

**Statement by Aleksandras Spruogis, Vice-minister of Energy  
of the Republic of Lithuania, at the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by congratulating the Union of the Comoros, the Republic of Djibouti, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Republic of Vanuatu on their accession to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Lithuania fully associates itself with the statement made by Italy on behalf of the European Union. On my national capacity I would like to add the following.

IAEA remains the key institution to supervise nuclear safety worldwide. The Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, endorsed at the 55th IAEA General Conference, already produced concrete results – the transparency and effectiveness of peer review missions have increased, the role of regulatory bodies has been strengthened, safety standards and international emergency preparedness framework are being reviewed. On the other hand, international community needs to step up with efforts to address public demand for information and increase public awareness about implemented safety measures.

Countries developing new nuclear energy projects are expected to follow the principles of transparency and responsibility. Each country has the right to develop nuclear energy, provided that international obligations on nuclear safety are properly addressed and national decisions are seen in a broader context of possible trans boundary implications.

That is why we express our concern, when nuclear energy facilities in close neighbourhood to European Union border are being constructed without proper implementation of international conventions, nuclear safety standards and dialogue with

neighbours. The lack of transparency and essential information, especially on site selection, seismic evaluation and emergency preparedness plans, is disturbing.

Confidence building and ensuring maximum safety are crucial for nuclear energy development. Implementation of IAEA Safety Standards, adherence to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, cooperation with specialized IAEA missions during the whole lifetime of installation, starting from the site selection, should become inseparable from any nuclear power programme.

International bodies addressing environmental matters also widely recognize that nuclear energy-related activities imply special challenges due to great public concern and can lead to significant trans boundary and long-range adverse environmental impacts. In this regard, we are glad to note, that the United Nations ESPOO Convention has recently adopted declaration on the application of Convention to nuclear safety issues, stressing the importance of the treaties under the auspices of the IAEA and calling for maximizing synergies and strengthening capacities to ensure precise environmental assessment and highest level of safety in the nuclear energy field.

The ESPOO Convention also recognized IAEA missions, including Site and External Events Design (SEED) mission, as confidence building measures. Therefore acknowledging that it is our common interest to ensure maximum safety level in NPPs, we call for all countries implementing nuclear energy projects to use the instruments provided by the IAEA and other international conventions from the very beginning of the project in order to guarantee safe environment and bright future for nuclear energy.

Mr. President,

Let me briefly update you on the nuclear-related activities performed in Lithuania since the last General Conference and to highlight the major achievements in this regard.

Lithuanian nuclear power plant (Visaginas NPP) project is important and relevant both from economy and energy security point of view, especially taking into account present geopolitical situation in the region. The project contributes to the security of

energy supply in the Baltic Region and to the full integration of the Baltic States into the internal European energy market.

Lithuanian political parliamentary parties by signing Agreement on Strategic Guidelines this spring committed to provide necessary political support and pursue the development of Visaginas NPP project.

Moving forward with the Project, on 30 July 2014 a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania and Hitachi Ltd. was signed stating the intention to proceed with the establishment of interim project company organization (iPCO) in the nearest future.

Lithuania continues to closely cooperate with the IAEA on the Visaginas NPP project implementation and we sincerely thank the IAEA for its comprehensive and competent support in the area of nuclear energy and nuclear safety infrastructure development and in particular strengthening technical and organizational capabilities for the preparation of new Visaginas NPP licensing and construction.

In response to the events at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi NPP and on the basis of the "Stress tests" the emergency preparedness plan of Ignalina NPP was updated last year and emergency preparedness functional training was performed in this July.

Many efforts are made to prepare for an adequate responding in case of radiological and nuclear accidents. Last year a state-level civil protection exercise was organized in the Lithuania and our state participated in joint Nordic-Baltic emergency preparedness exercise

The only nuclear power plant in Lithuania Ignalina NPP ended its commercial operation in 2009. The Final Decommissioning Plan (FDP) of Ignalina NPP has been updated in 2014. Nuclear fuel from both Units of Ignalina NPP will be moved to new Interim Spent Fuel Storage Facility by 2022.

