

**Statement by Mr. Anthony E. Borg
Director of the Department of Multilateral Affairs,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malta
to the 47th Session of the
General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency,
Vienna, 18 September 2003**

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr President, may I, at the outset, congratulate you and the other members of the bureau on your election. My delegation is confident that your abilities will successfully guide us through the work of this General Conference.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank the Director General for his incessant work in the service of the Agency as well as the Secretariat for the documentation prepared for this session, in particular the Annual Report for 2002.

I am confident that the vision of Dr. ElBaradei as well as the dedication of his staff will ensure that the Agency will continue to effectively pursue its goals and to further the objectives of the United Nations.

The year, which has just come to an end, has been a particularly intensive one for the Agency. In the course of this year the Agency was, once again, called by the UN Security Council to undertake verification duties in Iraq, duties which the Agency's experts have performed most ably and responsibly. This speaks very highly of the professionalism of the Agency's experts and management.

Mr President,

As an acceding State to the European Union, Malta endorses the statement delivered earlier by the delegation of Italy on behalf of the European Union, in particular, the commitment against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Malta fully subscribes to the need for a strong system of international safeguards to promote collective security. To this effect the Government of Malta has, earlier this year, signed the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement and is in the process of ratifying it. My delegation wishes to join

other delegations in encouraging States, that have not yet done so, to conclude their respective safeguard agreements and additional protocols.

The endeavours of the Agency to promote nuclear safety are assuming greater importance at a time when the misuse of nuclear material can pose a very serious threat to millions of people around the world. The Government of Malta, however, remains confident that through the continuous support, and enhanced co-operation and goodwill from its member states, the Agency will continue to give its vital contribution to secure international peace and security in this new millennium.

In this context, I am pleased to inform that the Government of Malta has enacted legislation on radiation protection and nuclear safety and for the establishment a national regulatory authority. It is anticipated that Malta will be in a position to become a party to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material in the near future.

Mr President,

The delegation of Malta has listened with attention to the statement of the Director General on the achievements of the Agency over the past year. In his statement the Dr. ElBaradei emphasised the Agency's determination to continue with the development of an ever-increasing number of nuclear non-power applications such as: seawater desalination, insect sterile techniques, the mutation and breeding of food crops and in other applications in the field of nuclear medicine. This is of particular interest to countries like Malta, which do not use nuclear power.

In his report the Director General has referred to an ever-increasing demand for participation in the Agency's co-ordinated research projects in a variety of nuclear applications. The widespread participation in such programmes will certainly go a long way in promoting the spread of nuclear knowledge and its applications for development purposes, thereby increasing the contribution of the Agency to sustainable development, worldwide.

The Government of Malta has noted with pleasure the launch of the World Nuclear University in London, earlier this month. The launch of this university is very important to small countries like Malta which are not in a position to provide education in nuclear science on their own soil. It is our ardent hope that this new university will go a long way in redressing the problem of the shortage of nuclear scientists of which the international community is now suffering. It is hoped that, in the long term, this university will prove to be an efficient instrument for sustainable development.

Mr President,

Malta, as a small island State with hardly any natural resources depends on continued investment in its human resources if it is to achieve a decent standard of living for its people. The assistance being provided by the Agency to Malta in the field of medical uses of nuclear radiation, in national preparedness in case of a radiological incident and other non-power applications are a most welcome addition to such investment.

For the 2003/4 biennium the Agency is assisting Malta through three projects, one on emergency response, one on Quality Assurance and Quality Control in diagnostic radiology and the other in capacity-building at the Malta National Laboratory.

Moreover, Malta is also participating in a number of the Agency's regional projects which have provided many opportunities for a number of government officers to participate in training courses as well as in international conferences related to their professional work.

All this assistance is provided to Malta within the framework of the Agency's TC programme which, as the Director General pointed out, is the principal mechanism through which the Agency attempts to implement its *atoms for peace* objective.

The delegation of Malta has noted with satisfaction that the Agency is currently trying to improve the effectiveness of its TC programmes through more dialogue with member states and focus on fewer but higher quality TC projects.

Increased co-operation with other institutions is also planned to render the Agency's technical co-operation programme more effective. This is all very good for the participants in the Agency's T.C. programmes, as is the Agency's increased interest in promoting both regional and inter-regional co-operation among its member states in the field of the sharing of nuclear knowledge. In this context the Government of Malta would like to see more co-operation within the Mediterranean region under the auspices of the Agency.

Mr. President,

The Government of Malta continues to be supportive of the Agency's activities and looks forward for increased collaboration with the Agency in the coming months and years.

Thank you, Mr. President.