



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND
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STATEMENT BY FINLAND

58th General Conference of the IAEA

General debate

H.E. Ambassador Anu Laamanen

Governor of Finland

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Mr President,

I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of the 58th General Conference. I would like to assure you of the full support of my delegation. I also wish to thank the outgoing President, H.E. Ambassador Xolisa Mabhongo from South Africa, for his excellent work and guidance in the General Conference last year. Further, I would like to express my gratitude to the IAEA Director General and the Secretariat for their continued professional and impartial work.

I associate myself fully with the statement made by Italy on behalf of the European Union. In addition, I would like to make following remarks in my national capacity.

Mr President,

According to the latest IAEA statistics 435 **nuclear power** reactors in 30 countries worldwide are generating electricity. In addition, 72 new nuclear power reactors are under construction in 15 countries, including in Finland. Nuclear power plants provide about 11 percent of the world's electricity, and 21 percent of electricity in OECD countries. These statistics demonstrate that nuclear power is still an important element of the energy mix in many countries.

A country like Finland faces increased challenges in considering a realistic energy mix and assuring security of supply. The overall energy environment is changing quickly. This means changes in the electricity market.

Traditionally, nuclear power is the base load, which is not flexible. Renewable energy, especially when considering wind and solar, are not flexible either. When a share of inflexible production increases in the electricity system, the flexibility of the system decreases. There seems to be a need for flexible capacity, as more and more intermittent energy enters the market. When electricity production consists of smaller production units, it seems that bigger nuclear reactors do not fit in to this palette anymore as they used to. Would it be time to move from bigger reactors to more flexible small and medium size nuclear power reactors?

The current economic downturn makes it even more difficult for companies to commit themselves to significant investments. High upfront capital costs pose financing challenges, even as it can be an attractive investment for longer term returns. The economic threshold should, however, be bearable, if investments are wanted in the future. Due to these current challenges, one thing is clear: **nuclear energy has to adapt itself to the changing electricity market**, if it wants to be successful in the future. Also, national policies can promote this change. In this

respect, Finland supports Agency's activities in the area of small and medium sized reactors.

Mr President,

Nuclear waste management strategy should always be considered from the very beginning of the development of a nuclear power programme.

Finland is currently licensing a final underground repository for spent fuel, called "Onkalo" . It will make use of the most advanced technology that has in main part been developed in Finland. It will meet strict safety, security and safeguards requirements. We expect the Government to take a decision on the construction license application during the first quarter of 2015. This would globally be the first construction license issued for the final disposal facility for spent nuclear fuel. The encapsulation and final disposal process of spent fuel is scheduled to start in 2020.

Mr President,

Nuclear weapon proliferation continues to be a serious concern and the international community must take appropriate measures in the cases of non-compliance in order to preserve the integrity of the non-proliferation regime and its cornerstone, the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT).

Since the previous General Conference some important developments have taken place in the preparations for the convening of the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The facilitator and the conveners of the Helsinki Conference together with States of the Middle East region have held five informal meetings in Switzerland. Some progress on the arrangements of the Conference has been reached. Continuing determined consultation between the States of the region,

willingness to seek solutions acceptable to all and the political will to pave the way for the Conference is now required.

The Agency's system of **safeguards** plays an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT. Safeguards are prerequisites for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, together with the Additional Protocol, should be accepted universally as the international verification standard.

Finland supports the further implementation of the Agency's safeguards system based on the state-level concept. Consistent and universal implementation of the state-level concept will further strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the IAEA Safeguards System and will thus contribute to global non-proliferation efforts.

Finland also continues to provide extra budgetary support to the IAEA safeguards. Finland decided earlier this year to provide a financial contribution of 300 000 euros for the implementation of the IAEA's monitoring and verification activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran in relation to the Joint Plan of Action. Further, Finland has given a permission to use its unspent balance for the extension of the Joint Plan of Action till November this year. Finland strongly supports the on-going efforts to seek a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue and the work of the IAEA under The Framework for Cooperation.

Mr President,

We attach great importance to the improvement of **nuclear safety** and Finland has consistently supported the Agency's activities in this area. It is essential that countries using nuclear power, or embarking on nuclear power, have a sound legislative and regulatory framework on nuclear and radiation safety. The roles and responsibilities of various stake holders need to be clear. The regulatory bodies need to be given the

required authority and independence in their decision making. The regulatory authority must also enjoy the trust of the stake holders, in particular the citizens.

Finland has made extensive use of different IAEA's safety services and contributed actively to the conduct and development of these services. We are very pleased with these services and we strongly encourage other states to make full use of them.

Mr President, in conclusion,

Finland is strongly committed to strengthening **nuclear security** world-wide. Finland has ratified the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and encourages all States to do so.

My government continues to provide financial and in-kind support to the Agency's Nuclear Security activities. Finland is a longstanding contributor to the Nuclear Security Fund (NSF). We have participated actively in the work of the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee and in developing documents for the Nuclear Security Series.

The Nuclear Security Summit process has contributed most to the visibility of the issue and brought it to the highest political level. Finland has taken actively part in the Nuclear Security Summit process and in other relevant international processes. The unanimous view in The Hague Summit indicates, for its part, that the IAEA will have a key role in the follow-up and in making irreversible the progress that has been achieved in the NSS-process. Combating nuclear terrorism was set as a clear priority in the Nuclear Security Summit. Finland contributes to this work by hosting in June 2015 the next Plenary of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT). New partners are warmly welcome to join the initiative and participate in the Helsinki Plenary.

Thank you, Mr President.