

STATEMENT

by

**Ambassador Arne Walther
Head of the Norwegian Delegation**

**at the 46th General Conference
of the International Atomic Energy Agency
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Mr. President,

On behalf of the Norwegian delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the 46th IAEA General Conference, and to wish you every success in your task. I would also like to compliment Director General Dr. ElBaradei and his staff on the excellent and highly professional way they are managing this Conference. It is not without reason that the IAEA is often referred to as one of the best run agencies in the UN family. My delegation joins others in welcoming Eritrea, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Seychelles as new members of the IAEA

Norway is happy to associate itself with the statement made by Denmark on behalf of the European Union. Let me highlight some perspectives of particular interest to my country.

Nuclear terrorism

The tragic events of 11 September last year, and reports suggesting that some groups may be planning more terrorist acts involving “dirty bombs”, are alarming and demand our collective concern. We cannot rule out the possibility of nuclear terrorism. The Norwegian delegation joins other delegations in fully supporting the Agency’s action plan to combat nuclear terrorism.

Norway has contributed USD 130 000 to activities under the Action Plan's subprogramme K6 on nuclear and radiation emergencies. We have made experts available to the Agency. We urge member states to take steps at national level to keep nuclear and radioactive material secure and to be prepared for emergencies.

Nuclear and radiological emergencies in one country, including those resulting from acts of terrorism, can have consequences that cover a wide geographical area, crossing borders and affecting other states. International cooperation is required to deal with such international emergencies. The Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency form a good basis for such cooperation. The implementation of these conventions needs to be strengthened and enhanced.

As a first step, the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority convened, in agreement with the IAEA Secretariat, a meeting for interested parties in Oslo in May this year. The meeting prepared a plan of action for competent authorities and international organizations to follow up on the most important recommendations from the first meeting of competent authorities held in Vienna in June 2001. We strongly encourage other competent authorities to nominate experts to the working groups that have been set up. We are contributing human and financial resources to help carry out the short- and long-term tasks that will be identified by the groups.

Norway will present a draft resolution in the Committee of the Whole today on the enhanced implementation of the Conventions on Assistance and Early Notification. Since the last resolution on this topic in 2000, important work has been done. We hope for broad support for the resolution.

Iraq

Let me echo the concern mentioned in the EU intervention that the IAEA has been unable to provide any assurances regarding Iraq's compliance with its obligations as laid down in the relevant Security Council resolutions. As regards the recent developments, it is the hope of my Government that the letter from Iraq's Foreign Minister to the UN Secretary-General will lead to such assurances being provided.

Radiological protection

Radiological protection frameworks have traditionally focused on protecting people. In recent years, there has been increasing pressure to explicitly demonstrate that the environment is sufficiently protected from the harmful effects of radiation. There is a clear need to develop a framework for the protection of the environment from ionizing radiation. The IAEA can play an important role in this work. Norway fully supports the omnibus resolution on “Measures to Strengthen International Cooperation in Nuclear, Radiation and Waste Safety”.

Challenges in Russia

Among Norway's main concerns in the area of nuclear safety are the challenges in neighbouring northwestern Russia. Russia today is faced with the necessity of decommissioning and dismantling a large number of nuclear-powered naval vessels and of safely conditioning and storing the radioactive waste and spent fuel. This requires a completely new infrastructure and huge investments. Norway is participating in a number of projects in the region in close co-operation with the Russian authorities.

A strategy for nuclear clean-up in Russia is being drawn up and discussed in cooperation with the Russian authorities within the Contact Expert Group (CEG) under the auspices of the Agency. One of the CEG's main objectives is to foster support and assistance by potential donors for spent nuclear fuel and waste clean up of the Andreyev Bay nuclear waste storage site in the Murmansk region. Norway has already started several infrastructure projects in the Andreyev Bay on a bilateral basis.

Since 1999 Norway, the United States, the European Commission and a number of countries in the European Union have been working to establish a multilateral legal framework for assistance to nuclear safety projects in Russia through the MNEPR agreement. This agreement will be vital for the multilateral funding and implementation of larger nuclear clean-up projects in the region, like the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund under the EU and the EBRD, and the G8 Global Partnership Programme. We hope that the MNEPR agreement will be successfully concluded as soon as possible.

