and test potential responses.

We look forward to continuing our active participation in GICNT and seizing opportunities to work with new and existing partners.

We recall successes from a legacy of UK led events: Blue Beagle in 2014 – on forensics best practice; Blue Raven in 2015 - looking at decision making among national authorities; and Blue Lion last year - on crime scene management and emergency response.

Over the last two years, we also hosted Sentinel I and II with Bulgaria and Ukraine respectively, to promote sustainability through national nuclear security exercise programs, and partnered with Canada earlier this year to deliver Resolute Sentry – a cross-disciplinary detection and forensics exercise exploring forensics best practice, the importance of bilateral relationships, and implementation of strong domestic legal frameworks to enable effective criminal investigation and prosecution.

We hope to see GICNT continue a great focus on policymaking, interdisciplinary exercising and monitoring and evaluation and increased sustainability. The UK also hopes to support opportunities to raise awareness around cyber security and continue to reinforce the importance of strong legal and regulatory frameworks. And we will look to engage an even wider range of experts, which we believes lies at the core of GICNT's strength.

The UK is proud to be an active member, committed to the GICNT mission and continuing our strong engagement with the organisation and its members. We encourage all to host, contribute and participate in GICNT workshops and welcome expressions of interest from all partners interested in working with the UK.

Which just leaves me to thank Christine Martin for all her hard work, commitment and passion to the GICNT cause. Your work and leadership has been tireless and the Initiative is the stronger for that.

Thank you.