

Statement  
by the Representative of the Government of Italy  
49<sup>th</sup> IAEA General Conference

(Vienna, 27 September 2005)

Mr. President,

Let me congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the 49th regular session of the IAEA General Conference. We are confident that under your able guidance the Conference will be successful.

Let me also congratulate the Director General, Mohamed El Baradei, on his reappointment. We appreciate his strong dedication in managing the Agency.

A warm welcome goes to the new delegation of Belize that recently joined the Agency.

Let me also add that Italy fully identifies its position with the statement made by the UK Head of Delegation on behalf of the European Union. I therefore will limit my remarks to some points and issues of particular significance to my Country.

Mr. President,

as it has been already outlined in the EU statement, Italy, together with all EU Countries, is strongly committed to support the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty strengthening and implementation. Italy considers the NPT the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the Treaty. Italy remains deeply convinced that a multilateral approach to security, including disarmament and non-proliferation, is the best way to maintain order, peace and stability. We acknowledge the crucial role of IAEA in this regard.

Mr. President,

we express our deep regret for the disappointing outcome of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, held in New York last May, where there was no consensus among States Parties on substantive points. It has been already recalled that the European Union Countries had a common position on NPT expressed in a group of 43 detailed points among which I would like to underline, *inter alia*, the following:

- the need for accession to the Treaty;
- the suspension of nuclear cooperation where the IAEA is not able to provide adequate assurance that a State's nuclear programme is designed exclusively for peaceful purposes;
- the need to do everything possible to prevent the risk of nuclear terrorism and, consequently, the need to comply with the Security Council resolution 1540;
- the important role played against nuclear proliferation and terrorism by the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Global Threat Reduction Initiative and the G8 Global Partnership Initiative;
- the need for a better control over the proliferation sensitive parts of the nuclear fuel cycle; the discussion of the report issued at the beginning of this year by IAEA's expert group on multinational approaches should start as soon as possible.

Mr. President,

Italy confirms its support to all the activities performed by the IAEA in fulfilling its statutory obligations. We believe that the IAEA has the capacity to foster positive developments in all its three main areas of activities: safeguards and verification, safety and security, technical co-operation.

We welcome the outcome of the Conference which adopted amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities; we intend to ratify such amendments speedily.

We highly value other fundamental activities such as those aimed at preventing nuclear terrorism, a threat which is pervading all sectors of human activities and represents a challenge of paramount importance for the international community. We are committed to fighting this menace and will provide the Agency with our support.

Mr. President,

since compliance with existing multilateral norms and rules is essential for their credibility and effectiveness, the possibility of concretely verifying compliance and detecting violations is of paramount importance. The best use has to be

made of existing verification mechanisms and systems. We should also seek to improve them. Italy considers the IAEA Additional Protocols an integral part of the IAEA Safeguards System. Thus, consistently with the EU position, Italy considers that the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, together with the Additional protocols, constitute the verification standard and calls for universal adherence to them.

Italy has given great attention to the Committee on Safeguards and Verification and is of the view that the present system of Safeguards and Verification could be carefully reviewed for improvements.

It is a fact that today's world is witnessing an enormous spread of nuclear knowledge and technical capabilities. This entails a highly increased risk of nuclear weapons proliferation.

Mr. President,

nuclear energy has been at the centre of political debate in my Country after the Chernobyl accident. We held a referendum in 1987, and phased-off all nuclear power plants since the early '90s. Now a strong commitment is under way for the decommissioning of those power plants. Plans are being defined for the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel abroad and for the identification of a national repository for the disposal of nuclear fuel and waste. We appreciate the increased international attention to the decommissioning of nuclear facilities. We believe that particular attention should be paid to the so called "non-technological factors" in the implementation of decommissioning projects, such as the involvement of local communities and site re-developers. A State-owned company (SOGIN) is now carrying out the decommissioning project.

On the other hand, we consider that a commitment has to be maintained, and has been maintained, by national research Agencies and Universities on research and development of the nuclear energy and innovative nuclear power reactor systems. Italy is now considering its participation to international collaboration agreements in this field. As far as nuclear power is concerned, we perceive a clear change in public opinion, notably within the young generation. The construction of new nuclear power plants in Italy is at present not on the Government's agenda, though we support strengthened international co-operation and participation of Italian parties into new European and international nuclear technology programmes and projects.

Mr. President,

as outlined by the E.U. Presidency, nuclear safety must receive the highest priority in every country's nuclear program. International cooperation on this

issue is essential, and we should all aim at the continuous enhancement of safety standards.

The safe and secure management of radioactive sources is an international issue of great importance. We endorse the findings of the recent Bordeaux Conference, in particular the need for periodic exchange of information on the implementation of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, adopted by the IAEA General Conference in 2003. Italy fully supports the Code of Conduct as well as the Guidance for the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources in accordance with the Code.

Mr. President,

Italy supports the IAEA activities with regard to Technical Co-operation, as a factor of progress and stability. Parliament has recently passed a bill providing the Government with the necessary resources to finance IAEA Technical Co-operation activities for the entire amount due by my Country.

We note with appreciation that effective co-ordination between the Agency's Technical Co-operation offices and other organizations has been pursued. Co-ordination was also achieved with the World Bank and the World Health Organization.

In the past few years, strong efforts were made in order to render Technical Assistance more fruitful and cost-effective. We have all witnessed their beneficial effects. It is important to continue along these lines and to keep requesting real and strong commitments from recipient countries.

Mr. President,

Italy, through UNESCO, contributes to more than 80% of the budget of the International Center for Theoretical Physics in Trieste (ICTP). The Center carries out activities and programmes aimed at promoting international co-operation among scientists from all countries and, through science, a better understanding among people at world level.

I wish to express my appreciation for the support that IAEA has provided to the Center of Trieste. This encourages us to carry on and extend our efforts in supporting and strengthening the Center, as well as to enhance its role aimed at filling the scientific and technological gap between North and South.

Mr. President,

concerning the IAEA budget, many positive results have been achieved. We believe that well defined priorities should be more clearly identified before starting new activities, in order to ensure a cost-effective system.

We support the result-based approach which provides indications about the possible deviations in the implementation of the programme and provides the opportunity to take advantage of the lessons learned.

As far as human resources are concerned, we expect the Secretariat to follow the criteria of competence and sound scientific and technical expertise in its staff recruitment policy.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to stress that Italy, as a founding member, has a long-standing tradition of active co-operation with the Agency. IAEA represents an indispensable tool for the preservation of peace and stability, and my Government is committed to keep providing its full support to ensure that the Organisation's programme and activities be strictly targeted to our common goals.

Thank you, Mr. President.