We would echo the importance underlined by US Secretary of Energy, Mr. Abraham, of new and expanded cooperation projects to address non-proliferation, disarmament, counter-terrorism, and nuclear safety issues. Norway welcomes the newly established G8 Global Partnership which will contribute up to USD 20 billion for such projects. We are willing to cooperate with the Partnership on nuclear safety- and security projects in Russia.

Marine environment

Norway is a coastal nation dependent on sustainable harvesting of living marine resources and on the confidence of the markets in the quality of these products. The 1998 agreement under the Oslo-Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Northeast Atlantic, OSPAR, provides for progressive and substantial reductions in discharges of radionuclides into the ocean. Norway welcomes the fact that several parties under the OSPAR Convention have now submitted their national plans for achieving the objectives of the OSPAR Strategy with regard to radioactive substances. We are, however, concerned that the national strategies submitted so far indicate that the reductions may be delayed several years. Discharges of radionuclides, such as technetium 99 from reprocessing facilities, would remain high or even increase for several years before reductions are implemented, even though the ultimate aim is to virtually end radioactive discharges to the sea in 2020. We urge the relevant member states, which are also parties to the important OSPAR Convention, to take the necessary measures to reduce their discharges of technetium 99 and other radioactive substances to the marine environment sooner rather than later.

Marine transport

The safety and security of transport of radioactive material are of great importance, not least because such transport is a potential target for terrorist acts. As a coastal nation, Norway has a clear interest in being consulted by shipping states and operators prior to the shipment of radioactive material. We are also concerned about the effectiveness of liability mechanisms in the event of an accident or incident during the transport of radioactive material. Norway therefore calls for further efforts to strengthen the measures and rules relevant to the maritime transport of radioactive material.

Non-proliferation and nuclear safety

Norway attaches great importance to the Agency's efforts to enhance nuclear non-proliferation. The Model Additional Protocol is an important contribution to this endeavour. It strengthens the effectiveness of the comprehensive IAEA safeguards system. The Additional Protocol to our Safeguards Agreement entered into force in May 2000. I am pleased that the Agency has decided to introduce the system of Integrated Safeguards in Norway, making us the second country after Australia to use this system.

Our Director General has noted that Additional Protocols have entered into force for only 28 States. We urge more countries to sign additional protocols and to speed up their ratification procedures, so as to make the enhanced safeguards system as universal as possible.

Export control is also of vital importance in the work for non-proliferation. The requirement of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group of full-scope safeguards as a condition of supply is a major step forward. National implementation of export controls is an important means of preventing non-state actors and terrorists from acquiring sensitive nuclear materials and technology. Norway has taken several steps at national level to strengthen our export control system.

Legal instruments

The Agency must continue to play a leading international role in managing and implementing legal instruments in the nuclear, radiation and radioactive waste safety fields.

Norway participated in the second review meeting of the contracting parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. We are happy to note that several countries have achieved substantial safety improvements since the first review meeting. We consider the convention and its review process to be important instruments in enhancing international nuclear safety.

The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, is another important legal instrument. We look forward to participating in the first review meeting, which is to be held in 2003.

The security of nuclear facilities-, and materials, and other radioactive materials, is a matter of great concern to us all. The exchange of information and strong international instruments are very important. We strongly support the work being done to amend and strengthened the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials. We hope that the open-ended group of legal and technical experts set up to prepare a draft amendment to the convention will soon conclude its work successfully.

Technical Cooperation

Finally, Mr President, let me confirm Norway's continued support to the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF). We urge all countries to pay their assessed contribution in full and on time. The projects under the TCF are of vital importance to the recipient countries concerned. The programmes are part of a global effort to create a better balance between countries with regard to technical development. The main focus of the Fund's activities should be on nuclear applications in fields such as agriculture, water resource management, human health and medicine. Nuclear power projects should concentrate on safety, security and the problems of waste and spent fuel.