Day 2

I would like to welcome you all to the second day of our conference, and I am pleased to present today's programme. I hope you enjoyed yesterday's sessions, where we celebrated the many success stories and achievements of the past 15 years.

Today, our focus shifts to the future: we will explore how to strengthen and enrich our network, and how to better anticipate the trends and challenges that lie ahead.

Our programme will begin with Tim Edwards, whom I sincerely thank for kindly accepting to speak with us about the Global Partnership and Canada's efforts under its G7 presidency.

The GP is a key platform for international cooperation, playing a vital role in strengthening global security, building resilience, and preventing the misuse of dangerous materials.

The EU is a strong supporter of this initiative, as it aligns with our commitment to multilateralism, non-proliferation, and a rules-based international order. Initiatives like the GP underscore the critical need for coordinated, cross-border efforts to address shared global threats.

The morning session will feature open and pragmatic discussions aimed at examining how our network can become even more effective within an increasingly complex global security landscape. We will explore avenues for partnering with the private sector, enhancing knowledge management, engaging with universities, and addressing the intricate topic of AI technologies. I invite all participants to actively contribute to the World Café discussions. Every perspective will enrich our dialogues and serve as valuable inputs to steer the future of our CBRN COE Initiative.

This afternoon, we'll delve into emerging technologies and future challenges that offer solutions for better CBRN risk mitigation while also presenting new sets of challenges. We have invited outstanding experts for in-depth explorations of these critical topics.

Our first panel will discuss the transformative role of artificial intelligence in the CBRN domain, and the application of space technologies in risk management. AI offers unprecedented advantages for CBRN risk mitigation, enhancing effectiveness, speed of data analysis, and decision-making accuracy.

AI transforms threat detection and prediction. It is able to process vast amount of data quickly and can anticipate incidents for proactive measures. Autonomous systems, like drones, enhance real-time monitoring and situational awareness.

AI-supported scenario simulations and risk assessment optimise response strategies through automation and efficient resource management.

However, at the same time, the use of AI in the CBRN field brings substantial risks. Ethical and legal concerns emerge around privacy, accountability, and potential misuse of sensitive data. Technical challenges also persist, particularly in ensuring system reliability, robustness, and the accuracy of data inputs. Additionally, there's a serious risk that AI tools could be exploited by hostile actors to gain access to critical know-how, potentially enabling the misuse of materials for malicious purposes.

As such, it is crucial to navigate these risks thoughtfully, ensuring that technological progress is guided by strong ethical frameworks, regulatory oversight, and a commitment to responsible innovation.

The panel will also consider space technologies, which can help detect releases of chemical, biological, or radiological threat agents over vast, remote, and hard-to-monitor areas at land or sea. Satellite technologies offer real-time data, crucial for guiding mitigation efforts and assessing potential consequences.

Our next panel will focus on "nuclear renaissance." While some EU member states view nuclear energy as a crucial component of overcoming today's geopolitical tensions and achieving low-carbon energy goals, others advocate for a careful, differentiated approach. The renewed focus on nuclear energy is influenced by several factors. Energy security is a key priority; nuclear power provides a stable energy alternative amid geopolitical uncertainties, contributing to reduced reliance on fossil fuels. As nations aim for net-zero emissions, nuclear's low carbon footprint plays a role in transitioning to clean energy, complementing renewables like wind and solar.

Technological advancements, such as small modular reactors, promise safer, scalable, and cost-effective solutions, enhancing nuclear energy's accessibility. Yet, public and governmental viewpoints within the EU vary, with some fully supporting nuclear energy's role in reducing emissions and boosting energy independence, while others prioritise investment in renewable sources. Addressing safety, waste management, economic viability, and proliferation risks remains essential, requiring improved reactor designs, effective waste solutions, innovative financing, and strong international cooperation.

In conclusion, if nuclear energy is to play a role in today's complex energy landscape, it will necessitate a balanced approach,

involving comprehensive public engagement, robust policy support, and continued innovation.

Lastly, a core aspect of CBRN risk mitigation is preventing CBRN materials from falling into the wrong hands, which would be catastrophic. States achieve this by controlling international trade in dual-use goods and technologies.

Our final panel will examine the impact of emerging technologies on strategic trade controls. Dual-use goods, vital for civilian applications and economic development, but they can also be used for military applications or weapons of mass destruction programmes by State or non-State actors, such as terrorist groups.

The EU export of dual-use items accounts for a significant share of total exports. In 2022, this represented 57.3 billion euros.

To prevent the diversion of sensitive dual-use items, States establish export control systems. These frameworks ensure legitimate trade of dual-use goods while safeguarding international security. This is because export controls provide a solid framework for companies to engage into high-tech transactions, in a global level playing field, where rules and procedures are clearly defined.

The EU and its Member States have developed a unified export control framework for dual-use goods, which I can proudly say has become a global standard. We see the added value in all States putting in place and managing export control systems to catalyse trade, investment and development while preserving security. We also promote such systems worldwide through the EU P2P Export Control Programme for Dual-use Goods.

Dear colleagues, today's agenda features a wealth of insights from excellent panellists and speakers. I encourage you to engage actively, share your questions and insights, and derive inspiration for your countries to use emerging technologies safely and apply trade controls effectively for CBRN risk mitigation.

Thank you and enjoy the day!