

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY GENERAL CONFERENCE

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**STATEMENT**

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**LATVIA**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR AIVARS VOVERS ,**

**Head of Mission of the Republic of Latvia to the OSCE**

Mr. President,

The Latvian delegation is pleased to join others in congratulating you on your election as Conference President and looks forward to participating under your guidance. I would like also to express our best wishes to the Agency and its Director General Doctor Mohamed El Baradei in this challenging year for the Agency.

I associate myself fully with the statement made by the honourable delegate of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

I will focus only on some issues, which the Republic of Latvia views as the most important at this moment for our country and also for international community. Firstly, I will talk about some of the questions, which had been discussed during this year, namely need to enhance the safety and security of radiation sources to meet threats and challenges for the safety infrastructure. Secondly I will speak about some recent events in Latvia and our plans regarding technical cooperation with the Agency.

Security of radiation sources

Mr. President,

We are well aware about the importance of this issue and strongly support the Action plans approved by the Board of Governors. During this spring at the International Conference on Security of Radioactive Sources here in Vienna international community

discussed these questions in depth. Number of Member States already allocated additional financial resources to cope with most urgent problems. Latvia believes that the global implementation of an effective system for safety and security of radiation sources delivers universal security benefits. Therefore in our view, an early finalisation of the draft standards on the safe handling, management and control of radiation sources are of high importance.

Lately last year the Government of Latvia approved new regulations regarding security of radiation sources and relevant facilities. We used experience accumulated by some Member States and elaborated by the Agency for security of nuclear materials and used them to elaborate requirements applicable also for other radiation source. It should be mentioned, that implementation of adequate physical protection systems is a very challenging task and we appreciate the assistance we received also from other countries. Therefore, I would like to express our gratitude to the United States of America and Sweden for their assistance in strengthening of Latvia's border control and enhancement of security systems for major radiation facilities.

Latvia takes this opportunity to confirm its full acceptance of Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources as base for implementation a good international practice and to urge other Member states to accept the Code of Conduct, to do so as soon as possible and to establish national systems for security and safety of sources.

### Medical applications

Mr. President,

Latvia participates in a national TC project about feasibility studies for the use of Positron Emission Tomography. Taking into account preliminary conclusions of this study, we are preparing a full scope implementation project for PET for submission to the Agency this year. PET project will be one more cost-sharing project for Latvia and will give an exciting opportunity to improve significantly diagnostic capabilities of Latvia's oncology centres as well as the whole range of related issues such as education in radiation safety,

use of radioisotopes in research, and others. Within regional TC projects we are receiving valuable support for our experts and the capability of national oncological centres also improves.

### Decommissioning of Latvia's research reactor and management of spent nuclear fuel

Mr. President,

Since the last General Conference, Latvia finished international bidding procedure to contract a decommissioning operator, capable to solve both major problems related to Salaspils research reactor – spent fuel issue and the decommissioning itself. Unfortunately, the bidding was not successful. Probably, our aim to solve spent fuel issue in comparatively short time was over ambitious. In the mean time we were involved in discussions and got indications for eventual support under tri-lateral initiative of the Agency, the USA and the Russian Federation. Hopefully, next year we will be able to report about certain progress.

Due to constraint next year's State budget, the Government has decided to postpone one of the projects - the dismantling of the Salaspils research reactor. But even though the Government allocated around 0.65 millions Euro to proceed with assessment of the environmental impact, preparations for off site dry storage if the progress related to spent fuel would be slower as expected, as well as some dismantling of unnecessary components with no impact upon the radiation and nuclear safety in reactor

### Radioactive waste management

Mr. President,

The radioactive waste management in Latvia is described in detail in our National report to the first per-review conference under Joint Convention. Latvia has submitted both our report and questions and comments to other countries regarding their reports. Recently, the Government approved our first Radioactive waste management Strategy, where the measures to enhance safety system on an existing disposal site have been elaborated. During next 7 years we are going to establish new long-term storage for spent sealed

sources and to perform feasibility studies for a geological disposal site. As the last issue is very challenging task even for big countries, Latvia strongly supports any activity, which could provide an international solution to the problem.

In conclusion, Mr President, I can assure you that Latvia will continue to strongly support the Agency as it implements its programs. We look forward to working with the Director-General and the Board of Governors to meet the new challenges that lie ahead after this Conference.

Thank you, Mr. President!