



**Statement by Mrs. Dhara Wijayatilake**  
**Secretary to the Ministry of Technology & Research, Sri Lanka**  
**at the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the IAEA General Conference**  
**Vienna, Austria 22 – 26 September 2014**

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Mr. President,  
Director General,  
Fellow Delegates,

Mr. President, let me, on behalf of my delegation add my own words of felicitation to those already expressed, on your election to the office of President of this Conference. The recognition accorded to you, Mr. President is no doubt based on the confidence that you will use your experience and skill and where necessary, your charm, to steer the deliberations of this Conference to achieve meaningful outcomes. My delegation ofcourse assures you of our whole hearted cooperation in this task.

We are also proud to recognize the presence on the podium of another of our very distinguished foreign service officers, Madam Aruni Wijewardena who assists the President in her capacity as the Secretary to the Policy Making Organs. To my delegation and indeed to my country, it is a unique honour and we are confident that the combined skills of both you Mr. President and you Madam Wijewardena will make this Conference one of the best!

Our sincere appreciation goes out to your predecessor, Ambassador Xolisa Mfundiso Mabhongo of South Africa for his dedication and hard work.

Sri Lanka is happy to note the steady expansion of the IAEA membership. Today we welcome into our fold the Union of Comoros, the Republic of Djibouti, the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the Republic of Vanuatu. It is our firm belief that they will work with commitment towards strengthening the Agency while benefiting from its services and assistance in different areas that are relevant to them.

Mr. President,

We have before us the IAEA Annual Report for 2013, which sets out the notable achievements of the Agency in respect of its multi faceted mandate. The Statement of Director General Yukiyo Amano highlighted some of the significant aspects of this report and the recent developments relating to the Agency's mandate. This report, together with related documents on thematic issues, highlight an impressive account of the Agency's work in the fields of nuclear energy, nuclear technology and its applications, nuclear safety and security, safeguards and verification, and technical co-operation.

We are gathering today after two very significant Conferences on nuclear energy, namely the *International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century*, held in St. Petersburg and *The International Conference on Fast Reactors and Related Fuel Cycles: Safe Technologies and Sustainable Scenarios*, held in Paris. These Conferences provided a forum to discuss key issues including energy security, sustainable energy and climate change and also focused on strategic and technical options for deploying fast reactors.

Mr. President,

Nuclear security is an important issue and the steps taken by the Agency to contribute to strengthening measures to deal with this field of activity are welcomed, especially given the current global challenges. We support the several global and regional initiatives pursued to enhance nuclear security around the globe. The threat of Nuclear terrorism is a serious concern, and no effort should be spared to address nuclear

security in all its aspects. I wish to acknowledge in particular the assistance provided by the Department of Nuclear Security of the Agency to sensitize and train the Sri Lankan security officials to provide protection to conference venues and other locations during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Sri Lanka in 2013. The skills acquired by our officials will now enable them to assist other nations when called upon to do so.

The importance of Nuclear Safety was highlighted following the Fukushima Daiichi incident in 2011, and the work of the Agency in this regard is greatly appreciated, particularly implementing the lessons learned in respect of emergency preparedness, response and mitigation. We also compliment the Government of Japan for the relentless efforts it has made to address the issues of safety and environmental and other concerns, which continue to date.

Despite the clear dangers illustrated by this incident, 2013 saw the largest number of nuclear reactors under construction since 1989. This trend is reflective of the growing global demand for energy and the accompanying high projection for growth in the coming decade based on a belief that the potential for adverse consequences can be managed. There is a growing realization among developing nations of the need for getting the right energy mix as part of their efforts to ensure energy security.

It is in this context that Sri Lanka will examine the prospects for using nuclear power as an option to meet the country's future energy demands, which are growing as its economy expands and industry diversifies. With the support of the Agency Sri Lanka has been able to build capacity in the area of Human Resources and in the use of IAEA energy planning tools. The latter is important to meet national needs in energy studies and planning.

