

STATEMENT

by

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of

Turkey

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of the International Atomic Energy Agency
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Mr. President,

I shall begin my words by congratulating you and the members of the bureau and extend the Turkish Delegations best wishes for a successful completion of the Conference under your able guidance.

It is a special pleasure for me to extend a warm welcome to the State of Eritrea, Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Seychelles which have recently become members of the Agency.

It would be only fair to express our appreciation to the Director General Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei whose able leadership made an invaluable contribution to the achievements and the success of the Agency over the last year.

Mr. President,

The recent World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg set numerous targets and timetables for action on a wide range of issues. Among those, there are a number of issues which can be addressed by the utilization of nuclear science and technology.

In this framework, we believe that the Agency is well equipped to contribute to the Plan of Implementation document adopted in Johannesburg which contains many aspects of the Agenda 21 and UN Millenium Declaration goals.

With its experince and accumulation of knowledge the Agency has an important role to play in the realization of these goals provided that it is given the necessary means.

Mr. President,

Turkey fully endorses the objectives of INPRO to support the safe, sustainable, cost effective and proliferation resistant use of nuclear technology to meet the energy needs of the 21st century, while engaging both the technology holders and the users. In this context, We have noted with appreciation the progress made by INPRO Member States, together with IAEA over the last year in the implementation of this project.

We also welcome the recent publication of the joint study on the Innovative Nuclear Reactor Development by IAEA, Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD and International Energy Agency and support all efforts to enhance the co-operation between INPRO and the Generation IV Project.

Mr.President,

Turkey has always supported Agency's efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and the verification mechanisms.

In this regard I would like to express our satisfaction with the Agency's conclusion for 2001 that the nuclear material and other items placed under safeguards remained in peaceful activities or adequately accounted for.

However, this outcome does not establish a complete immunity from the risks of proliferation of nuclear weapons. Thus, the universal application of the Agency's safeguards measures is of paramount importance.

Turkey has already concluded the Additional Protocol with the IAEA and made its initial declaration.

However, we believe that the pace of overall progress with regard to the conclusion and entry into force of safeguards agreements and additional protocols remained slow.

Turkey considers the safeguards regime of the Agency to be a main supporting pillar of the global efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In this context, Turkey views the failure of DPRK to implement fully its safeguards agreement with the IAEA as a serious source of concern .

Mr. President,

Turkey has repeatedly called on Iraq to allow the resumption of the UN inspections and to implement in full all relevant Security Council resolutions.

Now, we have learnt that Iraq has decided to allow the return of the UN weapons inspectors without conditions.

Iraq's decision could be a step in the right direction and we hope that the Government of Iraq will fully cooperate with the United Nations to fulfill all its obligations under the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions without delay.

Mr. President,

Concerning further activities supporting the non-proliferation regime, we have been actively participating in the open-ended expert meetings and have been stressing the need to widen the scope of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material to include domestic use, storage and transport.

In this regard, we hope that the contracting parties to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material will be able to reach a consensus on the draft protocol to amend the convention at the earliest convenience.

I am pleased to inform the General Conference that Turkey has recently applied to take advantage of the International Physical Protection Advisory Service of the Agency in 2003, with the aim of evaluating its national regulations and applications in the field of physical protection of nuclear materials and nuclear facilities.

Mr. President,

Another issue related to non-proliferation activities is the fight against illicit trafficking of nuclear materials. In this field, Turkey continues to upgrade its capabilities to better counter the dangers posed by illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials.

Already a number of Turkish border points are equipped with radiation detection systems, as part of an ongoing joint project with the United States. Installation of detection systems at other custom entries are also envisaged and an action plan to that effect is underway.

Mr. President,

Last year General Conference was held under solemn gravity of the tragic events of September 11. Our only consolation in the aftermath of those heinous attacks is that the Agency, together with the member states, took a prompt response against the threat of nuclear terrorism and the lessons learned from those tragic events have been embodied in the Agency's three years programme.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Director General and the Secretariat for their efforts to implement this programme.

The transnational nature of terrorism puts all nations in jeopardy. It is no secret that terrorists have long been trying to acquire nuclear weapons and material. Therefore, we believe that every radioactive source or nuclear material deserve maximum security. We also believe that, since the nature of threat is global, to counter this threat cooperation at international and regional levels is vital more than ever.

Cognizant of the importance of international cooperation against the threat of terrorism, Turkey has pledged a number of in-kind contributions in support of the Agency's programme for protection against nuclear terrorism. Within this framework, we have offered the facilities of the Turkish Atomic Energy Authority for regional training courses and seminars to be organized by the Agency. Turkey has also offered the organization of training programmes and provision of experts in the fields of radiation protection and illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive materials.

