

STATEMENT

by

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**Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
Chairman of the State Commission
of the Republic of Azerbaijan on cooperation with IAEA**

**at the 46th General Conference
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Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to take the floor at the forty-sixth regular session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. I avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate the President of the Conference and the Vice-Presidents on their election to these high and responsible positions and to wish them success in their work. I would like to thank distinguished Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, the IAEA Director General for his comprehensive and exhaustive report on the Agency's work in 2001. Allow me also to congratulate the representatives of the Kyrgyz Republic, the State of Eritrea, and the Seychelles on the occasion of the accession of these States to IAEA.

Mr. President,

Azerbaijan actively participates in the efforts of international community to ensure the observance of international regime of nuclear security in the framework of relevant obligations

and takes steps aimed at its consolidation. Our policy in this field is based on the principles of international cooperation and openness.

As a country located in the area of critical sensitivity to many threats and risks, connected also with nuclear danger, Azerbaijan attaches special importance to the control over peaceful use of nuclear energy. Being a consistent supporter of comprehensive nuclear disarmament Azerbaijan has acceded to a number of international treaties and agreements on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which was legalized through relevant Laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan. These international instruments include the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

The non-nuclear strategy of Azerbaijan has been reflected in the initiative to establish a nuclear weapon-free-zone in the South Caucasus put forward by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Heydar Aliyev in 1997. Unfortunately, at present this initiative cannot be put into practice due to harmful policy of Armenia, which has committed military aggression against Azerbaijan and occupied twenty percent of the territory of my country.

In view of this occupation, our international borders passing through the occupied territories are beyond the control of the Government of Azerbaijan, which has resulted in a rapid grow of danger of illegal trafficking of nuclear materials in our unstable region. Vigorous steps have been taken in recent years by Azerbaijan to provide training and to supply technical equipment to border, customs, sanitary and quarantine services to prevent illegal movement of nuclear and radioactive materials. However, these measures cannot be fully effective until a substantial part of the territory and external borders of Azerbaijan continues to be under foreign military occupation.

At present the issue of terrorism, including also of nuclear terrorism, has attained special significance. On numerous occasions Azerbaijan has presented at international forums, including also at the forty-fifth session of the General Conference, its principled position towards all manifestations of terrorism. Azerbaijan has made a practical contribution to the fight against this evil in the period of antiterrorist operation of the international community in Afghanistan.

Taking into account close links established between the Armenia-sponsored separatist regime in the occupied Azerbaijani territories and the international terrorist organizations, the problem of uncontrolled borders and territories is becoming even more acute, in particular in view of growing nuclear risks, connected with terrorism.

In the period of aggression against my country the Armenian terrorist groups have committed thirty-two terrorist acts aimed at Azerbaijan and its peaceful population. More than two thousand people have been killed, tens of thousand wounded. The terrorist acts have been carried out in underground, buses, trains, sea vessels.

In the light of the ongoing armed conflict with Armenia, the resumption of operation at the "Metsamor" nuclear power plant in Armenia, which is located in a seismic zone and close to the borders with Azerbaijan causes very serious concern. I would like to draw the attention of distinguished delegates to the issue of tracking the movement of radioactive wastes from this nuclear power plant, which according to some information, are deployed for burial in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Mr. President,

Azerbaijan is determined to continue to further develop its multifaceted cooperation with IAEA, which it joined in May of 2001.

In 1998, Azerbaijan signed the NPT Safeguards Agreement and the attached Protocol, and in 2000 we signed the Additional Protocol. Azerbaijan has passed the Law on Radiation Protection of Population and a number of other pieces of legislation establishing the legal basis for activities and liability with regard to radioactive sources and materials and their wastes.

The visit of IAEA Director General Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei to Azerbaijan in May of this year has become an important milestone in the development of our relations with IAEA. At the meeting with the Director General, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan has noted major importance of cooperation with such an authoritative international organization as IAEA and raised a number of issues important for us, which could be settled with the help of the Agency.

With the aim to further expand and deepen our relations with the Agency the President of Azerbaijan has issued a decree to set up the State Commission on cooperation between Azerbaijan and IAEA and appointed me as a Deputy Prime-Minister of Azerbaijan to be its Chairman.

The priority dimensions for our cooperation with the Agency are the improvement of radiation safety system, the radioactive sources safety system used in industry and medicine. We hope that our projects presented to IAEA on improvement of radiological treatment in the field of oncology, fight against illegal trafficking of radioactive materials and other projects will be considered positively.

Launching monitoring of the territory of Azerbaijan aimed at finding radioactive wastes, determining a degree of pollution of ground, environment, waters of Araz and Kur rivers, utilization and burial of radioactive wastes are very important issues for us at present. We rely on the assistance of IAEA in solving all of these issues.

The question of personnel training is of particular importance. Our experts have been taking part in the IAEA organized training events since 1995. Nevertheless, we continue to experience demand in the increase of IAEA's assistance in training experts in application of modern technical means of detecting nuclear and radioactive materials, doctors-radiologists in the field of oncology.

In conclusion, I would like to express my hope for intensification of our cooperation with IAEA and other international organizations aimed at speedy and comprehensive solution of the above-mentioned problems and their root causes. I believe that the Agency's assistance will make its significant contribution to the advancement of Azerbaijan along the path of implementing its non-nuclear development strategy.

Thank you.