

Mr. President,

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election as the President of 49th session of IAEA General Conference. In wishing you every success in this task I want to assure you and other members of the Bureau full support of my delegation. I also extend my congratulations to all other elected office bearers and, Mr President, I am convinced that you will steer this conference to a successful conclusion.

On behalf of my entire delegation I would like to commend the Director General and the Secretariat for their excellent preparatory work for this session and for all the effort in the past year.

Slovenia joins the previous speakers in welcoming the application for membership of Belize.

The Director General Mohamad ElBaradei has proven his capabilities skills in leading the IAEA in the past eight years and we are looking forward to his reappointment for another term of office. We believe that his dedication and professionalism will guarantee the IAEA authority also in the future.

I associate myself fully with the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom on behalf of the EU. Therefore I shall limit myself only to the issues of particular interest for Slovenia.

Mr. President,

The existence of weapons of mass destruction represents one of the greatest threats to international peace and security. The risk of proliferation of such weapons exists and all states should play an active role against further spread of these weapons. Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament could not be considered separately and all efforts should be put into pursuing the main goal, which is to reduce the nuclear threat.

This year in May the expectations of the delegations of many countries during the NPT Review Conference in New York were running high, but the outcome of the Conference was that no consensus document on essential points of the discussion could have been produced. To put more emphasis on the next Preparatory Committee Meeting seems as a reasonable direction to proceed. In that context, I would like to add my voice to those who are convinced that the first session of the NPT Preparatory Committee, which is due in May 2007, should take place in Vienna. That will coincide with the celebrations of fiftieth anniversary of the IAEA. In my view that gesture would strengthen the role of the Agency in universal non-proliferation efforts, embodied in the NPT.

The Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, which non-nuclear weapon states have in force, should not be the only means of nuclear material control. It should be thoroughly analysed, if nowadays safeguards system meets the actual needs, and particularly, how it can be improved. It seems that with more countries demanding to have access to complete fuel cycle, including enrichment, the task of safeguarding the nuclear material is getting more and more complex. Slovenia many times reiterated its position that Additional Protocol is a crucial instrument in strengthening the non-proliferation and that it should

become a universal verification standard for all countries which would like to demonstrate their adherence to the NPT, the transparency of their nuclear programs and assuring the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Mr. President,

The recent events have illustrated that the uncertain world in which we live demand nuclear terrorism to be considered as a global threat. We are pleased the legal instrument to counter terrorist threats was finally opened for signature in September this year. Slovenian Foreign Minister was among those who signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which also encourages States to co-operate in preventing terrorist attacks, and we call all other states that have not yet done so to sign the Convention.

In this context, I would like to point out that in non-proliferation efforts, the IAEA is not alone. There are also regional organizations, whose role is complementary to the role of the Agency. In this regard, I would commend the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which is currently chaired by Slovenian Foreign Minister. The OSCE promotes the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources (IAEA/CODEOC/2004) and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources supplementary to it (GC(48)/13) among its members. I am convinced that there are similar examples of this partnership in other parts of the world as well.

In reducing the risk of a successful act of nuclear terrorism the new plan for the IAEA nuclear security activities for 2006-2009 plays an important role. We would like to express support for this plan. Its implementation, which deserves the highest priority, depends on

voluntary contributions. Slovenia encourages all Member States to consider if they can contribute to Nuclear Security Fund.

Slovenia was among those Member States supporting a call for Diplomatic Conference on the proposed amendments of the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and we had actively participated in the expert level during the preparatory work for the Conference. I can report that the internal legal process to ratify the amendments of the Convention has already started.

I turn now, Mr. President, to specific issues with regard to technical co-operation.

Slovenia continues its interest in the IAEA Technical Co-operation Programme. For the next cycle there were five institutions with seven proposals expressing their intention to participate in the IAEA Technical Co-operation Programme. The Country Programme Framework was updated recently in order to provide guidelines and which would serve as a tool for identifying the suitable technical co-operation projects. The update was needed to provide the fresh and new perspective on the Slovenian participation in the Technical Co-operation Programme. All possible participants in technical co-operation projects are aware of the shift from a technology driven to a demand driven technical co-operation programme.

For effective implementation of Technical Co-operation Programme it is essential that resources of the Technical Co-operation Fund are not only sufficient but should be assured in a predictable manner. Slovenia is concerned about the Member States, which did not pay their full Technical Co-operation Fund shares or did not pay at all. It is important that all Member States are aware of their responsibility for financing and strengthening the IAEA technical co-operation activities.

Slovenia also noted the 4% decrease in implementation rate of technical co-operation projects in 2004 as compared to a year before. This trend may raise a concern and should be reversed in the shortest time possible, because potential continuation of such trend could jeopardise the Technical Co-operation Programme as a whole.

