

## **STATEMENT**

**by**

**The Head of the Delegation  
of the Kingdom of the Netherlands,  
H.E. Ambassador Jaap Ramaker**

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

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Mr. President,

May I first of all congratulate His Excellency Mr. Hatta Rajasa, Minister for Research and Technology of Indonesia on his election as President of the 46<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the IAEA. The delegation of the Netherlands will fully support him in his work. I would also like to join others in welcoming Eritrea, Kyrgyz and the Seychelles as new members of the Agency. Furthermore, the Netherlands fully endorses the statement made by Denmark on behalf of the European Union and the Associated Countries earlier this session. I limit myself therefore to some additional remarks of particular relevance to the Netherlands.

Mr. President,

A year has now passed since the horrendous terrorist attacks on the United States of America. We all have cruelly been reminded of the sad fact that we live in a world that continues to be a dangerous place. Much has been accomplished in the fight against terrorism since then. But much remains to be done. There should be no complacency. We have to tackle the new challenges we are facing also here in the IAEA. In our work here we should constantly be open for new points of view, approach the new situation with an open

mind and creatively. So no ideological straightjackets; no old answers to new questions, but rather, whenever possible, exploring new avenues so as to find the right answers to the security problems we are confronted with in today's world.

Mr. President,

Last year's attacks have also strengthened our conviction that safety and security in the nuclear field are essential prerequisites for co-operation in this field. In the framework of the Agency we have to ask ourselves the central question: how can we possibly strengthen international co-operation, if we are not convinced that co-operation takes place in a verifiably safe security environment where mutual trust prevails? This is where a balance should be struck. Co-operation of any kind, with any state, in any nuclear field, requires a safe and secure nuclear environment underpinned by a fully effective safeguards regime. The Netherlands measures all activities of the IAEA by one yardstick; the standard of integrated safeguards as this was developed over the last decade by the Agency and its members. We have, regrettably, quite some way to go in strengthening the global system of nuclear non proliferation. Not in the least this should also be achieved through promoting universal adherence to both the comprehensive and the additional protocol components of the existing safeguards regime. Disappointing as a lack of progress in this area may be, this does not diminish the importance of the safeguards regime as the yardstick for co-operation, both substantially and financially.

Mr. President,

This balance can evidently only exist as long as the IAEA ensures the continuation of the fulfilment of its statutory obligations as its central goal. Instead, years of zero growth, a disappointing record of payment of contributions and the current often quoted balance have taken the IAEA –and I quote DG ElBaradei- "close to being unable to provide credible safeguards". If that central goal is at risk, as it is now, that in itself threatens to undermine the very foundation for further co-operation. We have to avoid the risk that - when safeguards are no longer adequately financed - voluntary contributions to ensure an adequate co-operation programme may no longer be as readily forthcoming from an already relatively small group of donors, as was the case thusfar.

Mr. President,

We believe the traditional balance between safeguards and technical co-operation too static a concept. In our view the traditional concept of balance is not a very effective tool for advancing the work of the Agency. It unnecessarily tends placing Member States in two opposing camps. It stands in the way of a real one-house-approach. Both safeguards and technical co-operation are, after all, in everyone's interest. Instead the Netherlands favours flexibility between budgets, result-based budgeting and a better insight in the cost of management and support in the regular budget for Technical Co-operation. It has become increasingly clear to us that we need a fundamental debate on the effective use of the necessarily scarce financial resources available in the IAEA budget. Thus we could arrive at a new conceptual relationship between the twin objectives of international security and technical co-operation in the nuclear field which would be to the benefit of us all.

Mr. President,

There seems to be a general acceptance of the idea that the Technical Co-operation Fund should be increased beyond the 74.1 million dollars originally agreed. The Netherlands is not in favour of such an increase. We note that Member States have not fulfilled their commitment in at least achieving the Rate of Attainment in the Technical Co-operation Fund. We are also concerned that many States are far behind in paying their assessed programme cost. Nevertheless we did not want to block an agreement obviously favoured by most other Member States. While remaining committed to the Agencies Technical Co-operation activities the Netherlands will continue to monitor the situation carefully.

