

Statement by the Head of the Russian Federation Delegation E.O. Adamov
to the 44th Session of the IAEA General Conference

Mr. President,

Let me congratulate you on your election to the post of President of the 44th Session of the IAEA General Conference. The Russian delegation is convinced that you will make every effort to ensure successful completion of the tasks facing the General Conference. You can rely on the support and co-operation of the Russian delegation.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The Millennium Summit has recently taken place in New York. For three days the leaders of more than 150 countries were discussing global problems the humankind faced, and the role the UN played in the resolution of problems associated with the world structure of the 21st century.

We have gathered for the 44th Session of the IAEA General Conference shortly after the Summit. In the course of the Conference it would be logical to try to define the role the Agency can play in addressing such global problems discussed at that Forum as nuclear nonproliferation, assurance of sustainable development of mankind and reduction of man's technological impact on global environment.

The President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin suggested that the world community should phase out weapon-grade materials - enriched uranium and pure plutonium - from use in peaceful nuclear power sector. Our President's initiative is primarily directed to ensure energy supply for sustainable development of mankind, radical solution of nuclear weapons non-proliferation problems and global environmental improvement.

In particular, President Putin noted that according to the recent Russian research findings such phase-out was technically feasible in the framework of a proliferation-resistant and inherently safe nuclear fuel cycle. Moreover, inherently safe reactors used in such a cycle are optimal for efficient burning of weapon-grade plutonium and transmutation of other radioactive elements. Radiation-equivalent management of nuclear materials in the nuclear fuel cycle paves the way for the ultimate solution of the radioactive waste problem. In this regard Russia has proposed to implement a relevant international project under the auspices of the IAEA.

As you know our proposals on this issue have received wide support at the recent NPT Review Conference and were included into its Final Document.

As it was truly noted by the Director General in his statement - and we believe that no one in this room could question this idea - the future of the nuclear power depends on the extent of success in development of innovative reactors and the fuel cycle which would be proliferation-safe and economically competitive.

It is clear that the future Agency's work in this direction will be one of the first steps towards implementation of President V.V. Putin's initiative.

In the same context we consider the Agency's proposal to establish a Task Force on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles, with participation of the countries concerned, intended to develop promising nuclear technologies. We hope it will make possible to initiate a large-scale international project under the auspices of the IAEA.

The Summit urged to apply every effort to relieve mankind from the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the new millennium. To this end we should seek to ensure strict compliance with the signed treaties, encourage ratification of conventions and agreements constituting the core of the international law in this area.

The treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), signed by 187 States, is undoubtedly the most fundamental legal instrument in the nuclear sphere. In April-May 2000 the 6th NPT Review Conference took place in New York.

The Final Document of the NPT Review Conference recognizes the role of nuclear power in promotion of sustainable development and the need to resolve at technical level the issues of nonproliferation, nuclear safety and management of radioactive waste resulted from nuclear fuel cycle. Special emphasis is given to the role of the IAEA in assessment of new nuclear power technologies.

For the future of the nuclear power it is important not to repeat the past mistakes while developing new concepts of nuclear fuel cycle. At present we find ourselves at the end of the first phase of nuclear power development, a complicated and contradictory one.

Nuclear power is not only being criticized. Some real steps to do away with it are being made in several European countries. This criticism can be subjective and sometimes even prejudiced, but one should not plead it as an argument: this would mean to give up attempts to understand the root causes of the current crisis in the nuclear power industry. This would also mean lack of responsibility in the nuclear community for the development of nuclear power according to the dictates of present time.

Nuclear power, like any other technology, requires improvement. It is necessary to find acceptable to the public ways of preventing three major potential threats:

- accidents associated with large environmental and economic losses;
- accumulation of high-level and long-lived waste;
- nuclear weapons proliferation.

These are obviously serious problems. But in many countries in the areas with constant shortage of energy due to their geographic location and climate there are no other alternatives but the nuclear power development.

