

STATEMENT

**by the Head of Croatian Delegation Dr. Zdenko Franic, Deputy Minister of
Science and Technology, to the 47th General Conference of the IAEA**

Mr. President,

Let me join the distinguished colleagues in congratulating you on your election as the President of the 47th General Conference of the IAEA. Confident that under your guidance the Conference will accomplish its work successfully I would like to assure you of the full support of the Croatian delegation in this task.

At the outset, on behalf of the Republic of Croatia I wish to express deepest sorrow for the death of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello as a victim of barbaric terrorist attack in Baghdad and to convey condolences to the Government of the Republic of Brazil and to his family. Through his long-term work in the UN Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello was always appreciated as one of the most distinguished officials, an exceptional expert devoted to his duties. This act of terror that took lives of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello and other people in the honorable mission of peace in Iraq just strengthened the devotion of the whole UN family, within which Croatia firmly stands, to establish security and peace.

Unfortunately today, two years after the tragic September 11, a terrorist attack that went behind human mind, we are still facing the growing threats of terrorism. Although much has been done in fighting that evil this battle must remain among priorities of each and every state in the future. In this respect, the Agency proved to be an indispensable institution and its activities and role valuable more than ever.

Mr. President,

Having signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union, Croatia has opened a new, already intensively undergoing, dimension of mutual cooperation. Sharing common values and standpoints with the European countries, Croatia associates itself with the statement delivered by the Republic of Italy on behalf of the European Union and acceding and associated countries.

Mr. President,

In the period from the last year's General Conference the Agency was facing rising challenges in the NPT domain. Dramatic development in the Republic of Iraq, DPRK issue and the implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran required extraordinary of the Agency but at the same time proved its importance. With sincere hope for the positive outcome of these issues to the benefit of those countries and the whole international community, it is our common obligation to give all necessary support to the Agency in the fulfillment of its task.

Recognizing the importance of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols in today's challenging control of the peaceful use of the nuclear energy and confidence building, the Republic of Croatia was one of the first countries where the Additional Protocol with the Agency entered into force. In this respect we are welcoming Cuba's conclusion of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement as well as Island's and Cuba's conclusions of the Additional Protocol. I would also like to take this opportunity, especially having in mind Director General's report stressing slow progress, to call upon the member states that have not yet concluded or ratified the safeguards agreements and additional protocols to do so.

Croatia was also one of the first ten countries that completed the internal legal procedure for the acceptance of the amendment of the Article VI, confirming once again its full support and devotion to the successful work of the Agency. We are inviting the member states that have not yet ratified the Article VI to accelerate their internal procedures in order to enable its early entry into force.

Mr. President,

Beside the mentioned very important safeguards component of the Agency work, Croatia attaches equal importance to all other non-safeguards activities of the Agency. As for many other recipient countries, technical co-operation plays extremely important role for Croatia facilitating the transfer and implementation of nuclear knowledge and practice. Close and successful cooperation between Croatia and the Agency that exists today has reflected especially within the framework of the Agency's Technical Co-operation Program that is operating intensively and successfully.

Being a net recipient country, Croatia expresses its gratitude for provided assistance through a wide range of concluded and ongoing projects which have made positive impact in the various fields of peaceful use of nuclear energy. I have to underline here an unique project currently underway in Croatia, examining the usage of the nuclear technology in the field of land mine detection, whose possible positive results might contribute strongly to the de-mining process worldwide.

For this biennium (2003-2004) all six proposed Croatian projects, ranging from medicine applications to combating illicit trafficking, were accepted. Although other projects are undergoing, we have to express our regret for delay in the implementation of project CRO/0/006 "Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear and Radioactive Materials", especially having in mind the importance that the Agency and the whole international community give today to the combating illicit trafficking due to danger of terrorist actions.

I am taking this opportunity to express our special appreciation to Mr. Massoud Samiei and his staff for the valuable assistance and extensive cooperation enabling implementation of various TC projects in Croatia.

