

STATEMENT

by **Dr. Gueorgui Kastchiev,**

Head of the Delegation of the Republic of

**Bulgaria to the 44th session of the General Conference of
the International Atomic Energy Agency**

Dear President Othman,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria allow me to join previous speakers and to extend to you our congratulations on your election to this high and responsible post.

I would like also to congratulate the new member states of the IAEA — Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and the Central African Republic.

It is of great importance to mention the comprehensive statement of the Director General Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei on the Agency's activities and the problems and perspectives of its future development.

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

The present session of the General Conference of the IAEA is taking place a few months after the Review Conference of NPT, the only international treaty with global character, which diminishes the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons and is an important factor to the international stability. We welcome the determination declared by the NPT member states to work for its strict application, it is of vital importance for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament, peaceful use of nuclear energy and strengthening of the international peace and security. This is a solid confirmation by the NPT member states that the IAEA safeguards are a fundamental pillar of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Bulgaria has always attached great importance to the IAEA activities related to the control on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and has contributed to the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, particularly in supporting the measures envisaged in the Programme "93±2".

I am proud, that my country was among those, which first signed the Additional Protocol to the Agreement for the application of the safeguards, demonstrating once again its unreserved support to the Agency efforts for strengthening of the safeguards system. The draft Law for ratification of the Additional Protocol has been approved by the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria and was submitted to the National Assembly. I am really proud to announce that today, on its morning session the Parliament has ratified it.

Bulgaria strictly implements its obligations following the Agreement with the IAEA for the application

of the safeguards in connection with the NPT. This fact is confirmed once again by the official statement of the IAEA on the results of the inspections of the nuclear facilities in Bulgaria conducted in 1999.

As a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Zangger Committee, Bulgaria strictly follows the requirement for full scope safeguards as a condition for supply of nuclear material and equipment and firmly applies this principle in its foreign trade policy.

The struggle against illicit trafficking of nuclear material and other radioactive sources is another important factor for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We consider the role of the Agency as essential for the extension of the international co-operation in this field. Bulgaria participates in the IAEA database for illicit trafficking and fully supports the measures against illicit trafficking.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We approve the Annual Report for 1999, reflecting the activity of the Agency in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy, in the development and extension of the international co-operation and the application of safeguards. We welcome the statement in the Safeguards Implementation Report for 1999, that the Agency has not found any indication for diversion of nuclear material or misuse of safeguarded nuclear facilities, equipment and non-nuclear material.

Bulgaria appreciates the enormous contribution of IAEA for enhancement the safety of nuclear facilities and installations. It is of crucial importance to point out the actual technical criteria, based on the modern and internationally recognized standards used by the Agency in the process of assessment. IAEA is in a position to provide the policy-makers on national and international levels with the specific information and expertise, so decisions are taken on a technical, rather than political basis. Let us hope that this objective in the work of the Agency will be maintained and strengthened.

Considerable results were achieved by the IAEA in the field of technical co-operation in respect to improvement of the management of the technical co-operation programme as well as the volume of assistance rendered to the member states. We are grateful to the IAEA for the assistance provided for enhancement the safety of the Bulgarian nuclear facilities, strengthening the capabilities of the Nuclear safety authority, using of electron beam technology for purification of flue gases at the Maritza Iztok Thermal Power Plant, increasing the safety of the Novi Han repository for radioactive waste, etc. We highly appreciate the IAEA missions for enhancement the safety of the Kozloduy NPP. In particular I would like to point out the mission on the Programme for the Modernization of units 5 and 6 with WWER-I000 type reactors conducted in July this year as well as the forthcoming missions for the Independent Assessment of

the Programme for Reconstruction of units 3 and 4 with WWER-440 type reactors and the OSART Follow up mission.

We support the IAEA program and budget for the year of 2001 and we will make a voluntary contribution to the Technical Co-operation Fund for 2001 in accordance with the recommended amount. Bulgaria has paid in full its assessed contribution to the Regular Budget and the recommended contribution to the Technical Co-operation Fund for the year 2000 together with the assessed program costs for 1999.

Mr. President, Distinguished delegates, Nuclear power continues to play an important role in meeting the demands of Bulgaria for electricity. In 1999 the total amount of electricity generated from all energy sources was 36,3 billion kWh, from which 15,8 billion kWh were generated by the Kozloduy NPP or 43,6 % of the electricity was of nuclear origin.

As a country using nuclear energy, Bulgaria pays high attention to the safe operation of its nuclear facilities and plans and implements the relevant measures for enhancement of the their safety level. In a process of implementation are the Programme for Reconstruction of units 3 and 4 with WWER-440 type reactors and the Programme for Modernization of WWER-1000 type reactors, which have been developed and evaluated with expert assistance provided by the IAEA and other international institutions.

At the Kozloduy NPP site continues the seismic upgrading of the spent fuel storage facility and the implementation of other measures for its reconstruction which are expected to be completed by the end of this year. Continues the construction of a Plant for processing of radioactive waste and a storage facility for processed waste. It is envisaged that both facilities will be commissioned in 2001, thus the safety of radioactive waste management will be enhanced.

Following the Government decision for earlier shutdown of the Kozloduy NPP units I and 2 till the end of 2002 an administrative structure was established. The plans for decommissioning and the normative basis, related to the safety requirements for this specific activity are in a process of elaboration.

The development and upgrading of the national nuclear legislation and its approximation to the legislation of the European Union continues. On May 10th the National Assembly of Bulgaria adopted the Law for ratification of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

In a process of preparation is a draft of a new Law on the Safety in the Use of Nuclear Energy. The Law will regulate not only the questions on nuclear safety but also the aspects on radiation protection, the safety on the management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, the state control, the registration and licensing regimes, the interaction between the different state bodies and others. In this connection I would like to express our gratitude to the IAEA for the expert assistance in this field and in particular for providing

lecturers for the seminar on nuclear legislation, which took place in Sofia in July this year. I hope that the IAEA will continue this good practice.

Mr. President,

The co-operation with the IAEA is important for the application of the achievements of the nuclear science and technology in Bulgaria, as well as for the safety enhancement of our nuclear facilities and the strengthening the capabilities of the nuclear regulatory body. I want to express my highest appreciation for the assistance.

Bulgaria participates actively in the regional technical co-operation programme of the IAEA, giving high priority to the projects related to the nuclear safety, nuclear energy, medicine and the corresponding legislation.

In June this year the Director General of the IAEA Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei visited Bulgaria. Among the questions discussed at the meetings with Bulgarian officials was the extension of the co-operation with the IAEA in the field of nuclear safety and energy including the co-operation in the decommissioning of the Kozloduy NPP units 1 and 2. Dr. ElBaradei visited the Kozloduy NPP, where he was acquainted with the programmes and measures for enhancement the safety of the nuclear power plant. He also visited the pilot installation for purification of flue gases in the Maritza Iztok Thermal Power Plant, constructed in co-operation between Bulgaria, the IAEA and Japan. We consider the visit of Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei as an act of recognition of the active co-operation of Bulgaria with the IAEA.

In conclusion, I would like to express the high opinion and strong support of the Republic of Bulgaria to all IAEA activities towards promotion of international co-operation in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy and application of safeguards.

Thank you.