The National Participation Costs introduced in 2005 and their advance payment could be understood as the recipient country commitment and shared responsibility, but should not be an instrument for ensuring financial stability of the Technical Co-operation Fund.

Mr. President,

It is my pleasure to announce that Slovenia has pledged its full share to the Technical Co-operation Fund for the year 2006.

Slovenia attaches great importance to the international nuclear and radiation emergency preparedness. Therefore, Slovenia is extremely pleased with the new programme launched by the IAEA entitled »Incident and Emergency Preparedness and Response«, which is independent of other programmes within the major programme »Nuclear Safety and Security«. It is expected that the new programme would substantially contribute to the unified response system for incidents and emergencies involving nuclear facilities or nuclear and radioactive material.

Slovenia was active through its experts in conceiving the Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiation Emergencies and in the National Competent Authorities Co-ordinating Group acting as a co-ordinating body in

between the two Meetings of National Competent Authorities for the Early Notification and Assistance Convention. Within this context Slovenia considers important that the Member States decide to join the IAEA response network ERNET and the current mechanisms for reporting and sharing information about incidents and emergencies are thoroughly investigated and optimised.

Mr. President,

I am proud to report that after the three OSART missions in Slovenia since the startup of the Krško NPP, the latest such mission being in 2003, Slovenia is expecting to host the follow-up OSART mission in November 2005. These three OSART missions in Slovenia in the period of twenty years do not provide only the insight into the evolution of the Krško NPP working practices and equipment status, but they can show the evolution of the OSART process from its early period until now. Slovenia sincerely hopes that all three OSART reports, which were made public, were not only of great importance for the NPP itself, but also for those in nuclear industry who are willing to learn from the experiences of others.

Mr. President,

the Slovenian experience with the third Review Conference under Convention on Nuclear Safety was extremely positive and it revealed that the review process matured, which means the reporting procedures for the national report and for the rapporteurs were established in advance of the meeting. It seems that increased transparency within the next review meeting will be achieved by reaching consensus among the contracting parties within the Open Ended Working Group to relax the access to Country Group sessions and to have working documents more widely available to contracting parties during the review meeting. Slovenia is also aware that the CNS review process could turn into reiterating the already discussed

issues therefore it is important that the process remains open for new ideas and new topics in order to keep the momentum of the review process. The Convention on Nuclear Safety Review Conference could be viewed as a benchmarking process and the observations, which deserve particular interest of all nuclear community, are: continuing economic deregulation of energy markets, which brought significant changes in ownership and operating arrangements; challenges facing the nuclear safety due to the retirement of experienced staff and ageing management both of the staff and of the equipment. The knowledge preservation is a key factor for safe and reliable future operation of nuclear installations, and the fact is that almost sixty-five percent of the world's operating nuclear power plants are more than twenty years old.

I am pleased to announce that Slovenia has prepared its Second National Report under the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. The Slovenian initiative on regional repository for high-level radioactive waste, which was presented and discussed during the first Joint Convention Review Meeting, is still on the table as the most economically viable option for countries with small nuclear programmes. Slovenia must recognise that the regional repository is not only a technically demanding project, which requires widespread public and political acceptance, but it raises questions with regard to physical protection, nuclear security and non-proliferation of nuclear materials. Slovenia wishes that the interested parties would keep this initiative alive and proceed with an action plan which would address all the advantages and disadvantages of this project in order to produce a feasibility study.

Mr. President,

allow me to provide the information on important steps in the process of site selection in Slovenia for the disposal of low and intermediate level radioactive waste. After the Detailed Plan of National Importance for the Repository Preparation was adopted in November 2004, the Agency for Radwaste Management was able to invite local communities to offer their territory, at first for terrain exploration and later the selected community may agree to host a repository. Offers from interested communities were indeed received and are now in the process of evaluation. For the actual interest of communities the adoption of the Decree on Measures for Determining the Amount of Indemnities for Limited Land Use because of Nuclear Facility was of utmost importance.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to draw attention to Resolution on the National Energy Programme setting among other the policy for the long-term production of electric energy in the Krško NPP. The Resolution considers nuclear energy a viable option in the context of environmental impact, diversification of energy resources, reliability of supply and economical use of energy. The Resolution supports a continuous implementation of measures for assuring nuclear safety, independent surveillance over the operation and adequate information of the public.

Mr. President,

Let me assure you of Slovenia continued support for the IAEA and to commend Director General and the Secretariat for their competent and devoted work to fulfil the Agency's statutory obligations.

Thank you, Mr. President.

