

IAEA 51 General Conference General Statement by Norway

Mr. President,

Please allow me to congratulate you on your well-deserved election. Let me also congratulate the Agency and its Member States on the occasion of its golden jubilee.

Norway has just completed its two-year term as a Member of the Board of Governors. Over the course of this tenure, our commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and to the Agency has been firm. We have sought to support the Agency's pivotal role in addressing outstanding compliance matters; strengthen its capacities in the realms of nuclear security and safety; and sustain its ability to serve as a development partner.

We will continue to work closely with the Agency.

Let me also express gratitude to the outgoing President of the General Conference, Governor Abdul Minty, for the wise and constructive manner in which he guided our work.

Mr. President,

The international community needs a strong IAEA more than ever.

We need the IAEA in our efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

We need the IAEA in resolving outstanding proliferation concerns.

We need the IAEA to help ensure that nuclear safety and security do not suffer amidst an expansion of nuclear energy.

We need the IAEA to put nuclear applications in the service of sustainable development.

Norway continues to see the Agency's work in the broader context of the global non-proliferation regime.

It therefore has been heartening that, in recent months, we have seen renewed interest in our long-term aim to reach a world free of nuclear weapons. There is no naiveté here: the path will be long and arduous. But the urgency of recommitting ourselves towards nuclear disarmament as part and parcel of our broader non-proliferation efforts has come into ever sharper focus.

Through the Seven-Nation Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation, we have assembled a diverse network of governments which seek to advance non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses pragmatically and cooperatively. There can be common ground for a wide-ranging agenda, and as we move towards the

NPT Review Conference in 2010 – a critical juncture – I hope the initiative will help to build consensus.

My government also has engaged closely with civil society, and particularly research institutions, to clarify the challenges we face and to identify areas for greater cooperation.

The global disarmament agenda remains contentious, but its outlines are clear: adding muscle to, and moving beyond, the moratoria on nuclear testing and the production of fissile materials; new, deeper and irreversible cuts in existing nuclear arsenals; creating and strengthening nuclear weapons free zones; and genuine efforts to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security policies.

What has been lacking is broad agreement on an insuperable truth: Disarmament and non-proliferation serve the same fundamental cause of reducing nuclear dangers. The Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), for good reason, was not drafted as an a la carte menu. In order to sustain the NPT-based regime over the long-term, both disarmament and non-proliferation must be considered the responsibility of all States.

And the IAEA must remain a key partner in upholding and strengthening this regime.

Mr. President,

We cannot overstate the significance of safeguards for the non-proliferation regime. Confidence in this regime will hinge on our ability to devise and adapt a safeguards regime competent for 21st century challenges.

It therefore remains the firm conviction of my delegation that, as a baseline, the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards and the Additional Protocol constitute a verification standard. It is only through the Additional Protocol that the Agency is able to declare that all nuclear activities in a given country are for peaceful purposes.

The Additional Protocol was developed more than ten years ago. Yet nearly 100 countries have not implemented this vital verification instrument. Norway urges all countries which have not implemented this instrument to do so without delay.

We should consider all opportunities to increase the efficiency of safeguards, such as the Agency's system of Integrated Safeguards, but efficiency cannot be bartered for effectiveness. Full implementation of the Additional Protocol is essential.

To further strengthen safeguards, the Agency has produced a number of interesting proposals which I hope Member States will consider and support in due course. It is clear that the Agency needs better access to data, an improved laboratory network and a strengthened capability to carry out independent and credible analysis.

The Agency's mandate is of course not only to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, but also to promote peaceful uses of the atom. As the world's demand for energy and for energy security increases, so too does concern about climate change.

Perhaps not since the dawn of the nuclear age has there been as much interest in nuclear energy.

But as the Acheson-Lilienthal Commission predicted some six decades ago, an expanded interest in nuclear energy has posed significant challenges to the non-proliferation regime.

Multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle offer a potential accommodation of our energy needs and our non-proliferation concerns. The willingness of nuclear weapon states to make surplus nuclear material available for civilian use also demonstrates how the promotion of peaceful uses can complement disarmament objectives.

As we move forward, we must not forget that, without fresh initiative, without a willingness to forge difficult compromise, we risk foundering as we did three decades ago. I urge the Agency and its Member States to address the question of the fuel cycle with greater urgency and to consider not only mechanisms for the supply and storage of fuel, but also ways to accommodate concerns and provide incentives for countries to use such mechanisms.

Mr. President,

With respect to the nuclear activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we welcome recent positive steps towards resolving outstanding issues. The Understandings of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the IAEA on the Modalities of Resolution of Outstanding Issues is a step in the right direction.

