

**Statement by Artūras Dainius, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy  
Of the Republic of Lithuania, at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the General  
Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Lithuanian delegation I wish to congratulate you on your election as the President of the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Conference. My delegation is confident that under your able leadership the General Conference will successfully achieve its objectives.

Let me also congratulate the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, Kingdom of Lesotho and the Sultanate of Oman on their accession to the IAEA.

Lithuania associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of France on behalf of the European Union and wishes to reflect on some issues of particular importance to us.

Mr. President,

Lithuania reaffirms its full support to the work of the IAEA. The Agency remains the world's focal point for peaceful nuclear co-operation and nuclear safety. Furthermore, it plays an indispensable global role, inter alia, in preventing diversion of nuclear material and equipment to nuclear weapons related programmes and in countering new threats of nuclear terrorism. We believe that the international safeguards system of the IAEA is essential to the credible verification of nuclear non-proliferation. Lithuania considers that comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional Protocols constitute the current IAEA verification standard. We call upon states that have not yet done so to reaffirm their commitment to the NPT regime and to conclude the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements with the IAEA. In this context I would like to thank the State of Qatar for signing the safeguards agreement and

commend the Kingdom of Lesoto and the Republic of Iraq for conclusion of additional protocols Lithuania also urges countries which are already implementing Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements to bring into force the Additional Protocols.

I am pleased to note that the Agency has been able to draw a safeguards conclusion for 47 States, including the Republic of Lithuania. It also has to be noted that from the 1st of January 2008 the trilateral Safeguards Agreement among Lithuania and other non-nuclear European Union states, Euratom and the IAEA, as well as its Additional Protocol have superseded the bilateral ones between Lithuania and the IAEA.

A growing number of countries have recently expressed their interest in nuclear energy as a way to sustain their growing needs. At the same time, concerns over occurrence of eventual interruptions in nuclear fuel supply are still present. In this context we would like to welcome the Member States' initiatives reflecting on credible and robust international assurances of access to enriched uranium or enrichment services. In particular, the proposed fuel bank under the IAEA auspices would enhance international non-proliferation efforts and correspond to all three pillars of the NPT - non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy – keeping them tightened together.

Mr. President,

Lithuania strongly supports the global efforts aimed at strengthening international and national nuclear security regime. We want to underline key role of the IAEA in assisting Member States to develop and implement national and regional nuclear security frameworks.

In May 2008, the Lithuanian Parliament ratified amendments to The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities. Consequently, Lithuanian nuclear regulatory authority drafted new requirements for physical protection of nuclear materials and nuclear facilities.

Considering the importance of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources Lithuania actively seeks the ways to improve the regulatory infrastructure for control of ionizing radiation sources, exposure to ionizing radiation and radiation emergencies.

We call on countries which have not done so to adhere to and fully implement international instruments, such as the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities (CPPNM) as well as the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. We hope that the entry into force of the amendment to the CPPNM would be achieved as soon as possible.

Mr. President,

Lithuanian delegation fully adheres to the principle that safety is a precondition for the sustainable use of nuclear technology. Therefore, the capacity building on institutional, national and regional level, knowledge and experience sharing, training, assistance to the Member States to identify the gaps in knowledge and consequently to develop national programs for sustainable education and preparation of specialists remain of high importance. Due attention should be paid to competence building and training of personnel of regulatory authorities and its supporting organizations.

Lithuania fully supports the activities of the IAEA in establishing a network for exchanging regulatory experiences and practices which leads to global safety improvement and we look forward to participating in the activities of this network.

Lithuania dedicates significant resources to maintain the high safety level of Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant during remaining time of Unit 2 operation before it will enter into decommissioning process.

Some elements of Safety improvements for Ignalina NPP unit 2 were completed and some of them are being further implemented according to the Safety Improvement Program that is annually updated and reviewed.

We are particularly pleased with the positive results of follow up Operational Safety Review (OSART) Mission that completed its work at Ignalina NPP in April this year. All issues addressed by OSART Mission in 2006 were successfully resolved or were in satisfactory progress and in addition OSSART mission noted a number of good practices that will be shared with other Member States.

In parallel, Lithuania is proceeding with the licensing of the decommissioning activities at Unit 1 of Ignalina NPP.

Mr. President,

We closely follow global energy trend which shows growing energy demands and consequently significant increase in future nuclear power contribution. Lithuania's National Energy Strategy foresees rapid economic growth which is the key factor having direct impact on energy consumption and at the same time on electricity demand. Nuclear power is the largest source of energy in Lithuania now, accounting for approx. 70% of the electricity produced. Lithuania has already announced its decision to expand nuclear power by building a new nuclear power plant jointly with Estonia, Latvia and Poland. The new plant titled as Visaginas Nuclear Power Plant is planned to be built in 2016-2018. Visaginas NPP is intended to secure energy supply to the entire Baltic region. Despite the project complexity and large degree of coordination efforts among participating parties, we are glad that there are already some steps accomplished which I want to share with you.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Program (EIA) was approved by the Lithuanian Ministry of Environment on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007 taking into account comments from Lithuania and abroad. In August this year the EIA

report was prepared and presented to the public. The environmental impact assessment evaluated construction and operation of the new nuclear power plant in Lithuania with an approximate electric power of 3400 MW. This report will also be submitted for assessment to the IAEA expert mission coming to Lithuania in December 2008. The final decision on the acceptability of the nuclear power plant and its activity will be made by the Ministry of Environment of Lithuania taking into consideration all comments received from different authorities and public in Lithuania and abroad as well as results of the IAEA expert mission.