Turkey, furthermore, offered the utilization of the Çekmece Nuclear Research and Training Center's laboratories for sample preparation and destructive analysis of seized nuclear materials.

Mr. President,

Safety of nuclear and radioactive materials remain to be a priority issue for the international community. There is no doubt that the credibility of nuclear technology is very much dependent on the strength of the safety measures.

Turkey welcomes the Agency's efforts to promote high and desired levels of nuclear safety worldwide and is very pleased with the progress being made in revising the safety standards.

Orphan radioactive sources pose a serious threat to public health and carry the risk of potential malicious acts. Hence, the problem of orphan sources require prompt attention and international cooperation in order to establish preventive measures to respond to radiological emergencies.

In the field of human health and safety, Turkey strongly supports the international action plan for radiological protection of patients and welcomes the Implementation of the Revised Action Plan for the Safety and Security of Radiation Sources.

Mr. President,

Turkey has actively participated in the international action plan developed for the radiological emergency incident in Georgia and provided in kind contribution to Georgian authorities by delivering portable radiation detectors and cost-free expert support for training activities held in Tbilisi.

Turkey firmly believes that another important priority area is the safe transport of nuclear and radioactive materials. We welcome the progress made in the field of transport safety as envisaged in the 45th General Conference Resolution. Turkey also welcomes the agreement reached on the programme of the International Conference on Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material to be held in 2003.

Turkey furthermore encourages the Director General to report the results of this Conference to the 47th General Conference. We believe that the Conference will constitute an important event in further examining and developing measures for safe transport of radioactive material.

TranSAS missions are very important for the evaluation of national regulations and useful in creating an atmosphere of confidence . Upon the request of Turkey, the Secretariat has sent a pre-mission in October 2001 and TranSAS mission to Turkey is scheduled for 2003.

Mr. President,

Turkey has been actively participating in IAEA Regional Project entitled Harmonization and Strengthening of Regional Preparedness and Response for Nuclear Emergencies.

While participating in these projects, Turkey has evaluated and restructured its organizational and legal infrastructure by considering IAEA recommendations and international experience.

In order to strengthen the regional early notification capabilities, Turkey has signed bi-lateral early notification agreements with some neighboring countries and continue negotiating with some others. In addition, Turkey has initiated an early notification agreement among the Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organization countries.

An area of continuing concern is the safety of research reactors. Turkey welcomes the Agency's initiation of a range of measures towards the establishment of a comprehensive, internationally accepted safety regime for research reactors.

Turkey has actively participated in the preparation of a Code of Conduct on the safety of research reactors and believes that once completed this Code of Conduct will contribute to the desirable levels of safety in the management of research reactors.

Mr. President,

Turkey is pleased to note that the 2nd Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties of Nuclear Safety Convention was a success. Turkey welcomes the amendments for the rules and guidelines and recommendations made by the individual working groups.

The number of participants and the quality of the national reports clearly indicate the interest and special importance attached by the Contracting Parties to achieve and maintain a higher level of nuclear safety worldwide.

Mr. President,

Both as a recipient and donor country, Turkey attaches utmost importance to the Technical Co-operation activities of the Agency and considers them as an important element in the sustainable development process. I am pleased to express once again the satisfaction of the Turkish Authorities with the progress achieved both in national and regional projects concerning Turkey in the year 2001. However, we believe that there is still work to be done on both sides to increase the implementation rates of these projects.

In this context, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate the performance of Technical Cooperation Department despite the heavy work load, increased number of recipient countries and limitations on resources.

Turkey would like to reiterate its support to the introduction of central criterion approach and we are very pleased to note that the project requests submitted for the 2003-2004 technical co-operation programme show that nearly 70% of the requests from all regions fulfill this central criterion.

Turkey believes that the reduction of the project requests would eventually lead to a more focused and streamlined work and would have a positive impact on the coordination and management of the projects for the Agency and the relevant member state.

Mr. President,

In the field of radiation protection, several national and regional training programs have been conducted by Turkish Atomic Energy Authority and we believe that we have made significant progress for the establishment of a fully operational regulatory system compatible with the principal requirements of the International Basic Safety Standards.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the importance of pledges and payments to the Technical Co-operation Fund and welcome the recent consensus of Member States' on Technical Co-operation Fund target values for 2003-2004 and indicative planning figures for 2005-2006.

In this context, I have the pleasure to announce that Turkey is pledging a total of 314,698 US dollars to the Technical Cooperation Fund for the year 2003.

Thank you for your attention.