

60th General Conference of the IAEA

Statement

The Republic of Latvia

Mr. Rinalds Muciņš, State Secretary on the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia,

Vienna, Austria, 26-30 September 2016

Mr President, Director General, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by Slovakia on behalf of the European Union. I would like to highlight Latvia's views also in a national capacity.

Mr. President,

I am pleased to join others in congratulating you on your election as the President of the 60th General Conference and look forward to working under your guidance. My delegation is convinced that the Conference will be a success.

I would also like to congratulate the Agency on its 60th anniversary. Since the Agency's establishment the safety, security and peaceful uses of nuclear science and nuclear technology have been promoted worldwide.

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome the new Member States of the Agency - Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Islamic Republic of Gambia.

Latvia would like to express its sincere appreciation to Director General Yukiya Amano for his visit to Latvia this year. During his visit Mr. Amano had the opportunity to meet with high level officials and familiarise himself with Latvia's activities in nuclear and radiation safety, nuclear medicine and nuclear science, as well as promote peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology to the general public.

Mr. President,

I would like to draw attention to some issues, which are of particular importance to my country.

Nuclear safety

Latvia has consistently stressed the necessity to comply with high safety standards and nuclear security guidance. Application of new technologies, while ensuring nuclear safety and security, is important in the advancement of many fields. For example, the medical field is experiencing significant development with new technologies like the application of cyclotron technology at the new Nuclear Medicine Centre in Latvia being applied to ensure timely diagnostics of cancer, as well as other diseases in the future

Similarly, international agreements and standards set rigid conditions for the construction of Nuclear Power Plants. Latvia emphasizes the importance of stress tests and the significance of principles proposed in the 2015 Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety regarding the safety assessment for existing nuclear power plants.

I would like to underline that the foundation for ensuring nuclear safety globally is transparency, international cooperation and an efficient information exchange among neighbouring countries.

Nuclear non-proliferation, Safeguards and Nuclear Verification

Latvia strongly condemns the illegal nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on 9 September. This is yet another example of provocative and irresponsible action, following the nuclear test carried out this past January, the launch of a long-range missile in February, and recurrent tests of short-range and medium-range ballistic missiles. These actions pose a threat to security in the region and international peace as a whole.

We appreciate the Agency's continuous readiness to resume nuclear verification activities in this country (DPRK).

Latvia strongly supports strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's safeguards.

Latvia highly appreciates the central role of the IAEA in ensuring the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) for Iran. Verification measures agreed in the Plan of Action (JCPOA) are crucial, as they will allow monitoring the Iranian actions in the long-term. I note that for the last two years Latvia has made financial extra budgetary contributions to the IAEA in order to support the monitoring and verification of nuclear activities in Iran.

Technical Cooperation

At the end, I would like to focus on some issues related to technical cooperation.

The opportunities offered by the Agency's technical cooperation program are highly valued by Latvia. Within this technical cooperation cycle 2016-2017 our priorities are effective application of new medical technologies and improvement of knowledge. It is also of high importance to continue the

training of government experts and education activities in regard to inspections, emergency situations and radiation control on our borders.

I would also like to note that this year we have hosted one and will host two more regional training courses for nuclear safety experts and medical personnel from Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

I am convinced that sharing knowledge and experience will continue to provide great benefits for all countries in the future.

Mr. President,

I would like to use this opportunity to note that we are honoured to have been elected to the IAEA Board of Governors, as well as to Chair the Open Ended Working Group for the development of the IAEA Medium Term Strategy 2018-2023.

Mr. President,

To conclude, I would like to emphasize the indispensable role of the Agency as the world's focal point for promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology as well as strengthening nuclear safety and security. Its activities and guidance in the implementation of safeguards agreements and promotion of non-proliferation prove the effectiveness of international cooperation and dialogue as the best approach for solving complex issues to ensure international peace and security.

Last but not least we thank Director General Amano for his dedicated work and his expressed availability to serve another term as Director General of the IAEA. Latvia is glad to support his candidacy for this important position.

Thank you!