Last year Lithuania established a national investor company LEO LT which is responsible for the implementation and development of the New Nuclear Power Plant project. A new LEO LT subsidiary – ‘Visaginas Nuclear Power Plant’ Limited has been established in August 2008 to coordinate all activities related to the preparatory phase of new NPP.

The National Energy Strategy gives the national priority to ensure timely preparation of specialists for licencing, construction and operation of the new nuclear power plant. In this respect Lithuania has developed a National programme for the preparation of nuclear energy specialists for the years 2008-2015. This autumn, new educational programs on nuclear energy physics and nuclear engineering were launched at the main universities of Lithuania. Additionally, we have an idea to establish a regional center to train nuclear energy specialists and also make research activities.

We once again would like to reiterate our appreciation for the Agency’s timely assistance to Lithuania in nuclear energy and nuclear knowledge management areas.

Mr. President,

Future generations should not suffer from radioactive wastes currently generated in nuclear power facilities and resulting from other peaceful

applications; therefore, the Safety of radioactive waste management must be given utmost attention. Long - term safety assessment is a key element in the radioactive waste management process.

Lithuania's Radioactive Waste Management Strategy describes tasks that have to be implemented to ensure safety of radioactive waste. Lithuania has already taken a decision to dispose short-lived very low level waste in a landfill-type repository and short-lived low and intermediate level waste - in a near-surface repository with reinforced concrete vaults. Projects related to the construction of new radioactive waste management facilities and repositories for Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant's radioactive waste are ongoing. The contractor for building the landfill type repository for very low level waste is already chosen.. Technical project is in preparation stage now. As regards to near surface repository, recently organized pre-qualification procedure of possible contractor for near surface repository for low and intermediate level waste passed successfully and tender will be announced soon.

Both mentioned repositories will be constructed with the financial assistance from the European Union.

Mr. President,

Radiation protection is a complex, multifunctional and dynamically developing infrastructure that is able to be in line with ever changing technologies. Lithuanian radiation protection infrastructure is being constantly strengthened. Our country plays an active role in the regional European and Central Asian ALARA Network, RECAN. We understand its usefulness and support network's goals as it helps to maintain and even improve radiation protection level in the regions. Being a regular member of ALMERA laboratory Network, Radiation Protection Centre regularly passes proficiency tests.

Lithuania devotes considerable attention to the development of the radiation protection system in medicine as well. Related activities are being

implemented under the national project „Optimisation of Patient Dose in X-ray Diagnostics through Control of Patient Doses”. Doses in interventional radiology were measured and assessment of quality of mammography images were organized within the framework of regional project „Strengthening Radiological Protection of Patients and Medical Exposure Control“.

Specialists of the Radiation Protection Centre participate in various trainings, seminars, workshops, visits with a view to build required competence and adequately perform its functions in different areas where radiation sources are being used. A lot of efforts are being invested in developing of a complete set of measures enabling to ensure both occupational radiation protection in facilities using radiation sources and public radiation protection.

The establishment of the training centre in Lithuania is very promising and gives possibility for specialists to increase their knowledge in radiation protection.

Mr. President,

The role of the IAEA technical cooperation is being widely recognized and valued. Proper funding of technical cooperation activities is of great importance to us; therefore, we put all efforts to fulfill our commitments to the Technical Cooperation (TC) Fund by paying in full and on time.

Lithuania has a long lasting technical cooperation with the IAEA. During those years Lithuanian organizations were actively involved in different activities of the IAEA which resulted in building nuclear energy infrastructure, higher level of professional expertise and ensuring safe operation of nuclear facilities in our country.

Looking to the near future Lithuania will face a rather challenging task related to nuclear power expansion activities. Therefore, Lithuania's national institutions involved in the said processes need to be strengthened. In this regard, a technical cooperation project “Enhancing capabilities in VATESI and other institutions in the licensing of a new NPP” launched in early 2008 is

helpful to institutions in enhancing their capabilities and consequently ensures proper regulatory and authorization process during construction and operation of the new nuclear power plant.

Lithuania declares its strong support to the Agency's activities in the field of Technical Cooperation. While planning its future participation in TC activities Lithuania takes into consideration the *Common position of 29 countries of Europe region* presented to the Secretariat during the "Regional Meeting of IAEA Member States in Europe on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme" held on 22-23 May 2008. We would be willing to actively contribute to the planning process of the next TC Program cycle. In this context, we look forward to participating in the TC Europe Regional Meeting which will take place today.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I take this opportunity to reiterate the importance Lithuania attaches to cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and we will continue to closely work with the Agency by contributing to the achievement of our common goals.

I thank you, Mr. President.