

Statement by
H.E. Mr. Keith Azzopardi
Ambassador & Permanent Representative
of Malta
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Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election to the Chair of the 58th Session of the IAEA General Conference and to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation to successfully accomplish the important work before us.

The Republic of Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by Italy on behalf of the European Union and would like to add some further remarks from a national perspective.

Malta warmly welcomes the Union of the Comoros, the Republic of Djibouti, the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the Republic of Vanuatu as new members to the IAEA and wishes them a most rewarding relationship with the Agency.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Malta is a strong advocate of disarmament and non-proliferation and is committed to the principle of full compliance to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Malta supports the Treaty's universalisation and calls upon those states that have not yet ratified the Treaty, to do so without further delay.

Malta values highly the indispensable work undertaken by the IAEA in carrying out its verification tasks and in ensuring that the Non-Proliferation Treaty is fully respected and adhered to. The IAEA holds a

prominent role in this domain and Malta is cognizant of the challenging work carried out by the Agency in verifying that nuclear power is solely used for civilian purposes.

As a small nation state, Malta's security depends on international Treaties and their thorough implementation. In the nuclear sphere, full adherence to the NPT guarantees international safety and security. Although Malta does not make use of nuclear power for its energy needs, Malta recognizes the right of every State to develop, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, with full respect to safety standards. In this respect, Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and the Additional Protocol allow the IAEA to confirm that a State is living up to its international commitments. Malta calls upon States to sign and put into force these verification tools which act as confidence-building measures to the international community.

The need to adopt and implement safety and security standards should not be limited solely to land. As an island state and leading Maritime Flag State, Malta stresses that safety and security standards should be similarly applied to the maritime industry, in particular to the shipment of radioactive cargo. Malta wishes to recall that the Seas represent the common heritage of mankind and as such, need to be protected from potentially hazardous accidents. Malta encourages dialogue between coastal and shipping states involved in the transportation of radioactive material and welcomes the practice of shipping states that provide timely information in advance of shipments of a radioactive content.

Mr. President,

Malta's strategic situation in Europe and the Mediterranean Sea and Malta's traditional links with its neighbours has brought along concern with respect to the events that have been unfolding in Malta's Southern neighbourhood. Malta firmly believes in the establishment of a Middle East zone free of Weapons of Mass Destruction, which would strengthen the non-proliferation regime and instill confidence in the region. Malta welcomes the developments that have resulted from the informal Glion meetings. Malta fully supports the important work and relentless efforts carried out by the Facilitator, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, and is hopeful that a Conference that would pave the way for the establishment of such a zone takes place as soon as possible.

Mr. President,

Malta is deeply concerned with the nuclear weapons and missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its decision to cease all cooperation with the IAEA. International obligations are there to be respected and Malta calls upon the DPRK to comply fully, unconditionally and without delay to the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the IAEA. Malta denounces the provocative launches made by the DPRK and considers DPRK's comportment as a serious challenge to the international non-proliferation regime.

Likewise, Malta remains concerned that Syria has not provided the requested cooperation to the Agency to resolve outstanding issues. Syria remains responsible to fully comply with the Board's 2011 resolution. Malta calls on the Syrian authorities to remedy their non-compliance and bring into force an Additional Protocol without delay.

Malta views positively the steps taken by Iran under the Framework for Cooperation and discussions that have taken place between Iran and the Agency. Nonetheless, Malta remains concerned that not all commitments under the said Framework have been fulfilled and that the Agency has not been able to confirm that Iran's nuclear programme is solely for peaceful means. Malta calls upon Iran to fully cooperate with the Agency in order to meet agreed deadlines and to provide the Agency with access to Parchin and resolve all outstanding issues. Malta also underlines the need for Iran to bring into force its Additional Protocol. Malta believes that these steps are fundamental towards building international confidence in Iran's nuclear programme.

Mr. President

I cannot end this statement without making reference to the valuable work of the Agency under the framework of the Technical Cooperation Programme. The TC programme is an important framework providing an exchange of expertise and know-how in the nuclear field. My country's participation in this programme, both at a national and regional level, has been a most positive one and for the past years, Malta has implemented national projects in the fields of radiotherapy for medical purposes and cultural heritage and has participated in various regional training programmes. Malta is currently implementing a national project aimed at strengthening the radiation safety regulatory framework in Malta. Malta is

most thankful to the Agency for all the assistance and technical support shown in this area and looks forward to participate in further programmes in the future.

Mr. President

I trust that this year's Conference will be a means of further consolidating the indispensable role that the Agency has established on a global level and that the international community continues to work hand in hand in combating the challenges towards a brighter, safer and more secure future.

Thank you.