

49th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference

**Speech delivered by Mr. Alain Bugat
Chairman of the French Atomic Energy Commission
Head of the French Delegation**

Mr President,

1. First of all, I would like, on behalf of the French delegation, to give you my congratulations on your election as the Chairman of this forty-ninth session of the IAEA General Conference.
You may be assured, Mr President, of our entire confidence and our full cooperation in bringing this delicate task to fruition.
2. The French delegation fully supports the statement made by Mr. Wright, Head of the United Kingdom delegation, that was made on behalf of the European Union.
3. I am particularly pleased to welcome the recent membership of the Agency of Belize.
4. I would also like to offer my heartiest congratulations to Mr. ElBaradei for his re-election – by acclamation - to the position of Director General. The Agency and its member states are faced with some significant challenges, especially in the field of non-proliferation. I am sure that the Director General's personal qualities and the experience that he has acquired during his two previous mandates will enable him to take these supreme responsibilities with talent, determination, efficiency and pragmatism. As ever, he can rely on France's active support.

Mr President,

5. The international community must continue to make sure that the commitments made in the field of non-proliferation are respected.
6. Even though the NPT Review Conference held in May 2005 did not result in a consensus on points of substance, it did confirm the importance of the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime.
7. The recent development of proliferation crisis demonstrates the need to reinforce the non-proliferation regime. The international community must develop effective means of reacting to any failure or violation of the commitments taken by states. The international community must also to pursue to think about measure to take in case of withdrawal of the treaty as initiated during the NPT Review Conference.

8. In order to prevent the risk of proliferation, it is also necessary to control more strictly transfers of the most sensitive nuclear technologies, equipment and materials and to enforce universally applicable rules.

This task mustn't be conducted in contradiction with the legitimate needs of economical growth for States which complied with their international commitments. Under conditions to be defined, those States must to get access to non-sensitive technologies and equipment and to the procurement of nuclear materials and related services.

9. Concerning the verification of non-proliferation obligations under the NPT, France considers that the combination of a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an Additional Protocol that complies with the status of the States, must become the standard to ensure maximum credibility of the international verification, and also to demonstrate the commitment of the State parties and their support to the Treaty. For several years, France has supported the initiatives taken by the Agency on this issue in an effort to apply these two instruments universally. France is also contributing to the initiatives taken in the same direction by the G8 and the European Union.
10. In that connection, I should like to recall that, on April 30, 2004 the additional Protocol of France came into force along with those of her European partners and that all declarations required by this instrument have been issued to the Agency. An update of the initial declaration was sent to the Agency in May.
11. My delegation is paying close attention to the results of the work done by the SAGSI that helps to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these safeguards.
12. Furthermore, we are pleased to note that the recent initiatives taken to set up a committee for safeguards and inspections have been successful and hope that this committee will start its work as soon as possible.
13. My delegation would also like to emphasise the importance of sound cooperation between the Agency and the European Commission for the implementation of safeguards, especially at a time when both organisations are experiencing changes. We are particularly keen to see closer dialogue at the highest levels in order to overcome any difficulties that arise. We are convinced that this dialogue, which needs

to be intensified, will help to preserve and develop the benefits of fruitful cooperation within the European Union.

Mr President,

14. Iran's clandestine activities were revealed more than three years ago and the exact purposes of the fissile material production programme remain a matter of concerns for the international community. As stated in the recent Director General's report, the cooperation of Iranian authorities was not complete and without reserve. There are a lot of important questions which remain unsolved.

15. Within the framework of the Agreement, concluded in November 2004, with the governments of Germany, France and United Kingdom, with the support of the high Representative of the European Union, Iranian authorities have agreed to suspend all activities related to enrichment and reprocessing. The IAEA's Board of Governors has stated in all its resolutions that full and sustainable suspension was necessary to rebuild confidence and essential for resolving outstanding issues. The Board also called for the suspension of the project related to heavy water research reactor.

By resuming activities in the Esfahan's conversion facility on August the 1st, in contradiction with IAEA's repeated appeals and by rejecting, without looking at, the substantial offer the E3 were committed to propose under Paris agreement, Iranian authorities have challenged the confidence of the international community on the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

16. Facing that situation, the Board of Governors met in August and one more time stated the necessity for Iran to suspend conversion activities in order to rebuild the confidence of the international community as well as the necessity to pursue investigations on remaining outstanding issues. The Director General was also invited to report on this matter for September the 3rd.

17. Today, the doubts of the international community remain.

18. Under these circumstances, the Board of Governors has approved a resolution which makes a clear and objective picture of the situation. This resolution preserves possibilities of negotiation which should be explored without delay to restore sustainable confidence. The Agency will continue to play an essential role in resolving

outstanding issues and verifying suspension. Circumstances allowing, France remains ready to pursue the dialogue to achieve a satisfactory solution.

