

Statement of Miroslav LIPÁR  
Head of the Delegation of the Slovak Republic at the 44<sup>th</sup> Session of the General  
Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Mister President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman,

On behalf of the Slovak delegation I would like to join other delegations and congratulate Mr. Ibrahim Othman the Conference President on his election. Let me assure you, Mister President of the full support of the Slovak delegation in executing your responsible office. The Slovak delegation looks forward to work with you, with the distinguished delegates of the Member States, the Director General Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, and the IAEA Secretariat.

First of all I would like to welcome the approval of membership of Azerbaijan Central African Republic and Tadjigistan of the IAEA.

The Slovak delegation also joins the European Union statement presented by the representative from France on behalf of the European Union and Associated Countries. In addition I would like to highlight some facts which are of particular interest of my country.

Mister President, Distinguished Delegates,

In May the 6<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons took place. After difficult negotiations the Parties to the Treaty adopted the final document containing consensus views on how the provisions of the Treaty are fulfilled and what are the future challenges. The most remarkable result since 1985 have been achieved on how the disarmament provisions of the Treaty shall be fulfilled in the future.

The Conference also reconfirmed that the safeguards system is the fundamental pillar of the non-proliferation and that the IAEA is the competent authority with regard the verification regime and for assuring the compliance with the safeguards agreements.

Slovakia vigorously supports the IAEA's program on strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of safeguards to further enhance the Agency's ability to detect clandestine nuclear materials and activities. In September 1999, during the 43<sup>rd</sup> General conference of the IAEA, Slovakia signed a new Agreement with the IAEA for the Application of Safeguards in connection with the NPT and the Additional Protocol to this agreement. The appropriate steps to implement the provisions of the Additional protocol are under way parallel to the activities on to bring it into force for Slovakia.

We believe that the IAEA's safeguards system can also be greatly strengthened by the application of safeguards on the basis of universality. Along that line, at the March meeting this year the Board of Governors of the IAEA approved the text of the Additional Protocol

with the Russian Federation, whereby it joined other nuclear weapon states in fulfilling their pledges given in 1997. This is a promising fact for the NPT implementation and by that token Slovakia encourages all states, including those having other than full scope safeguards agreements, to apply the strengthened safeguards system and to conclude Additional Protocols to their safeguards agreements as soon as possible. In this regard my delegation commends the efforts of the Secretariat in negotiating and concluding Additional Protocols but there is still a lot of work ahead to be done when considering that 51 States still need to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements required under the Treaty's Article III.

With regard the process of conclusion of Additional Protocols, my delegation is of the view that the text of the protocols should correspond as much as possible with the wording of the Model Protocol approved by the IAEA Board of Governors in 1997.

On this subject I would like to inform about the implementation of the safeguards in Slovakia where six reactors and an interim spent fuel storage are in operation and one reactor is under decommissioning. All spent fuel from the decommissioned power plant has been transported back to the Russian Federation. The spent fuel from the power plants in operation is stored at the sites. Besides the nuclear fuel cycle, small quantities of nuclear material is used by about 70 so called "small users", mostly in form of radiation protection containers made of depleted uranium.

All nuclear facilities on the Slovak territory as well as all nuclear material are subject to IAEA full scope safeguards in accordance with the relevant safeguards agreement. In addition the Nuclear Regulatory Authority also performs inspections at above mentioned small users in accordance with the provisions of the Atomic Act.

An important part of the global non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is the verification of weapon origin fissile material. The NPT Conference welcomed the announcement of some nuclear weapon states on the cessation of the production of fissile material however we see no significant changes in positions against the past with regard a ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. For the credibility of future work on this task it is of the utmost importance that the process will be irreversible and the verification process is realised under the auspices of the IAEA. In this regard Slovakia continuously supports activities of the IAEA in making its expertise available for this purpose.

Further the NPT Review Conference reaffirmed the importance of the cessation of all nuclear weapon or any other nuclear test explosions. Despite of the growing number of ratifying states the CTBT does not entered into force yet. Therefore, we are consistently stressing the importance of the early entry into force of the CTBT and believe that States will be able to sign, and ratify the CTBT in particular those states whose ratification is a prerequisite for the entry into force.

Mister President, Distinguished Delegates,

Another important area for Slovakia is the safe use of nuclear energy. The Government of the Slovak Republic in January updated the energy strategy plan a part of which is the future role of nuclear energy. According to this concept nuclear energy will remain also in the medium term an important source of energy for Slovakia. I have to emphasise that the utmost important precondition for the use of nuclear energy is its safe use. Since the last General Conference the project on gradual reconstruction of the V-1 Nuclear Power Plant in Jaslovské Bohunice has been finalised in June. The present activities are focusing on to determine the status of implementation of safety improvements with respect to earlier IAEA recommendations. To demonstrate the improvements a specific Bohunice V-1 Safety Analyses Report after Gradual Reconstruction has been prepared by the operator and presented to the Nuclear Regulatory Authority with the aim to assess the overall safety impact of plant modifications. In addition Slovakia already invited an IAEA mission to the Bohunice V-1 plant for November 2000 with the aim to assess the implementation of the IAEA's recommendations for safety improvement and evaluate the fulfilment of safety functions.

Another important event was the start up of the second unit of the Mochovce nuclear power plant after an extensive safety upgrading program. The safety of the Mochovce NPP has been assessed besides the responsible national authorities also by a group of experts from France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Hungary in the framework of a PHARE project. The final report of this complex assessment, which took nearly two years, is positive. Also a revised report on the status of nuclear safety is under preparation by the Western European Nuclear Regulatory Association (so called WENRA group) in connection with the accession process of Slovakia to the European Union. The group of experts reviewed the legislative framework, status of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority (UJD) and the actual safety status of nuclear power plants.

