

STATEMENT

by

**Mr. Andris Eglajs
Chairman, Radiation Safety Board
Latvia**

**at the 46th General Conference
of the International Atomic Energy Agency
Vienna, 16 September 2002**

Mr. President,

The Latvian delegation is pleased to join others in congratulating you on your election as Conference President. We wish You and the Bureau every success in guiding the work of our conference.

I would also like to stress that we associate ourselves with the statement of the Denmark on behalf of European Union and we strongly encourage the initiatives that this statement comprises.

May I also take this opportunity to welcome the State of Eritrea, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Seychelles as the new members of the Agency.

I would also like to express our best wishes to the Agency and its Director General in relation to 45th anniversary, which Agency celebrated on 29 July this year.

Mr. President,

I will speak about significant events in Latvia especially related to decommissioning activities and the issue of spent fuel management, as well strengthening of security regime for all radiation sources in the country.

The Radiation Safety Centre was established in July last year. Since then it has grown and has developed its capacity to meet all tasks imposed by the Parliament.

Implementation of CPF for Latvia

Mr. President,

We work closely together with the Department of Technical Co-operation to enhance our cooperation and transfer of experience in main priority areas. Like in the past years, we pledge full contribution to the technical co-operation fund. For several years Latvia provides additional voluntary contributions for priority national projects. We have also exercised cost-sharing and regard this as a good practice.

Medical Applications

Mr. President,

In line with the Country Programme Framework, Latvia submitted a request for a technical co-operation project for feasibility studies for the use of Positron Emission Tomography. Within regional technical co-operation project we upgraded knowledge of medical experts and also enhanced the main cancer treatment centre in Latvia.

Decommissioning of Latvia's Research Reactor and Management of Spent Nuclear Fuel

Mr. President,

During this year Latvia gained experience in a number of new activities. We started international bidding for full scope decommissioning and dismantling of our research reactor. We expect to sign contract before end of this year. First important step that must be finished next year is the spent fuel management. Moreover, currently we deal with environmental impact assessment related to all aspects of decommissioning.

Radioactive waste management

Mr. President,

This last statement leads to another issue - we are approaching the first peer-review conference under the Joint Convention. We are working on the Radioactive Waste Management Strategy. In that document we have included activities to enhance radioactive waste management system. This system is in operation for more than 40 years. We would like to establish new long term storage for disused sealed sources and we are ready to start feasibility studies for deep geological disposal option.

We are aware of complicity of this issue. Because of lack of international solution for long lived sources and small amounts of high activity waste, there is no other option for small countries with limited uses of atomic energy as to assess whether there is any possibility to build the geological disposal in the country. With this respect we would strongly support any activity which could provide internationally accepted solution.

Non proliferation and combat of illicit trafficking

Mr. President,

Latvia's past activities have clearly shown that we regard Non-proliferation as one of the highest priorities. Latvia supports resolutions in this field endorsed by the last General

Conference. We believe that the area of combat of illicit trafficking of radioactive and nuclear material, combat of nuclear and radiological terrorism could serve as a good basis for cooperation, as these issues are of importance both for the developing and the developed countries.

We are pleased to announce that Latvia's first national report under the Model protocol aimed to strengthen international safeguards regime was submitted to the Agency in May this year. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to countries that render their assistance in the field of non-proliferation and combat of terrorism, especially Denmark, Sweden and USA.

Mr. President, in conclusion, let me state that Latvia offers its continued cooperation to the IAEA to support the Agency in its efforts.

Thank you, Mr. President!