It would have been preferable for the Agency's work plan with Iran to resolve issues in parallel rather than in sequence. But the plan as it stands is the first to address all outstanding issues with the Islamic Republic of Iran within an agreed time frame. As such, it is an important step in the right direction.

It is absolutely crucial that Iran implement the work plan in a serious and urgent manner. Resolving outstanding issues on the scope and nature of Iran's past nuclear activities would be a major step towards reaching a politically negotiated solution. Nevertheless, other steps would be needed.

Iran must take a series of steps which build confidence about the scope and nature of its present nuclear activities. One crucial step would be for Iran to ratify and bring into force its Additional Protocol, consistent with calls from the Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors.

Two unanimous Security Council resolutions have called on Iran to suspend sensitive nuclear activities, such as enrichment activities and the construction of a heavy water reactor at Arak. It is deeply regrettable that these steps have not been taken. We hope that Iran will seize the present opportunity in order to achieve a negotiated political solution.

With respect to the DPRK, Norway applauds the diplomatic breakthrough and appreciates the swift response by the Agency in February this year. It was highly encouraging that IAEA inspectors in July were able to verify that the nuclear facility at Yongbyon was shut down.

The prospect of a de-nuclearised Korean Peninsula is again a reality. We urge the DPRK to move towards full dismantlement of its nuclear weapons program under IAEA supervision. And we urge the DPRK to return to the IAEA and to announce its intention to adhere to the NPT. In doing so, new windows for international cooperation will emerge.

Mr. President,

Since the attacks of 11 September, it has become incumbent on all of us to cooperate in wide-ranging efforts to combat international terrorism. In this context, preventing an act of nuclear terrorism has rightly become a top global priority.

We must engage in a variety of cooperative activities in the areas of nuclear security and national controls to fight nuclear terrorism. The IAEA is an important actor in many of these.

Preventing nuclear terrorism requires the cooperation of all countries. First and foremost, Member States must take responsibility for putting in place, implementing and enforcing relevant national legislation.

Norway will engage in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and we have provided funding to the UN Secretariat for regional workshops to promote the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540. My government also has led efforts to minimize the use of highly enriched uranium in the civilian sector.

Norway applauds Agency efforts to support Member States to develop and implement national measures to suppress nuclear terrorism. In particular, my delegation applauds the Agency's work on Integrated Nuclear Security Plans. Such plans build essential national ownership of nuclear security.

Global and legally binding treaty instruments on nuclear security are also essential in fighting nuclear terrorism. Norway has initiated the process towards ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism as well as the valuable Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

It has recently been argued that the impact of radiological weapons could be much more serious than previously estimated. This should induce us all to do much more in the protection of fissile and radioactive materials, including full support for relevant Agency programs.

Mr. President,

Given the fact that the nuclear energy sector is likely to expand in the years to come, nuclear safety becomes ever more important. The IAEA must be at the centre of our efforts to build an integrated nuclear safety and security regime.

First, Member States must implement relevant conventions and codes of conduct in the area of nuclear safety. The Agency plays a vital role in assisting Member States to improve safety standards.

Second, we need to further refine relevant instruments such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

Third, we must ensure that transportation of nuclear and radioactive materials is held to the highest safety and security standards.

Fourth, because, despite preventive efforts, incidents and accidents do happen, Norway emphasizes the importance of emergency preparedness in each member state and underlines the need for an evolving international regime in this area. We must ensure that the IAEA Incident and Emergency Centre (IEC) is equipped to carry out its functions, and we need further progress in the implementation of the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies. My government is committed to continue this important work. We welcome also the achievements made in developing a draft Code of Conduct.

Finally, we need to work with the Agency to develop an international framework for protection of the environment.

To meet these challenges, adequate resources must be allocated to nuclear safety.

Mr. President,

IAEA technical cooperation is a means to ensure that all Member States have the opportunity to fully implement important norms and standards in areas such as nuclear security and safety. It is also vital in another dimension: that of sustaining the IAEA as a development partner.

IAEA assistance facilitates the use of nuclear applications for food and agriculture, water management, health and other key sectors. It makes a real contribution to efforts to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Norway encourages the Agency to continue to take part in UN coordination of development activities. Likewise, through initiatives such as the Scientific Forum, it is essential that the Agency continues to nurture partnerships with civil society.

Mr. President,

The IAEA has served us well for 50 years. Yet the nuclear challenges of the next half century are perhaps more daunting than any we have seen before. My government

believes that all of these – from managing a global nuclear renaissance to preventing nuclear terrorism – require sustained international cooperation and a highly professional and efficient IAEA. Norway pledges its full support for both.

Thank you, Mr. President