

**58<sup>th</sup> IAEA General Conference**

**Statement by Mr. Bernard Bigot,  
Chairman of the CEA**

**(French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission)**

**Head of the French Delegation**

Mr. Chairman,

1. On behalf of the French Delegation, I would firstly like to warmly congratulate you on your election as Chair of this fifty-eighth session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and assure you of our full cooperation in assisting you in the successful completion of this sensitive task.

I would also like to extend my congratulations to the Republic of Vanuatu, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, the Comoros and the Republic of Djibouti, new members of the IAEA.

2. The French Delegation wishes to fully support the declaration made on behalf of the European Union by Mr. Della Vedova, Head of the Italian Delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

3. France considers that the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles is a major threat to international peace and security.

4. France has engaged with hope and determination in the negotiation of a long-term agreement on the **Iranian nuclear issue**, following the conclusion of the Geneva agreement on November 24, 2013. We are then concerned with the report of the Director-General of the IAEA dated September 5, reporting - for the first time since the election of President Rohani - insufficient cooperation by Iran with the Agency, in particular with regard to the resolution of issues related to the possible military dimension of Iran's nuclear activities. It is essential for Iran to respond to the concerns that such a development has raised, by pursuing and accelerating its cooperation with the IAEA within the Framework for Cooperation of November 11, 2013. The international community and France are awaiting with impatience concrete actions on the part of Iran that must be verifiable and verified in the field. The resolution of all outstanding issues is indeed a determining element in the credibility of a long-term agreement, the negotiation of which resumed in New York on September 18.

5. After the space missile launch in December 2012 and the third nuclear test on February 12, 2013, **North Korea has conducted many more ballistic missile launches, including two medium-range ballistic missile launches, since spring 2014. By accelerating the development of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, and threatening the international community with another nuclear test, North Korea has once again placed itself in clear violation of its international obligations, in particular those**

pertaining to the Security Council resolutions which called on North Korea to **completely, verifiably and irreversibly cease all its nuclear and ballistic activities**. It is essential that North Korea strictly comply with its obligations under the terms of the NPT and its Safeguards Agreement. North Korea must immediately allow IAEA inspectors to return on its territory and give them access to all its nuclear facilities. It is also vital for Pyongyang to cease all proliferation activity and put a stop to its uncontrolled uranium enrichment activities.

6. Finally, the new IAEA report on Syria notes the absence of cooperation with the IAEA by the Syrian authorities since the resolution adopted by the Board of Governors in June 2011. We deeply regret this. France calls on Damascus to comply with its obligations, immediately, and to provide the additional information concerning its nuclear programme that has been requested by the IAEA. In the long term, we wish to see this commitment lead to full and complete cooperation with the Agency in order to shed light on Syria's past and present nuclear activities.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The IAEA plays an essential role in the international system of nuclear non-proliferation and France attaches particular importance to the continued **strengthening of the IAEA's safeguards system** to ensure that it remains fully effective and credible.

8. France congratulates the Secretariat for the quality of the supplementary document on the **state level concept** presented by the Director-General to the Board of Governors last week. This report follows a major consultation effort conducted with Member States and addresses their concerns on this issue. It summarizes the dense discussions with the Member States undertaken since the beginning of the year and gives everyone a better understanding of the objectives of inspections conducted by the IAEA and the resources implemented to achieve them. France has also taken part in the process of listening to Member States, both bilaterally and within the framework of the Agency. It was very important to defuse this debate while addressing the substantive issues in the interest of a more effective and less costly application of the safeguards.

9. We thus support the continued evolution of the application of safeguards towards **State-level control**, which will make it possible at once to make the conclusions drawn by the Secretariat more robust and to optimize its use of resources, focusing inspection activities on those areas of greatest importance for the safeguards in a State. This is a matter of

preserving the very effectiveness and efficiency of the IAEA safeguards, a fundamental objective in our eyes.

10. France calls for **the universal application of the IAEA's safeguards system**. In order to fulfill the goals of article III.1 of the NPT, France believes that inspection standards should be founded upon the implementation of a **comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol**. France invites all States that have not yet done so to ratify and implement these as soon as possible.

11. In addition, France will continue to help strengthen the resources of the IAEA through the provision of its skills and expertise as part of its **National Safeguards Support Programme**.

Mr. Chairman,

12. Even if a lot has been carried out, it will take several more years to draw all the lessons from the **accident that occurred at the Fukushima-Daiichi power plant** on March 11, 2011 and the efforts of all stakeholders must be maintained. By the end of this year, the IAEA will finalize a comprehensive report on the accident, taking into account all the lessons already learned, which will certainly make a significant contribution in this regard.