Mr. President,

We cannot de-link nuclear energy needs from the need for nuclear safety and safeguards. The principles that have been incorporated into the several IAEA

instruments to provide for a safe and secure regime are significant and require cooperation at international level if we are to achieve results and ensure that nuclear materials and technological capabilities are not diverted towards non-peaceful uses. This is essential for international security and for the protection of humanity, society and the environment.

Sri Lanka considers nuclear disarmament as being essential for ensuring lasting international peace and security. We look forward, in this respect, to contributing towards the success of the 2015 NPT Review Conference. We wish to emphasize however, that all aspects of the package agreed upon at the previous Conferences be implemented to the fullest. We join other delegations in celebrating the Day of Nuclear Disarmament on the 26<sup>th</sup> September as declared by the UN General Assembly. The pain and horror resulting from the use of nuclear weapons is a particular concern for all States - a concern that should strengthen our combined resolve to advance towards nuclear disarmament without further delay.

Mr. President,

We would like to commend ***The Working Group on Financing the Agency's Activities***, for the consensual outcome it had achieved after several months of deliberations. The recommendations it has made address ways and means to ensure that the resources for the Technical Cooperation Fund are sufficient, assured and predictable. We thank the Permanent Representatives of France and Kenya for their successful stewardship of this Group.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka is acutely aware of the emerging trends and challenges in the nuclear field and is conscious of the need to strengthen technology and research institutions and enhance capacity to meet today's challenges and to harness the potential of nuclear technology for development.

Under the leadership of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka has launched the "Ten Year Horizon Development Framework" that has envisioned accelerated economic growth and social development, including development of science and technology. This will help to reap the benefits of nuclear science, for the advancement of national development.

Sri Lanka will soon enact a new Nuclear Law to replace the current statute which was enacted in 1969. The new statute defines its legal regime to deal with the peaceful use of nuclear energy including safety, security and safeguards and will establish two independent entities- the Atomic Energy Board and the Atomic Energy Regulatory Council. It incorporates the principles adopted in IAEA Conventions and Guidelines and provides for the comprehensive treatment of promotion and regulation of nuclear energy. We thank the IAEA for the assistance afforded by its Legal department to formulate the new Law.

Sri Lanka established its first Government owned Multipurpose Gamma Irradiation Facility this year. The facility offers to our Industrialists a service which was not hitherto available in Sri Lanka by providing irradiation services for industry products, spices and other food. We wish to place on record our appreciation of the technical cooperation assistance received from the IAEA for this initiative.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka acknowledges with appreciation the assistance to many of other initiatives through the Technical Cooperation Programme of the IAEA.

In the past twelve months alone, the Atomic Energy Authority of Sri Lanka has hosted seven IAEA international events. We remain committed to work with the IAEA on such programmes which are mutually beneficial and which afford to our own scientists as well as those of other nations, opportunities to enhance skills and capabilities.

Regulatory staff of the AEA of Sri Lanka were trained in relation to the licensing and inspection programme and to formulate codes of conduct and rules and procedures required for the regulatory regime.

The project "Upgrading Nuclear Medicine Diagnostic Imaging Facilities at University of Peradeniya" implemented at the Nuclear Medicine Unit in Peradeniya with IAEA assistance has proved to be a boon to patients in rural areas.

The IAEA is currently providing technical assistance for the setting up of a National Centre for Nuclear Agriculture and National Centre for Marine Applications in collaboration with national stake holders, the Marine Environmental Prevention Authority (MEPA) and the National Aquatic Resource Authority (NARA).

The construction of the National Center for Non Destructive Testing will be functional with effect from next month, October. The technical assistance provided by the IAEA to build capacity for this Centre and the provision of the major NDT equipment has been of great value.

We are pleased that technical assistance will be forthcoming for the establishment of a Regional Centre for Research and Training in Medical and Molecular Entomology for vector-borne disease control in the University of Kelaniya, under the next biennium programme commencing 2016.

Mr. President, Sri Lanka wishes to place on record our deep appreciation to the Director General Mr. Amano and to all of the staff of the IAEA who have worked with us over the past year. We look forward to an equally meaningful year ahead and to working with the IAEA in a spirit of cooperation.