Besides nuclear activities connected with the operation of NPPs there were extensive activities connected with the commissioning of radioactive waste treatment facilities. After the assessment of the safety documentation as well as the installations themselves, the responsible authorities issued their consent with the active testing of the Radioactive Waste Treatment Facility at the Bohunice site and of the National repository of radwaste at the Mochovce site. By this, major steps have been made in the direction of the safe and environmentally sound management of low and medium level radioactive waste. The Nuclear Regulatory Authority is planning to invite a follow up WATRP mission. With regard the spent nuclear fuel at present it is not considered as waste. Therefore conditions have been created to store safely the spent nuclear fuel for a medium term. Investigations are going on to find a safe repository, responsible to the environmental and accepted by the public.

In the area of radiation protection Slovakia actively participated in the development of the Action Plan on strengthening international co-operation in nuclear, radiation and waste safety including the document on the Categorisation of Radiation Sources and the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. These documents served as a basis for an updated act on the Public Health Protection which was already approved by the Slovak Government. The accidents in the management of radiation sources in the world needs further

attention of the international community including the implementation of the Action Plan. My delegation also supports the Agency's new service to Member States on Radiation Safety Regulatory Infrastructure and to review the application of Basic Safety Standards.

Mister President, Distinguished Delegates,

Since the last General Conference Slovakia continued with its co-operation in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy with more than 25 Member States and with a number of international organisations. One of the most important cooperation is the co-operation with the IAEA. At present Slovakia is cooperating with the IAEA in 6 national and in more than 20 regional projects. Like in previous years expert services of the Agency are still considered by the competent Slovak authorities as an essential part of international co-operation and transparency. In connection with the IAEA mission to the Bohunice V-1 nuclear power plant, the operator and the regulators as well, attaches great importance to this and is considered as a milestone in the gradual upgrading program of this plant. We consider continuously these kind of activities of the IAEA as an essential part of the safety related activities and as a support to the national regulatory decision making process. In this connection I would like, on behalf of the Government of the Slovak Republic, to express my sincere thanks to the Director General and the Secretariat for their support of nuclear safety related matters.

With regard to the future direction of the IAEA in this area the Slovak delegation fully supports the continuation of all IAEA safety services like OSART, IRRS, PROSPER etc. missions as an important step for implementation of IAEA safety standards. Such a need was also underlined by the 6<sup>th</sup> NPT Review Conference. The political arena should also recognise the value of IAEA safety standards as well as its peer reviews on compliance with these standards.

In addition more attention should be given to safety of other nuclear installations. There is a need to prepare safety standards for fuel cycle facilities similarly as it was done in other areas and to start services to review the safety status of such facilities.

Besides nuclear safety there are also other areas where a co-operation with the IAEA is successful. Since the last General Conference the IAEA organised in co-operation with the Slovak Government 4 workshops and a training course for experts of the region. Based on the positive feedback from the participants my government offers the Agency to be a host country for further activities of this kind. Because Slovak organisations have broad experiences in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy we are ready to accept fellows and scientific visitors for the purpose of exchange of experiences. With regard the national projects of co-operation a remarkable one is the project on Radiochemical Facilities for Producing Medical Radionuclides. This project is of the utmost importance for Slovakia and will be supported by national contribution in the amount of 1,45 mil USD during the next years. The first results of this project are now available. A positron emission camera (PET) camera have been installed as part of the overall project which is since August operated by a qualified personnel trained under the Agency's training and fellowship program.

In connection with the technical co-operation fund it is my pleasure to announce that the Government of the Slovak Republic has already decided to contribute to the TC Fund in the amount consistent with the assessed program costs including the voluntary contribution for the year 2001.

As mentioned before there is a broad co-operation with more than 25 countries on bilateral basis. Special attention is devoted to neighbouring countries. Regular meetings are organised with all neighbours on high level governmental experts to discuss questions of common interest in the area of peaceful uses of nuclear energy on regular bases. We consider these meetings as an essential part of developing co-operation and of the mutual confidence building measures. On this background I would like confirm the readiness of my government to continue and deepen a meaningful co-operation with all interested Member States of the IAEA.

Mister President, Distinguished Delegates,

Like other delegations my delegation would like draw the attention to the International Youth Nuclear Congress which took place in April in Bratislava Slovakia. During the four days of the Congress the following statement has been agreed by the participants I quote: "We, as representatives of the new generation of professionals in the nuclear field from 32 countries, agree to seize the opportunity of IYNC 2000 by creating an international network, the international Youth Nuclear Congress, to:

- develop new approaches to communicate benefits of nuclear power, as part of a balanced energy mix;
- promote further peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology for the welfare of mankind;
- transfer knowledge from the current generation of leading scientists to the next generation and across international boundaries" end of the quote.

In our view the present generation have the responsibility to make sure that the option of the use of nuclear energy will be open to future generations and that the necessary transfer of know how will be assured by appropriate national and international programs. We can see here a challenge also to the Agency in supporting activities like the International Youth Nuclear Congress. In the past the Agency already provided support for selected activities of the young generation but in addition we propose, that the Agency should develop a comprehensive program especially devoted to the co-operation with the young generation.

Mister President, Distinguished Delegates,

Finally, I would like to confirm the position of Slovakia on the issue of financing the technical co-operation and safeguards. In our opinion one of the main responsibility of Member States is to ensure that the Agency has the necessary human and financial resources to fulfil its statutory obligations. On this basis my delegation is ready to support the proposals on the financing of the technical co-operation and on the financing of safeguards. In our view

the proposals are containing sufficient flexibility for Member States to meet their responsibilities and consider them as a good basis for reaching consensus on these matters hopefully during this Conference.

Mister President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your attention.