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NTI Launches Nuclear Materials Security Index

Global Priorities for Security Needed All Governments Can Do More

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) today released a first-of-its-kind, public baseline assessment of the status of nuclear materials security conditions in 176 countries. The NTI Nuclear Materials Security Index underscores that there is no global consensus about what steps matter most to secure some of the world’s most dangerous materials against theft and recommends actions to hold countries accountable, increase transparency and benchmark progress.

Released ahead of the March 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, the NTI Index examines nuclear materials security conditions in 32 countries with one kilogram or more of weapons-usable nuclear materials, as well as in 144 additional states that have less than one kilogram of this material, or none, but could be used as safe havens, staging grounds or transit points for illicit nuclear activities.

“There is evidence today that the elements of a perfect storm are in place: an ample supply of weapons-usable nuclear materials—some of it poorly secured—and the determination of terrorist organizations that have publicly stated their desire to acquire and use nuclear weapons,” said NTI Co-Chairman and former U.S. Senator Sam Nunn. “We know that to get the materials they need, terrorists will go where the material is most vulnerable. Global nuclear security is only as strong as the weakest link in the chain.”

The report, *NTI Nuclear Materials Security Index: Building a Framework for Assurance, Accountability and Action*, was developed with the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), and assesses countries with weapons-usable nuclear materials across five categories: Quantities and Sites, Security and Control Measures, Global Norms, Domestic Commitments and Capacity, and Societal Factors. The 144 states without weapons-usable materials are assessed across a subset of these categories.

Country Rankings

Australia ranks number one out of the 32 states with weapons-usable nuclear materials, with Hungary, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, and Austria rounding out the top five. The United Kingdom ranks highest among nuclear-armed states at 10; the United States ranks 13th. Among countries without weapons-usable nuclear materials, Denmark earns the top spot. Full rankings are available on the website, www.ntiindex.org.

International Engagement

NTI and EIU drew on the expertise of technical advisors and an international panel of nuclear security experts from a dozen countries. The panel members assisted in developing the framework and determining the factors most important to a robust nuclear materials security program.

Over the course of the past year, NTI also offered briefings on the development of the Index to all 32 countries with weapons-usable nuclear materials, as well as South Korea, host of the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit. More than half of those countries reviewed and validated the data, which was drawn primarily from public and open-source information gathered by the EIU.

“The Index highlights how countries can take steps to improve the security of nuclear materials,” said NTI President Joan Rohlfing. “By offering recommendations for all states, it can be a valuable tool in helping set priorities. All states can and should do more.”

Recommendations

NTI recommends actions for the global community to take, in parallel with steps to improve state stewardship.

Build the Foundation for a Global Nuclear Materials Security System

- Establish an international dialogue on priorities for materials security through the Nuclear Security Summit or a subsequent process
- Benchmark progress and hold states accountable for security
- Build appropriate transparency to increase international confidence by:
 - Publishing and providing access to nuclear materials security regulations
 - Declaring nuclear materials inventories
 - Inviting regular peer reviews
- Stop increasing stocks of weapons-usable materials

Improve State Stewardship of Nuclear Materials

- Eliminate weapons-usable nuclear materials completely in as many states as possible
- Strengthen security and control measures, including physical protection, control and accounting, and personnel measures at facilities and during transport of nuclear materials
- Bring all civil uranium enrichment and reprocessing facilities under IAEA safeguards
- Better target assistance to states with urgent needs
- Ratify and implement existing materials security-related treaties.

“The NTI Index underscores that all countries with weapons-usable nuclear materials have a responsibility to account for them, to take steps to secure them, and to provide continued assurances to the rest of the world that those materials are not at risk for theft or diversion,” said Deepti Choubey, NTI senior director for nuclear and bio-security and co-leader of the Index.

2012 Nuclear Security Summit

The March summit provides an opportunity for much-needed international dialogue on priorities for materials security. “Countries participating in the Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul can use the Index to stimulate discussion and define future commitments,” said Page Stoutland, NTI vice president, nuclear materials security program and Index co-leader.

“This is not about congratulating some countries and chastising others. We are highlighting the universal responsibility of states to secure the world’s most dangerous materials,” said Nunn. “As citizens and as leaders, we need to ask ourselves this question: If we had a catastrophic nuclear terrorist attack on Moscow or New York, on Tokyo or Tel Aviv, or on any other city in the world, what steps would we wish we had taken to prevent it?”

The Index website (www.ntiindex.org) includes the NTI report with the full results, findings and recommendations in an easily accessible format, including all country summaries as well as interactive tools for visitors to select their own priorities and weighting of categories and indicators.

The project was funded by NTI with support from the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

About the Nuclear Threat Initiative

The Nuclear Threat Initiative is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to reduce the global threats from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. NTI is co-chaired by Sam Nunn and Ted Turner and governed by a board of directors with members from nine countries. More information can be found at www.nti.org

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