13. The **IAEA's Action Plan on nuclear safety** is an essential part of the process of gathering feedback being conducted by the international community. France, in order to be as transparent as possible, communicated its domestic implementation of the Action Plan as of the end of 2012. An update was sent to the IAEA's Secretariat last June with a request to make it available to Member States. It is now time to conduct a comprehensive review of the Action Plan and to prepare what follow-up action is to be taken in order to maintain, beyond 2015, the impetus created by it, in order that we may reach a common, pluri-annual view of the international priorities in the field of nuclear safety.

14. We must make sure that we maintain **the highest possible standards in terms of the safety of nuclear installations**, and develop a **real international safety culture at both the decision-making and the operational levels**.

15. The strengthening of the existing nuclear safety system also requires the reinforcement and **universal application of existing legal instruments**. France commends the efforts made by the parties to the **Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS)** at the review

meeting in March and April. We welcome the adoption of the amendments to Convention's guidance documents, as well as recommendations for actions to improve safety. We also welcome the decision to hold a diplomatic conference early in 2015 to review the Swiss proposal to amend Article 18 of the Convention. We hope it will enable constructive dialogue between all contracting parties with the aim of bolstering prevention and mitigation of radiological impacts of nuclear accidents.

16. The French delegation would like to draw attention to the importance of tirelessly promoting the implementation of a **global nuclear civil liability regime**. In August 2013, the USA and France signed a joint declaration affirming our common commitment to contributing to the development of such a regime, based on conventions between States, to enable, under simple conditions, the fair compensation of potential victims of nuclear accidents.

17. France encourages all States concerned to adhere to one international nuclear civil liability regime, whether it be the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC), or the revised Paris Convention (alongside the Brussels Convention) or the revised Vienna Convention, linked by the Joint Protocol. Although we believe that the second option constitutes, for us, the most suitable system for the compensation of nuclear damage, the increasing number of ratifications of one or the other regime are a step in the right direction and will foster the development of useful relationships in the field of nuclear civil liability between all States having acceded to any convention. The multiplication of accessions to one or other regime will increase the chances of developing bridges between them.

18. We hope that in this way the joint initiative with the USA will make it possible to accelerate the development of a global nuclear civil liability regime. In this context where the debate has finally emerged from years of antagonism, it is essential that the IAEA, as custodian both of the CSC and the Vienna Convention and the Joint Protocol, should always promote both simultaneously and equally.

Mr. Chairman,

19. The **Nuclear Security Summit** held in The Hague in March showed how very attentive to nuclear security the policy makers at the highest levels rightly remain. In this sense, and considering its positive results, this event was a major new opportunity to promote nuclear security, a prerequisite for the development of nuclear energy while minimizing the risks of nuclear and radiological terrorism. The results of this Summit therefore confirmed

those of previous summits and of the International Conference on Nuclear Security organized by the IAEA in July 2013.

20. We are very pleased that this Conference was able to confirm the central role of the IAEA in strengthening the nuclear security in the world, and that the States participating in the Summits process have emphasized the growing role of the IAEA in field of nuclear security.

21. For its own part, in 2013, France ratified the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the 2005 amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM). It calls upon the States that have not yet done so to become parties to these instruments to enable the early entry into force of the 2005 amendment and to ensure the widest possible application of all international texts relating to nuclear security.

22. In this way, France intends to continue its financial and technical support to the Agency's action under its **Nuclear Security Plan 2014-2017**, in particular with regard to improving the safe and secure management of radioactive sources.

23. In particular, we welcome the Agency's action in providing, with the assistance of international experts, nuclear security assessment and advice to States that have requested assistance. For its own part, after having welcomed an **IPPAS mission (International Physical Protection Advisory Service)** in November 2011, France organized, alongside the IAEA, **the first international seminar devoted to the lessons learned from this type of mission** in Paris on December 4 and 5, 2013. This event was attended by many Member States and has been widely regarded as a success. It has helped promote IPPAS missions, raise awareness among Member States to encourage them to use this service and identify areas for improvement.

24. On the occasion of the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, the President of the Republic stressed France's **determination to further strengthen the security of high-activity sealed radioactive sources**. Jointly with Germany, the United States and the Netherlands, we commit to working, in close consultation with the IAEA, to establish a roadmap of actions and cooperation in the next two years in the following areas:

- Further strengthening and expanding support for the international framework of conventions and IAEA guidelines relevant to the safety and security of high activity sealed radioactive sources.

- Supporting the development and use of alternatives to high activity radioactive sources.
- Enhancing the efforts of the Ad hoc Group of States that are Major Suppliers of Radioactive Sources to further strengthen and harmonize supplier state activities to improve the safety and security of high risk radioactive sources.
- We further commit to reporting jointly on the progress achieved in these areas in the context of the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit and of the 2016 IAEA Nuclear Security Conference.

