

Statement

by

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Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me firstly to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the other members of the bureau on your election and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. I am confident that under your able leadership, the Conference will successfully accomplish the important tasks before it.

Let me also thank the Director General for his inspired leadership of the Agency and express the appreciation of my delegation for the work of his professional and dedicated staff.

I would also like to welcome the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Independent State of Papua New Guinea as new Members of the Agency, and wish them a fruitful relationship with the IAEA.

Malta associates itself with the statement delivered by France on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore make only a few additional remarks on areas of particular interest to Malta.

Mr. President,

The early 21st century has witnessed the emergence of new threats and challenges to international peace and security. These challenges are, in many ways, different in scope and nature from anything we have seen. They have called into question the effectiveness of global institutions that, for so many years, have served well the

international community. The need for new thinking and novel approaches to world governance has become more urgent. Tools already available to the international community must be updated and strengthened in response to the challenges of our time.

Mr. President,

The Non Proliferation Treaty continues to constitute the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime with disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy at its foundation. Malta calls on those States not yet Party to the NPT to join as non-nuclear weapon States as soon as possible.

The role of the Agency in verifying the compliance of States with their safeguard obligations under the NPT remains vital. The increasing need for the Agency's safeguard system to be equipped to respond to new challenges within its mandate is self-evident. In this respect, Malta considers Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, together with the Additional Protocol, as the international verification standard. We urge those States that do not have a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement to fulfil their basic obligation under the NPT without delay. Likewise, we call on all States that have not yet done so to promptly sign and bring into force an Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

Mr. President,

We regret that the Agency is still unable to determine the nature of Iran's nuclear programme. A number of issues identified in the Director-General's report remain outstanding. We urge Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA, providing the maximum transparency called for by the Agency. The implementation of the Additional Protocol would constitute an important step in building the required confidence in Iran's nuclear programme.

My delegation is also following with concern the ongoing developments with regard to the DPRK. We note with concern the recent announcement by the DPRK of its decision to suspend its disablement activities. My delegation urges the DPRK to

resume and conclude the dismantlement process. We underscore the importance of achieving a comprehensive and peaceful resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue that will lead to the early denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Malta welcomes the recent report of the Director-General on the Implementation of Safeguards in the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. We are pleased that the Agency is now able to implement safeguards in Libya in a routine manner. This development represents a success for Libya and a success for the IAEA. We commend Libya for the various steps that it has taken leading to this new phase in its relations with the Agency.

Mr. President,

Malta believes that the IAEA plays an important role in efforts to protect against nuclear terrorism. Malta recognizes the primary role of the Agency in providing States with assistance to control better their nuclear material and radiological sources, to protect their nuclear facilities and strengthen border controls. The potential of malicious acts using nuclear material with unimaginable consequences remains a continuing threat. The illicit trafficking of sensitive nuclear material and designs presents an enormous challenge in the area of non proliferation. It is of particular concern to my delegation that of the 243 incidents of illicit trafficking and other unauthorized activities involving nuclear and radioactive material reported to the Agency over a period of twelve months, 21 involve the theft or loss of material that was never recovered. My delegation supports measures to further intensify and expand those concrete actions which enhance the capabilities of States to prevent, interdict and respond to illegal acts involving nuclear and other radioactive material.

Mr. President,

Sharp fluctuations in the price of oil and other fossil fuels, uncertainty of supply and climate change are contributing to making nuclear power an increasingly attractive proposition. More and more countries are considering adding nuclear power to their energy mix. At the same time, a decision by a State to exercise its inalienable right to develop nuclear energy brings with it the heavy responsibility that it does so in a

secure and safe manner. The international community expects nothing less. We consider it of the utmost importance that new or expanded nuclear energy programmes are developed and undertaken in adherence with the strictest safety standards. In this context, we welcome the efforts of the Agency to promote sustainable education and training in all safety-related fields and to enhance nuclear and radiological emergency preparedness and response. Malta has every interest in being a part of the international effort to ensure the highest safety standards. In this context, I am pleased to inform the General Conference that earlier this year my Government acceded to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and participated for the first time in its Review meeting.

As an island State, Malta would like to see better communication between States shipping radioactive material and coastal States. We reiterate the importance of the safety of marine transport of radioactive material and believe that coastal States should have full information regarding shipments of nuclear material in the vicinity of their coast.

Mr. President,

Malta strongly values the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme and the important contribution it makes to achieving sustainable development and addressing needs in the areas of human health, food and agriculture and the environment. Malta benefits from technical cooperation in a number of fields with two additional national projects planned for the next technical cooperation cycle in the areas of consumer protection and human health. Malta also participates in several regional programmes in other areas such as the preservation of cultural heritage and environmental protection. The Agency's ongoing assistance has been especially instrumental in the establishment and strengthening of Malta's own regulatory authority and the consolidation of our public health services.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Malta wishes to express its appreciation to President Zedillo and to the other Members of the Commission of Eminent Persons for their Report. The Report

examines a broad spectrum of subjects of vital importance to the work of the Agency. It is ambitious and wide-ranging in scope with implications in all areas of Agency work. My delegation looks forward to the discussion in the coming months on the Agency's future role and on the resources needed to effectively fulfill its mandate. We are confident that in the decades to come the Agency will remain in the forefront of international efforts to make our world a better, safer and fairer place in which to live.

Thank You, Mr. President.