

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Latchezar Kostov

Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency of Bulgaria

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria I would like to join the other speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of the 59th session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. I avail myself of this opportunity to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in the fulfillment of your important and responsible task during the session deliberations. I am convinced that under your guidance we will be able to reach a desirable conclusion through our work this week and the conference will contribute to the achievement of the IAEA's main objectives: non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, enhancement of nuclear safety and peaceful application of atomic energy.

It is my pleasure to welcome Turkmenistan, Antigua and Barbuda and Barbados as a new Member State of the IAEA.

The Bulgarian delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries.

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

Bulgaria is committed to the efforts of the international community for non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and our policy aims to strengthening the global security and stability. We consider the IAEA Safeguards mechanism as a key instrument for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Bulgaria calls for the universalization of the NPT and IAEA Additional Protocol and we believe the

Agency Safeguards activities play an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT.

Bulgaria reaffirms its full support to the establishment of a Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East. We encourage all State in the region to renew their efforts for convening a Conference with the participation of all stakeholders. We regret the decision of the Arab States to include the item "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities" in the IAEA General Conference Agenda. Bulgaria firmly believes that only through the spirit of trust and cooperation we can reach the desired consensus and make progress towards implementing the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

Mr. President,

Bulgaria welcomes the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) from July 14, 2015 between E3+3 and Iran. This deal clearly demonstrates that the active diplomacy and political determination always bring positive results, even on issues that have remained in a long-term deadlock.

We hope that the timely implementation of all provisions of the JCPOA will contribute to the international peace and security, especially in the region of the Middle East. It will also have positive economic implications for Iran and its trade partners all over the world.

We look forward to the ratification of the IAEA Additional Protocol by Iran and we urge more countries to do so.

Bulgaria remains seriously concerned about the nuclear weapons and missile programs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its decision to cease the cooperation with the IAEA. We call on the DPRK to return to full compliance with all its NPT and IAEA safeguards obligations and to provide the Agency with prompt access to individuals, documentation, equipment and facilities and to abandon all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile activities, including its uranium enrichment program, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

We urge Syria to cooperate with the Agency to clarify matters with regard to Dair Alzour and the other sites, and to bring into force an Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,

We would like to congratulate the Director General and the Secretariat for the preparation of the 2014 Annual Report. We are glad to see that it reflects the full scope of the Agency's activities for the period covered. My delegation commends the efforts that Agency continues to provide in supporting new IAEA member-states and countries with established nuclear power programs in human resource development, training, stakeholder involvement and management systems.

As stated in the Report a progress continued to be made in the review and revision of the Agency's safety standards taking into account the lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi accident. These revisions are being reflected through the Safety Requirements agenda related to the safety of nuclear power plants and the storage of spent nuclear fuel. We support this approach and we encourage the Secretariat to keep the momentum in fulfilling this very important task.

My delegation would like to emphasize our appreciation of the Report on the Fukushima Daiichi Accident. The Report provided a comprehensive analysis of the events and could serve as a unique reference point for enhancing the robustness and in-built resilience of safety in nuclear power plants. In this regard the report has to play an important role.

Mr. President,

Bulgaria is one of those countries mentioned in the Annual Report, for which a long term operation of its power reactors is of a major focus. Now the operator of units 5 and 6 of Kozloduy NPP and the regulatory body are in the process of development and assessment of the relevant materials aimed to further activities regarding the long term operation of these units. We also expect valuable assistance of the IAEA in this area inviting SALTO mission, which will be held in

Kozloduy NPP in June 2016. Also in 2016 in April a Follow-Up IRRS mission will be conducted at the Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency.

Development and application of nuclear science continue to be of great importance for Bulgaria. We see this as a tool for the technological and economic growth. That is why my country is actively participating in the work of the different international scientific organizations as the Joint Institute for Nuclear Researches in Dubna, Russian Federation and CERN near Geneva.

We share the view expressed in the Annual Report that IAEA should continue to support the activities to improve physical protection measures in Member States. During the visit of the Director General Amano last year in Bulgaria a Practical agreement between the IAEA and the University of National and World Economy in Sofia was signed. On the basis of the Agreement a Master's degree program on nuclear security will be launched with the University on 1st of October this year. Senior IAEA officials are invited to join us at the opening ceremony.

Mr. President,

At the end of 2015 the current cycle of the Technical cooperation program will be over. In accordance with its Program Framework's priorities Bulgaria participated in this cycle with projects in the field of nuclear safety, nuclear energy agriculture and medicine. The successful accomplishment of these projects will allow the beneficiary organizations in Bulgaria to meet the challenges and to promptly solve relevant, specific issues.

Bulgaria actively participates in European regional projects as well. Large number of Bulgarian specialists and scientists from operating organizations, regulatory body, technical support organizations and from different institutes attended seminars, training courses, technical meetings, conferences and scientific forums organized by the IAEA. In 2014 and 2015 Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency hosted two regional meeting under Technical Cooperation Program. In November 2014 a regional workshop on public information and involvement in regulatory activities was held and it was attended by over 20 experts. In May 2015 - a regional meeting for region Europe was organized as

well. During the forum the National Liaison Officers adopted the final version of the Technical Cooperation Program for the region for 2016-2017 cycle. Also in May 2015 the Director of the Division for Europe Mr. Manase Peter Salema visited Bulgaria. The visit was very successful and contributed to strengthening the cooperation between IAEA and Bulgaria.

We regard the Agency's Technical Cooperation Program as a main tool for supporting the efforts of the Member States to address the priority issues in human health, food and agriculture, water and environment, industry etc. The program also helps Member States to identify and meet future energy needs, and to improve the nuclear safety and security worldwide.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to reconfirm that Bulgaria will continue to support the IAEA activities in promoting the international co-operation in the field of the peaceful use of atomic energy and for the application of the Safeguards. Saying this I'm also expressing our confidence in the work of the Secretariat and its Director General.

Thank you, Mr. President.