Mr. President,

While the Croatian experts are attending seminars and training courses abroad, we are pleased to see a large and growing number of foreign experts in training or scientific visits, under the Agency fellowships, in Croatian research institutes and other relevant institutions, as well as the University of Zagreb. Each year Croatia also hosts various training courses, workshops and seminars taking actively its role in TC Program. Pleased with the positive impressions from the guest experts we are inviting the Agency to use Croatia's capacities and infrastructure for this purpose to a larger extent.

Fully aware that education in the field of nuclear and radiological sciences and preserving the nuclear knowledge are the key factors for peaceful use of nuclear energy, Croatia welcomes the inauguration of the World Nuclear University.

Announcing last year Croatia's intention to bring more attention to the education in this fields in order to facilitate a stronger expert base for the relevant applications in the future, I was happy to have opportunity to be the host of Deputy Director General Mr. Werner Burkart visiting Croatia in June this year. Meetings and his lectures during this visit have given additional strong impact to the mentioned efforts. I also hope that the visit of DDG Burkart to the Maritime Research Department of the "Ruder Boškovic" Institute in Rovinj will result in Agency's larger use of Department's knowledge and capacities, creating intense cooperation in future.

Regarding technical cooperation, but also other activities of the Agency, Croatia has always been fully aware of the importance of the financial contributions for the IAEA abilities to meet requests and needs. Therefore, although a net recipient country, Croatia in its aim to provide maximum support to the Agency's work continuously fulfills its financial obligations. I am pleased to inform that Croatia has paid its full share to the TC Fund and fulfilled all other financial obligations in full and on time.

Mr. President,

With regard to the Krško Nuclear Power Plant, jointly built on the territory of Slovenia and owned by Croatia and Slovenia, we are very pleased to acknowledge major positive developments since the last year's General Conference. After conclusion of years-long disputes over the joint exploitation of Krško NPP in the end of 2001 with compromised "Agreement on the Regulation of Status and Other Legal Relations in Connection to Investment, Operating and Decommissioning of Krško Nuclear Power Plant", and Croatia's ratification of the document in July 2002, Slovenia finally ratified the Agreement in March this year enabling its implementation. This positive outcome has given its valuable impact to the safety and security of Krško NPP and bilateral cooperation. The joint management of the Krško NPP was restored in April this year, and Croatia started to receive its half of electricity production. Immediate positive result of the strengthened cooperation was a decision of governments of Croatia and Slovenia, in accordance with the Agreement, to start joint elaboration of the program for NPP Krško decommissioning and radioactive waste and fuel management. Last month two countries requested assistance from the Agency for this project and I am taking this opportunity to praise the TC Department for their immediate recognition of its importance. This project represents the elements appreciated for TC programs - it is a joint project of two countries and a project in function of long-term solution of the safety and security issue. I am happy to learn that preparation for the assistance is undergoing in the Agency.

Mr. President,

I have to stress a few of the numerous activities and tasks accomplished, besides the important safeguard issues, since the last General Conference. The Agency should be praised for the organization of two important conferences this year: "International Conference on Security of Radioactive Sources" in March and the "International Conference on the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material" in July. Their outcome gave new impetus towards regulation of the issues in question. Among other activities, completion of the work of Open-ended group of legal and technical experts

on a draft amendment of the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material in March this year represents very important and positive achievement. Croatia attaches great importance to the strengthening of the CPPNM and therefore applauds this outcome hoping to see its final acceptance and implementation in the near future.

Croatia is also looking forward to actively participate in the work of the first Review Meeting of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management that will take place in November this year. I am convinced that the elected Croatian Vice-President of the Review Meeting will give, as an experienced expert, valuable contribution to its successful outcome.

Mr. President,

The period from the last General Conference was extremely intense for the Agency which dealt with major safeguards issues, important conferences, expert negotiations on legal documents and other numerous regular and special activities, most of them being highlighted by the growing public and media attention. All together just confirms importance and indispensable role of the Agency and gives us an obligation to provide our full support to its work, together with strengthening cooperation between member states, to benefit the secure and peaceful use of the nuclear energy. Croatia firmly stands behind.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen thank you for your attention.