

**Statement by H.E.Mr Mart Laanemäe,
Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Estonia**

Mr President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr President, on your election. My delegation and I are convinced that your skilful guidance, which has our full support and co-operation, will ensure the success of this Conference.

I would also like to join the previous speakers in welcoming Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and the Central African Republic as new members of the Agency.

Estonia, unlike most of our neighbouring states, has no operating nuclear facilities. Our specific interest is to ensure the safe storage of the relatively large amount of radioactive waste which was stored on our territory without the knowledge or approval of the inhabitants, as well as the small additional amount coming from the present use of radioactive materials in specific peaceful applications. Nevertheless, Estonia's unconditional support for all endeavours of the Agency is fuelled by the conviction that nuclear energy should be used to benefit mankind.

While fully endorsing the statement made earlier by the distinguished representative of France on behalf of the European Union and countries associated to it, I would like to offer some additional remarks on three key issues: nuclear non-proliferation, safety and technical co-operation.

Mr. President,

Estonia as a State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons fully supports the Agency's endeavour to apply safeguards in order to verify the fulfilment of the obligations of the States Parties under the Treaty. We also welcome the Agency's efforts to strengthen the

effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system. Moreover, we look forward to the integration of safeguards into one efficient and cost-effective system.

Fully recognising its responsibilities under the Treaty, Estonia has concluded the Safeguards Agreement with the Agency, which entered into force on 24 November 1997.

The Protocol Additional to the Safeguards Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Agency was signed on 13 April 2000. The Protocol is based on the text of the Model Additional Protocol that was adopted by the Board of Governors on 15 May 1997, as corrected. The preparation of relevant national legislation needed to implement the provisions of the Additional Protocol has already begun.

As one of the 54 states which have concluded Additional Protocols, Estonia is concerned that a substantial number of States Parties to the NPT have not concluded comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and/or Additional Protocols. We call upon those states to fulfil their obligations under the NPT.

To comply with further NPT commitments, Estonia adopted a new Import, Export and Transit of Strategic Goods Act on 16 June 1999. Since then, the Government has approved the statute of the export control commission and the specific procedures to implement the law. The latest version of the Estonian List of Strategic Goods comprises among others all dual-use goods and technology covered by the MTCR, Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Dual-Use list of the Wassenaar Arrangement.

Mr President,

Estonia strongly supports the Agency's efforts to enhance nuclear, radiation and waste safety. Therefore we particularly welcome and encourage the Agency to carry on activities to implement the Action Plan for the Safety of Radiation Sources and the Security of Radioactive Materials.

Estonia itself is making steady progress in incorporating internationally accepted safety standards into its national legislation. Based on the Radiation Protection Act adopted in 1997, there are now

altogether 13 legal acts in force, specifying various aspects of the basic law. This legislative process is continuing.

In the year 2001, the Estonian Radiation Protection Centre will present to the Parliament a new draft of the Radiation Protection Act, which will take into account present experience as well as the requirements of the European Union. In addition, up to 9 legal acts, on the governmental or ministerial level, are expecting approval in the coming year. Several of them concern radioactive waste, for example the strategy for radioactive waste management and procedures for management, registration and transfer of radioactive waste generated in medicine, industry and research. Moreover, the requirements for intervention in the case of radiological emergency will be specified as well as the exact procedure for supervision and control of radiation safety and radiation sources. In this context I would like to thank the Agency for providing expert advice and training for Estonian specialists and especially welcome the Agency's intention to continue technical co-operation in this area.

One significant and historic radioactive waste management undertaking in Estonia is already in its final stages after five years of intensive work.

On 26 September 1995, Estonia took over the responsibility for the former Soviet navy nuclear submarine training centre in Paldiski. With the generous assistance of several international organisations, including the Agency, as well as its Member States, there has been considerable progress in the decommissioning of this site. By now all solid radioactive waste left on the site has been conditioned. The conditioning of liquid waste will be finished in the next two years.

The Paldiski site also serves as the interim storage for all radioactive waste generated in Estonia. Although it is suitable to fulfil this function for several decades, we fully recognise the need to explore the options for the establishment of a final repository for radioactive waste. Furthermore, the present condition and future management routes of the sarcophagi covering the two reactors need to be assessed.

Mr President,

The many times that this statement has addressed technical co-operation shows its considerable role in almost all fields of activity related to radioactivity in Estonia. We are pleased to note that this co-operation is going to continue. Estonia welcomes the intention to include two projects, both related to application of radioactive substances in medicine, into the Agency's 2001-2002 technical co-operation programme for Estonia.

Above all, it is necessary to emphasise the great importance that we attach to the establishment of the national calibration laboratory for ionising radiation. Therefore, the prospect of continuing the relevant sub-regional technical co-operation project is most welcome. Moreover, there are several regional and interregional technical co-operation projects that are of interest to our institutions and specialists.

Today Estonia is no longer just a recipient of technical co-operation, but an active partner, offering its facilities for fellowships and scientific visits for specialists from other countries. We also have and will continue to participate in organising seminars and training courses in co-operation with the Agency and its member states.

Mr President,

Let me conclude by once more commending the Agency on its efforts to ensure the peaceful use of nuclear energy in the world. May I also reiterate the firm commitment of the Republic of Estonia to contribute its utmost efforts into achieving this noble goal.

Thank you, Mr President.