We regard nuclear power development in Russia as a matter of clear economic expediency. In May 2000, the Government of the Russian Federation approved *The Strategy of Nuclear Power Development in Russia in the First Half of the 21st Century* with industrial growth rate three times higher than in other electricity production branches.

Nuclear power may become a cornerstone of the power system which will ensure sustained, environmentally safe, economically efficient and socially acceptable development and improvement in all areas of human activities in the 21st century, and not only in Russia. However, I must point out that market mechanisms alone cannot fully ensure the nuclear power's transition to a fundamentally new level. It would require political will and resolute governmental support of the promising, technical developments.

Half a century of nuclear power development has not produced a nuclear technology fit to compete with traditional energy technologies on a global scale. But given the great practical experience gained during the first stage of nuclear evolution, this task can be accomplished.

We have submitted to the General Conference a draft resolution aimed at enhancing of the IAEA role in strengthening of international cooperation in the area of nuclear technologies, in fundamental and applied sciences. I hope that it will be supported by our Conference.

Mr. President,

Russia's political priorities are undoubtedly in the sphere of disarmament. We openly declare that we should do all that is necessary to make the issues of reducing strategic offensive arms, maintaining the strategic stability and retaining its main legal framework- the ABM Treaty - become an absolute imperative in the world politics. There should be no place for national egoism in this strategy. Eventually, the question is - what direction the world community is going to take for its development in the 21st century.

The ratification by Russia of the START-2, the ABM package agreement of 1997 and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is another confirmation of the fact that our country is consistently following the course of strengthening the non-proliferation regime, pursuing disarmament and maintaining the strategic stability in the world.

Conversion of nuclear weapon materials for uses in a peaceful nuclear fuel cycle is, in our opinion, a crucially important aspect of nuclear disarmament.

For already several years Russia has been engaged in irreversible and large-scale conversion of highly enriched uranium removed from nuclear weapons into reactor fuel - low enriched uranium i.e., into a non-weapon form. In constructive cooperation with the USA from the---ear2000 we have achieved the policy target: conversion of 30 tons of weapon-grade uranium per year.

Disposition of weapon-grade plutonium declared as no longer required for defense purposes is becoming a current agenda item.

The key objective to be achieved in the very near future is the establishment of an international mechanism for guaranteed for guaranteed and continuous funding of the plutonium disposition programme at all its implementation stages. We assume that, in accordance with the Okinawa Summit decisions, the actual work in this area will start soon.

One possible solution to the problem of partial compensation for nuclear disarmament costs would be "commercial" use of the Russian MOX fuel for electricity generation at NPPs in those countries which already have licenses to use such type of fuel, with subsequent return of irradiated MOX fuel back to Russia for safe storage. Such approach would allow to save budgeted funds of potential donor-countries of the programme and significantly reduce time for its implementation.

Mr. President,

We note the importance and relevance of the Agency's activities aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the IAEA safeguards system.

In March 2000 the Additional Protocol was signed by the Russian Federation, and we urge all States that have not yet concluded Additional Protocols to do so as soon as possible.

From the inception of the IAEA Russia has been actively participating in the technical cooperation programmes and projects by supplying Russian equipment, instruments and materials, by organizing and hosting in Russian institutions numerous interregional and regional training courses and by sharing experience with particular emphasis to training of local specialists from developing countries.

This September we are ready to contribute about 1 million US dollars for implementation of technical cooperation projects.

Mr. President,

One of the problems discussed at the Millennium Summit was the problem of new approaches to providing greater opportunities for young people. In the nuclear field the issue of maintaining knowledge and succession of generations is a serious one.

In this connection I would like to mention successful completion of the first International congress of young nuclear scientists and specialists held under the auspices of the IAEA in Bratislava this year.

In conclusion I would like to express hope that the borderline of two millenniums will become a turning point in the evolution of world nuclear power, and in the coming century mankind will be able, at last, to make full use of all its potential.

Thank you for attention.