25. Furthermore, and in coherence with the announcements of its President of the Republic, France:

- Calls for the universal ratification of the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which is currently the only legally binding document which contains provisions on the security of disused radioactive sources;
- France also calls for the universal ratification of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management which has contributed to the security of disused radioactive sources, although its primary goal is to provide for their nuclear safety;
- We also call on all States that have not yet done so to make a political commitment to implementing the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources (Code of Conduct) and its Additional guidance for import and export of radioactive sources;
- Following the recommendations of the Abu Dhabi Conference in October 2013 on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, France calls on the IAEA to set up an ad hoc working group to assess the interest and the possible content of an international convention on the safety and security of radioactive sources and to make recommendations;
- France considers it useful for Member States to undertake efforts to minimize the use of high-activity sealed radioactive sources. Whenever it is technically and economically feasible, we support a transition to technologies using sources with lower activity or lower risks, a shorter half-life, recycled sources, or better no sources at all. Research and development is also needed to make such technologies technically and economically attractive and, in this regard, should be encouraged and supported;
- Finally, France wishes to invite Member States that export or have exported radioactive sources to strengthen cooperation among themselves and with the

importing States, in coordination with the IAEA, to further improve the management of retired sources in importing countries, and ensure satisfactory levels of safety and security. Such cooperation should also give rise to the preparation of guidelines on the return to the supplier or repatriation to the country of origin of disused sources that cannot be managed in the user country, the establishment and regular update of national lists of exported sources, and the exchange of information on exports and repatriation procedures.

Mr. Chairman,

26. **The use of nuclear power remains for many countries an important option in their energy supply policy** and the role of the IAEA, which favors cooperation between countries with experience in nuclear power and those wishing to develop its peaceful use, is internationally recognized. France, whose commitment to the development of nuclear power under the best conditions of safety, security and non-proliferation has been reaffirmed on numerous occasions, intends to continue to support the IAEA's activities related to the promotion of nuclear power.

27. France is also convinced that **peaceful uses of nuclear energy** have a decisive role to play outside the field of energy in fulfilling fundamental human needs and meeting the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDG). We welcome the leadership role of the IAEA in this area and intend to continue to support the Agency's activities in favor of development. In addition to the partnerships established between the IAEA and French organizations competent in these areas (INCa, IRD, CIRAD, in particular), we took a decision several years ago to focus our work on three areas: the fight against cancer with regular contributions to the PACT programme, the protection of the environment with technical and financial support to the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre (OA-ICC), and research on infectious diseases centered on the IAEA-IRD joint research project on Reunion Island devoted to the applicability of the sterile insect technique in the fight against mosquito vectors of dengue, malaria and chikungunya.

Mr. Chairman,

28. The international community is facing an unprecedented situation: a significant number of newcomer countries simultaneously wish to use nuclear power as an energy source for the first time. Starting with limited experience, they are going to develop substantial



nuclear energy capacity very quickly over the coming decades. In order to manage their nuclear programme, they need to acquire the necessary skills quickly, and they will therefore simultaneously call upon the available multilateral cooperation resources and those of experienced countries. This means that we all face new challenges and that it makes it necessary and urgent to deploy much more in-depth international cooperation than in the past.

29. As such, **programmes for capacity building** in the nuclear field is for France one of the major challenges of responsible nuclear energy development. France believes it necessary now to think through these issues with the countries most directly concerned and with the IAEA to identify together how we can step up and improve efforts in order to provide a satisfactory response to these needs. An open side event will be held on Thursday between 1pm and 3pm in the Mozart lounge of the VIC restaurant to continue the discussion on this topic of interest to suppliers and users. The IAEA has, by virtue of its statute and experience, a major role to play in helping to formulate the collective response to these challenges.

30. France has **confidence in nuclear technologies and in its own nuclear industry**, which will continue to play a central role in the energy mix over the long term. With its considerable experience and expertise, by organizing the first **"World Nuclear Exhibition"** (WNE), France's ambition is to provide a worldwide reference event devoted to the nuclear energy sector. We want this event to be a success: over 6,000 participants are already expected.

31. France has been a pioneer in the organization of the **waste management** sector and associated techniques. Developing solutions for the ultimate management of radioactive waste is part of a responsible approach to nuclear energy and I am delighted that the Scientific forum is this year dedicated to this topic. As you know, France is working on the geological long-lived waste storage project CIGEO and a virtual tour of the ANDRA underground laboratory is available on the "Team France" booth during this general conference.

32. **To conclude**, Mr. Chairman, allow me to restate France's commitment to supporting the IAEA and its Director-General, in all the work that they do. In the current international climate, this work is particularly important, whether in terms of the worldwide dissemination of nuclear safety standards and culture, the responsible development of

nuclear energy, the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, or their contribution to the fight against proliferation and nuclear terrorism.