Mr. President,

The situation in Iraq remains a major concern for the Netherlands. We hope that the letter that was received by the Secretary General of the United Nations yesterday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, in which Iraq promises to allow the return of inspectors without conditions, will turn out to be a first step towards a full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. President,

The Anti Nuclear Terrorism Fund needs to be sufficiently funded. Its 'rate of attainment' –if I may use that notion in this connection- rests at the moment on the shoulders of an even smaller group of contributors than that of the Technical Co-operation Fund. One would imagine, however, that the activities financed by either fund should rank high on the priority lists of Member States. There seems to be, in our view, a moral obligation to contribute which equally applies to both Funds. My delegation commends the Secretariat for the speed with which it conceived the Action Plan against Nuclear Terrorism. The Plan has acquired a purpose and direction that is fully supported by the Netherlands. Attention is rightly given to concrete and practical steps that could quickly provide an enhanced protection of nuclear materials and its safe and secure storage. In that context also, the recent co-operation between the United States of America, the Russian Federation, Yugoslavia, IAEA and the Nuclear Threat Initiative is welcomed by my delegation.

Mr. President,

The Netherlands continues to believe that the activities of the Action Plan against Nuclear Terrorism should be financed under the Regular Budget. Nevertheless, the urgency of the present situation warrants in our view an extra impulse for the Anti Nuclear Terrorism Fund. The Netherlands has therefore decided to double its contribution originally pledged, adding another 250,000 Euro to the earlier announced sum of 250,000 Euro thus bringing our contribution to a sum total of 500.000 Euro. The first instalment of our increased contribution will be made available to the Agency in the coming weeks.

Mr. President,

We note with increasing uneasiness the ongoing efforts to try and amend the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials. That in the course of the negotiations the scope of such an amendment has tended to become severely limited while at the same time a lack of progress can be observed in finalising this process does not augur well. In our view pragmatic and concrete approaches in the field of Physical Protection promise to be a more fruitful path. We support, therefore, the efforts of the

Agency aimed at strengthening the Physical Protection Regime through practical steps, based on existing rules, regulations and guidelines, rather than efforts aimed at drafting an amendment to the Convention.

Mr. President,

The Netherlands attaches considerable importance to improving control on sealed highly radioactive sources. Research shows that in the past 50 years, within the European Union alone, approximately 500,000 radioactive sources of this kind have been distributed to different end-users. Of these about a 100,000 are still in use today. It is expected that for 30,000 sources that are no longer used there is a serious risk that they will escape control. Within the EU work is going on at present to strengthen the control of these sources. The Netherlands calls on the IAEA to address this issue as well, and where desirable co-operate with the EU in this area.

Mr. President,

As you may know, the only remaining nuclear power plant in the Netherlands, in Borssele, was ordered by two successive governments to shut down, earlier than originally foreseen, by the end of 2003. However, the new government, which took office in the beginning of August, has agreed to postpone closure of this power-plant, as it said "taking into account the Kyoto obligations, it would not be sensible to close Borssele prematurely". The new Cabinet will consult with the owner of the plant in order to seek an agreement on continuing the operation of the plant taking into account its economic and technical lifetime.

Mr. President,

The Netherlands is concerned about the ageing of the nuclear professionals in a number of Western countries including my own. We see an increasing danger that essential knowledge and expertise in the nuclear field will be insufficiently available in future. Maintaining and developing knowledge in this area is of utmost importance, not only for the continuation of existing nuclear programmes, but also for safe decommissioning of plants, safe storage of waste and adequate countering of the effects of possible nuclear accidents. The Netherlands therefore calls on the IAEA to implement as soon as possible the

conclusions and recommendations formulated by the meeting on Managing Nuclear Knowledge held during the month June 2002.

Mr President,

The Netherlands listened with great interest to the announcement by the Head of the Delegation of Cuba, yesterday, to the effect that Cuba has decided to adhere to the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This further step towards the universality of the NPT is indeed a very welcome one.

Thank you, Mr. President.