Mr President,

19. France has been closely following the work done by the experts group created at the Director General's initiative to identify possible multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. We are satisfied with the results of the work achieved by the group and take note of the corresponding report. France will pay equally close attention to any future developments that follow on from these reflections.

Mr President,

20. In addition, France recalls its commitment to the entry into force of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. France supports efforts to make the international surveillance system operational as quickly as possible. France also support efforts for the opening of negotiations at the Disarmament Conference on a Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty for nuclear weapons.

Mr President,

21. The risk that nuclear or radioactive materials may be used for terrorist purposes also constitutes another serious concern, against which the international community has mobilised to improve yet again the situation wherever necessary, starting from the high level of protection from which nuclear activities already benefit.

22. Of course, responsibilities are above all those of the States, but the States must be able to base themselves effectively on exchanges and international cooperation.

The IAEA naturally has a pre-eminent role to play, in conformity with its Statute, in the security of nuclear materials and facilities, and we support its plan of action in this area. France provides technical and financial support in particular with a series of actions taken in close cooperation with the Agency.

France also signed a security arrangement on April 27, 2005 that provides for the deployment of a support plan, essentially relating to issues of physical protection, security of sources of radiation, improvement of national systems and use of appropriate international instruments.

23. With regard to physical protection, France welcomes the adoption by consensus of the amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material during the Conference held in Vienna on July 2005. This amendment, when into force, will significantly reinforce the Convention.

24. I would now like to address the issue of the safety and security of radioactive sources. France attaches great importance to this question, especially in view of the terrorist threat.

French Government hosted in Bordeaux, on last June, an international Conference on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Organised by the IAEA and placed under the auspices of the G8, in the framework of the action plan initiated by France during the 2003 Evian summit, this conference allowed to review actions taken by the international community in order to improve controls on radioactive sources and to define perspectives for the future.

25. The conference also emphasised the importance of the Agency's code of conduct applying to the safety and security of radioactive source as revised on 2003 that all member states are encouraged to adopt and apply as a priority.

Mr President,

26. France has always attached the utmost importance to the promotion activities of the Agency and strongly supports the Technical Cooperation Programme. This commitment is expressed through the transfer of expertise, the recruitment of interns or the delivery of training in particular on radioprotection. It is also demonstrated by the support we lend to actions taken as part of the AFRA and ARCAL, by the funding we provide for various "footnote / a" projects and the numerous contributions of French specialists to expert missions in many fields.

Year after year, France pays in full its contribution to the Technical Cooperation Fund and is acutely aware of the difficulties encountered in funding technical cooperation activities, which must be carefully planned wherever possible. May I remind you that all of the member states share a joint responsibility to fund and strengthen the Agency's technical cooperation activities in order to enable the Agency to fulfil its mission of promotion.

Mr President,

27. The Convention on Nuclear Safety has led to progress in a range of fields, and we encourage States, which have nuclear projects and which are not yet party to the Convention, to ratify it as quickly as possible. France has issued its national report, and has made an active contribution to the success of the review meeting in April 2005.

28. With regard to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, France plans to attend the second review meeting in May 2006 and the preparatory meeting planned for November of this year. As many members as possible are needed to get the confidence of the international community in the quality of the management of the back end of the fuel cycle.

29. In the realm of transport safety, France is actively contributing to the deployment of the action plan that was prepared on the basis of the conclusions of the Vienna conference on the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material and was adopted by the Board in March 2004.

In accordance with the plan, we are continuing dialogue and consultation with our partners and the impacted coastal states to improve our mutual understanding and confidence in the safety of radioactive material transport by sea.

30. France received a TranSAS mission last year in a spirit of progress and transparency. The conclusions of the mission on the French nuclear safety authority were highly positive and France welcomes the future TranSAS mission to Japan, following the United Kingdom and France, which will enable the Japan to benefit from an international appraisal of its practices in the field of transport safety of radioactive material.

31. Since we are convinced that an external appraisal will help to improve the quality of activities of our nuclear safety authority, we have asked the Agency for an IRRT audit, scheduled for early 2007.

32. In order to pursue its involvement in the efforts of the international community to improve the safety of operational facilities, France has also asked the Agency to

conduct another OSART mission, as it has done every year since 20 years. At this rate, all of France's nuclear facilities will have been inspected by an OSART mission by the end of the decade.

33. May I take this opportunity to reassure the Agency of my country's full support for the actions it takes in the field of nuclear safety.

