

S T A T E M E N T

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Latchesar Kostov

Chair of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency of Bulgaria

Head of the delegation to the 64th General Conference of the IAEA

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria and on my personal capacity I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the 64th Session of the General Conference of IAEA and to assure you of our full support and cooperation in the fulfillment of your responsible task, especially in the specific circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

The Bulgarian delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by Germany on behalf of the European Union.

We commend the work of the Director General Mr. Grossi and the Agency to continue to fully and successfully exercise its mandate during this year, marked by restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic. This global crisis affected all areas of people's lives and we highly value the emergency

support received by the Republic of Bulgaria, with the kind contribution from the USA Government, for expanding its COVID-19 testing capacity. My country welcomes the ZODIAC initiative of the Agency and is ready to support the future project, which shall reflect the need of all Member States for sustainable infrastructure to address emergencies of the same nature.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Bulgaria is strongly committed to the efforts for further nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Considering the current security environment worldwide, we share the view that the upcoming Tenth Review Conference of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should be seen as a key milestone in further advancing of the nuclear disarmament, and provides for the chance to once again uphold and consolidate the NPT.

50 years after its entry into force, as well as 25 years since its indefinite extension, the NPT's full implementation is needed now more than ever. In this regard, I would like to stress the significance my country is placing on the universalization of the NPT, on the constructive engagement by all States Parties to further advance the goals of the treaty, the reconfirmation of its objectives, including on nuclear disarmament in accordance with art. VI. The Republic of Bulgaria strongly supports all three pillars of the NPT and spares

no efforts to promote their comprehensive, balanced, and full implementation.

The IAEA Safeguards mechanism is a key instrument for its implementation. We once again call for the universalization of the IAEA Additional Protocol.

The Republic of Bulgaria fully supports the JCPOA as an important multilateral achievement, having a key role for peace and stability in the region. Nevertheless, we stay concerned about the continuing activities by Iran to the detriment of the Agreement and support the efforts of the JCPOA participants in addressing these issues within the JCPOA framework. We would like to commend the Director General, and the Secretariat for their professional and impartial technical work in verifying Iran's safeguards obligations and we encourage them to continue to provide comprehensive and timely update on the implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol in Iran.

We note with satisfaction the intensification of the talks between the Agency and Iran that resulted in an agreement to provide the requested access to the two disputed locations. This allowed the beginning of the process of solving the outstanding safeguards implementation issues.

We call on the DPRK to return to full compliance with all its NPT and IAEA safeguards obligations as a non-nuclear weapon state, and to provide the Agency with prompt access to individuals, documentation, equipment

and facilities. We continue to insist on the complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. President,

The nuclear energy sector in the Republic of Bulgaria continues to be a major factor in the country's energy balance. In October 2019, the Bulgarian regulator renewed the 10 years operational license to Unit 6 of NPP Kozloduy. The global pandemic triggered additional measures to secure and safe operation of the nuclear power plants. The Bulgarian regulatory framework requires provision of sufficient personnel and maintaining of the necessary stock of spare parts for the safe operation of the units. These requirements, together with the contingency measures ensure the safe operation of the NPP. In this respect, we are also looking forward to engaging in discussions during the postponed 8th review meeting of the Convention of nuclear safety and the 7th review meeting of the Joint convention on the safety of spent fuel management and safety of radioactive waste management.

Mr. President,

Our understanding is that the Technical Cooperation Program is the Agency's key mechanism for transferring technology and building capacities in the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology, based on the needs

of Member States. In this respect, we consider that the funding of the TC Program should be ensured, sufficient and predictable and my country pays its annual contribution to the TC fund fully and on time.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Bulgaria would continue to support the IAEA activities in promoting the international cooperation in the field of the peaceful use of atomic energy and for the application of the Safeguards. Saying this I am also expressing our confidence and support for the work of the Director General and the Secretariat of the Agency.

Thank you, Mr. President.