

**STATEMENT OF THE HEAD OF THE CUBAN DELEGATION TO
THE 47th SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY
VIENNA, 16 SEPTEMBER 2003**

Mr. President:

Distinguished delegates:

First of all, allow me Your Excellency Mr. Yukio Takasu, to congratulate you for your election as the President of this Fortieth Seventh Session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and to make extensive these congratulations to all the members of the Bureau.

Mr. President:

Cuba has historically maintained a firm position in favor of achieving the goal of general and complete disarmament under strict international control, including nuclear disarmament. In this context, we have put all our efforts to advance towards a world free of nuclear weapons, which every day in our planet becomes more and more sophisticated. Toward this end, NPT was a first step, but it is still an insufficient and discriminatory instrument, since it allows the establishment of a Club of nuclear powers without real and concrete commitments to disarmament.

Nevertheless, as it is already known, my Government acceded to the Treaty of Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in November of last year. In October of the year

2002, my country also ratified the Treaty of Tlatelolco which it had signed in 1995. These steps have been taken by my Government, as a proof of its commitment with multilateralism and showing once more a clear political will, in favor of an effective process of disarmament which would contribute to world peace. All these in spite of the fact that the only nuclear power in the Americas maintains and permanently reinforces a political and economic blockade and keeps a growing hostility against my country.

Cuba has been a State which has traditionally completed in a rigorous manner the emanated commitments of its political decisions. In accordance with this, Cuba began, immediately after its accession to those mentioned Treaties, the process of consultations with the IAEA Secretariat with the view of signing once and for all and in unique process a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocol.

Cuba could technically apply, in accordance with the characteristics of its nuclear program and the quantity of nuclear material accounted for, as a Country of Small Quantities, so Cuba could have been able to sign an Agreement according with this condition. However once again my Government, as another proof of its will and commitment with a strengthened safeguards system that is effective and efficient, based on a fair and equal universal system of Non Proliferation conducive to the total and unconditional elimination of all nuclear weapons, it has decided to sign a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and an Additional Protocol which are standards. Last week the IAEA Board of Governors authorized the Director

General to sign, on behalf of the Secretariat, a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with Cuba and an Additional Protocol to those Agreements.

These instruments will be signed in the course of this General Conference. My delegation would like to express its deep and sincere gratefulness to the IAEA Secretariat for its support to this process and for having created the necessary environment of trust, understanding and transparency which characterized the process of consultations.

In this context, it is specially important the holding in Havana, during 5-6 November of this year, of the XIII General Conference of OPANAL, the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, event for which several countries have confirmed their participation at a very high level, including the members, and the agencies of the United Nations system. In the framework of this Conference the region of Latin America and the Caribbean will be declared as the first densely inhabited nuclear weapons free zone in the world.

Mr. President:

My country, as a member of the Board of Governors, followed very closely the issue of the Nuclear Program of the DPRK and it has always defended the criteria that a negotiated solution is possible. In this regard, my Delegation greets the information given by the Director General and by the delegation of the People's Republic of China.

My Government fully supports the statements presented by the Non Aligned Movement members of the NPT during the past Board of Governors, in relation with the issue of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Cuba considers as a crucial element that the Agency takes all necessary measures to guarantee that every State strictly complies with its obligations in the framework of the safeguards system, but also rejects any attempt to prejudge the nuclear programme of any country or any politization of discussions on this matter.

The Director General has been very clear by affirming that the verification process has not been finished, so it is not possible to produce definitive conclusions on the character of the Iranian nuclear programme. On the other hand, the cooperation of the government of Iran with the Agency has been evident, in order to continue the process of investigation and verification. This has also been confirmed by the DG.

Cuba is confident that Iran will continue showing transparency and good faith when complying with its commitments with NPT and congratulates the decision taken by this country to initiate negotiations with the Agency for the conclusion of an Additional Protocol.

Cuba rejects any attempt to violate the sovereign right of every State to accede in the appropriate time considered necessary by itself, to any international instrument. To accept this would create a very negative precedent in the contemporary

international relations which, by the way, are not always characterized by justice and equality.

Cuba will always stand up for avoiding that dealing in a wrong manner with the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme, could lead to a new international crisis, and firmly supports that a satisfactory solution be achieved for all sides, through political and diplomatic means, in the framework of IAEA, and within the most strict respect to the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran and to the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

It is in this context, that Cuba also reiterates the importance of the initiative mentioned in the Final Document adopted on the XIII NAM Summit held in Malaysia, which embraces the aspiration of declaring the Middle East as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, which would imply necessarily that Israel submit its nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the agency.

Mr. President:

My Government recognizes the important role played by nuclear technologies in sustainable development and it also confirms that the use of these technologies has had a tangible impact in the high-priority development programs in Cuba.

The activities of technical cooperation carried out by the Agency constitute a vital element of the process of transfer of technologies. Cuba has historically strongly

benefited from this cooperation and it exhibits excellent performance indicators, as well as a good use of the assigned resources.

Consequent with this, Cuba, in spite of the economic difficulties it faces has continued fulfilling systematically its financial commitments with the Agency.

The experience acquired by the country in the execution of the projects of technical cooperation has also allowed the Cuban specialists to participate actively in transferring the main results to other countries and regions in the framework of the Agency's programs.

My Government would also like to reiterate its support to the Regional Agreement of Cooperation for the Promotion of Science and Nuclear Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARCAL). With the realization of the IV Meeting of its Technical Coordinating Body (OCTA), in Havana in June of 2003, Cuba assumed the Presidency of ARCAL for a period of one year.

Cuba takes the Presidency of the Agreement in this period as a high commitment and responsibility and it expresses its gratefulness to the Secretariat of the Agency for the support given to ARCAL, convinced that it will be intensified in the future, as a concrete way to support technical cooperation among developing countries.

Mr. President:

My Government stresses that personnel's recruitment to work in the Agency should be based on efficiency, technical competence and integrity, preserving the principle of geographical distribution and achieving an increase in the number of staff members coming from developing countries.

It is also indispensable to achieve an increase of women's presence in the Secretariat of the Agency. Every time in a more growing way women are more linked to Science with outstanding results. In Cuba, the 66.6% of the personnel linked to the scientific-professional sector are women.

In this context, my country reiterates it is ready to offer the Secretariat Cuban specialists of a very high qualification.

Thank you very much.