Mr President,

34. I would now like to turn to the outlook for nuclear power, which continues to demonstrate a clear revival in those countries that have opted for this energy source to achieve sustainable development of their economy. This renewed understanding of the benefits of nuclear power prompted the Director General, together with the OECD's Nuclear Energy Agency and the French authorities, to organise an international conference at ministerial level on the future of nuclear power in the 21st century. More than 400 personalities from 74 countries, including more than 70 ministers and nuclear power officers from all over the world, attended the "Nuclear Energy for the 21st Century" conference in Paris on March 21 and 22.

35. The resounding success of the conference sent out a clear signal of the renewed global interest in this energy source, as the world faces increasing energy needs in the decades to come and the general public voices its concerns and expectations, especially in terms of development and environmental protection.

Delegates presented the energy situation in their own country and their vision of the future for nuclear power. They highlighted the need to use diverse energy sources. They also acknowledged the economic advantages of producing nuclear electricity and the major role that nuclear power will play in providing durable access to energy and electricity all over the world, while limiting CO₂ emissions.

36. In this context, we must in particular to commit ourself to embody the most important industrial emerging countries at the crucial moment, while for their development, they have to make important energy choices for the next fifty years. France will pursue efforts undertaken in this way.

France underlines the progress that allows the joint French-Indian declaration on September 12th.

37. For more than 30 years, France has been pursuing a responsible energy strategy that is founded, to a great extent, on the use of electronuclear energy. This policy has allowed France to achieve a high degree of self-sufficiency, since, in 2004, the 58 reactors in operation generated more than 78% of our electricity.

38. The leading role played by electronuclear energy was confirmed in the law passed on July 13, 2005 that laid down the outlines of France's energy policy.

Nuclear energy is central to this law which confirms that a high proportion of this energy will be used to generate electricity in France and that research policy must enable France to maintain its leading position on the nuclear power stage until 2015.

39. The EPR is a reactor offering improved industrial and environmental performance and increased safety. EDF plans to build a 1,600 MW EPR to generate electricity in Flamanville.

A public debate organised by our National Commission will be held between October 2005 and February 2006 in the largest towns and cities throughout France. The purpose of this debate is to prepare the start-up of a demonstration reactor by 2011-2012 under the best possible conditions.

40. Reflections on the **long-term management of high-activity and long-life nuclear waste** have also made progress during the past year.

Under the terms of a law passed in 1991, the French government must submit to the parliament an overall appraisal of research, accompanied wherever necessary by a bill authorising the creation of a storage facility for high-activity and long-life nuclear waste, in mid-2006.

The preparation of this important step forward has involved players from French research, the National Appraisal Commission and the French public authorities. The Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) and the National Agency for the Management of Radioactive Waste (ANDRA) have submitted the summary reports of the fields of research for which they were responsible.

An other public debate has just been opened in order to prepare the 2006 deadlines.

Mr President,

41. International cooperation obviously has a key role to play in this global context that is generally favourable to nuclear power and I would like to highlight two points.

42. 2005 saw the decision to locate the ITER reactor (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) in Cadarache, France. On June 28, the members of ITER met in Moscow to announce their choice of a site in Europe. We are now faced with a daunting technological and organisational challenge and all of the partners involved in the project are already busy working on the preparations for this initiative, which represents a decisive step on the road to the production of electricity by controlled thermonuclear fusion. As the debate on the selection of the site was still going on, work continued on the preparation of the ITER Joint Implementation Agreement – JIA.

The Agency supported these discussions and frequently hosted meetings between the parties and I would like to thank the IAEA for the contribution that it made to getting this vast and ambitious project off the ground.

43. In international cooperation programmes, innovation plays a crucial role in the design and development of new generations of systems that are more competitive, safer, produce less long-life radioactive waste, are more resistant to proliferation and are capable of meeting the world's energy requirements and opening the way for sustainable economic and social growth. This is the reason why France is actively participating in the **Generation IV** initiative, the international forum cooperating on the development of the 4th generation of nuclear systems. Last February in Washington, France, the United States, Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom signed a framework agreement heralding the start of operational cooperation. My country also sits on the Steering Committee of the Agency's **INPRO** project, which may make some particularly valuable contributions in terms of appraisal methods in the Agency's scope of expertise. I would like to take this opportunity to underscore the importance that France attaches to the close fit between the INPRO project and Generation IV and the associated coordination. Both together are an expression of the global importance of the production of nuclear power in terms of goals and implementation resources deployed.

Mr President,

44. I would like to conclude by again stating that, in the opinion of France, it is crucially important that nuclear power remains a significant option in the use made of the planet's energy resources in order to promote progress and sustainable development that respect both the planet and its inhabitants.

The IAEA's missions are an essential factor in achieving this goal through actions that contribute to peace and international security and allow a growing number of countries to benefit from the peaceful applications of the atom. Rest assured of France's solid and resolute support for the Agency and its Director General in the accomplishment of these missions.

Thank you.