Decommissioning activities are performed at the site according to projects and programs agreed upon with the Nuclear Regulatory Authority. All the necessary

technical and management measures to assure adequate level of safety of decommissioning activities are undertaken.

After the European stress tests and peer review of their results, in 2013 Lithuanian State Nuclear Power Safety Inspectorate (VATESI) approved the Plan for Strengthening Nuclear Safety, which sets forth safety upgrading measures to be implemented both at the Ignalina NPP units and at the spent fuel storage facilities. Participating in the peer review process was very useful to evaluate lessons learnt after the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi NPP, thus improving safety of existing and future nuclear power plants in Europe and worldwide.

Lithuania, as a Member of European Union, has obligation with the aim of continuously improving of nuclear safety every 10 years to arrange periodic self-assessment of its national safety framework and competent authorities and to invite an international peer review. Self-assessment of national safety framework was performed and IAEA Integrated Regulatory Review Service mission is planned to invite to Lithuania in 2016.

Implementation of IAEA safety guidance and standards on radiation protection in public, occupational and medical exposure in Lithuania is essential matter for ensuring reduction of doses for population. Lithuania, as many other countries in the world, is concerned about increasing medical exposure of population upon introducing new medical technologies therefore great attention was given to the justification and optimisation problems of medical exposure. Medical exposure monitoring programmes for radiography, fluoroscopy, mammography, computed tomography and interventional radiology procedures were implemented seeking reduction of medical exposure doses.

Lithuania continues to improve its legal framework related to the physical protection of nuclear facilities and nuclear materials. In accordance with the Law on Nuclear Energy and the Resolution of the Government on approval of the Design Basis Threat, the threats to nuclear materials and nuclear facilities were reviewed and reassessed in 2013, including with regard to transportation of fresh and spent nuclear fuel.

Mr. President,

The international non-proliferation regime, based on the IAEA verification and safeguards system, has prevented significant spread of nuclear weapons. Still, proliferation as well as the risk of non-state actors getting access to nuclear materials or radioactive sources, represents a serious threat to international security. In order to secure nuclear materials and counter illicit nuclear trafficking and nuclear terrorism, national and international nuclear security measures must be in place.

We call on countries which have not done so to adhere to and fully implement relevant international instruments, such as the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities and its amendment as well as the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

Three Nuclear Security Summits - in Washington, Seoul and in The Hague - have given an important impetus for far-reaching initiatives that collectively strengthen nuclear security around the globe, reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism and secure vulnerable nuclear and radiological materials.

Lithuania is strongly committed to improve its national implementation and enhance institutional capacities in the field of nuclear security. Lithuania has invited the IAEA International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) mission in 2016. It will be already the third such mission since 1999.

Lithuanian Nuclear Security Centre of Excellence since its opening has been very active and in 2013 organized training events for more than 225 participants not only from Lithuania, but also from EU Eastern Partnership Countries. We are grateful for our partners, first of all the IAEA secretariat for their support for the Centre's activities.

Since joining the IAEA, Technical Cooperation has played a key role for Lithuania in enhancing nuclear energy infrastructure. The Country Programme Framework for the period of 2012-2017 has been signed in November 2012. The Programme provides an overview and guidance on what Lithuania aims to achieve

within the framework of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme over 2012-2017. Lithuania in cooperation with the IAEA is performing 3 national projects dedicated to radioactive waste management, institutional capacity building and radiation protection.

We would like to express our delight that this year the implemented national project on Establishing Biological Dosimetry Laboratory in Lithuania has been selected as one of success stories within the IAEA Technical Cooperation framework. The result of the project marks an important step towards further enhancing Lithuanian's radiation safety infrastructure in the field of emergency preparedness and response.

Mr. President,

Nuclear security challenges needs our high-level political attention. Lithuania strongly supports global efforts to strengthen nuclear security and secure all vulnerable materials around the world. With all these efforts I have mentioned we wish to demonstrate that nuclear security remains Lithuania's priority and we will further strengthen our nuclear security culture, cooperation with other countries.

I thank you, Mr. President