

# **S T A T E M E N T**

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**Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency of Bulgaria**

**at the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Conference of the IAEA**

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Madam President,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria I would like to join the other speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency and to assure you of the full support and co-operation of my delegation in the fulfillment of your important and responsible task.

I am convinced that under your guidance we will be able to reach a desirable conclusion through our deliberations and the conference will contribute to the achievement of the IAEA's main objectives: non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, peaceful application of atomic energy and enhancement of nuclear safety.

It is a pleasure for me to extend a cordial welcome to the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Rwanda as new Member States of the IAEA.

Our position was already expressed by the distinguished representative of Sweden speaking on behalf of the EU. In addition I would like to draw your attention to a couple of issues of particular importance to my country.

Madam President,

Distinguished delegates,

The IAEA plays an important role in strengthening the global nuclear safety framework. We would also like to commend the Agency for supporting national and international efforts for the safe and secure use of nuclear technology. The Annual Report gives a clear and analytical picture of the broad range of important results of the Agency's activities in 2008 and significant achievements in the field of nuclear technology, safety, verification and security and management as well.

In our view this proud record is inseparable from the leadership of outgoing Director General Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei. My delegation highly appreciates his efforts in fostering the peaceful, safe and secure use of nuclear energy, technical cooperation, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Allow me to express our gratitude and wish him success in his future endeavors

I would also like to express our confidence in Agency's incoming Director General Mr. Yukiya Amano and wish him success in the implementation of the goals and objectives ensuing from his mandate.

We firmly believe that the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be based on full compliance with the NPT and transparency in nuclear programs. An international non-proliferation regime of a universal character backed by a strong international Safeguards system is an absolutely essential basis. We consider the Comprehensive Safeguard Agreements and Additional Protocol to be the current IAEA verification standard. The strengthening and the universalization of the multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament treaties as well as their strict implementation and compliance are the core of our policy in this field.

We are convinced that NPT continues to be one of the cornerstones of international security and is the basis of the control of nuclear non-proliferation, and as a country that has signed and ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Bulgaria is deeply concerned about the decision made by the DPRK to withdraw from the NPT and to renew its work on the delayed nuclear projects for producing highly enriched uranium. Bulgaria is deeply concerned by the tests recently carried out by the DPRK and is convinced that the efforts should continue to find a diplomatic solution in the framework of the six- party negotiations.

The system of IAEA safeguards is a basic tool for preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons. As one of the first countries, that have signed and ratified the Additional Protocol, we call for its universalization.

Bulgaria fully aware of the importance of the zones free of nuclear weapons for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, regional peace and security. We commend the entry into force of Pelindaba Treaty and we express our support for transforming the Middle East into a zone free of nuclear weapons.

Bulgaria is deeply concerned about the lack of sufficient transparency on the Iranian side with regard to the IAEA verification activities. Respecting the inalienable right of every country to develop nuclear programs for peaceful purposes it is also our view that Iran should restore the confidence of the international community in the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. Bulgaria is convinced that a major step in this direction would be the ratification and application of the Additional Protocol which has already been signed by Iran.

Madam President,

The last two years were important for the development of the nuclear sector in Bulgaria. In 2007 the Modernization Program of Units 5 and 6 of Kozloduy NPP was completed. Ensuring the transparency of the whole process of the Program implementation and seeking for independent expertise an Agency mission was invited to assist Bulgarian experts in the assessment of the results achieved. Such a mission was held in November 2008 with the conclusions that the results of the review are excellent. In the experts' opinion, the complexity and the amount of the activities implemented under this program are impressive. I would like to say that we are proud of this conclusion and this gives us confidence that the combined efforts of regulator and operator towards safety improvement bring very good results.

Another important issue is the further development of the activities of the new nuclear build. The licensing process of Belene NPP is under way and now the Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency is in a final stage of assessment of the Technical Design, Safety Analysis Report and Probabilistic Safety Assessment. In order to obtain broad international support in this process we have been seeking assistance from relevant international organizations and mainly from the Agency. Thus, under the respective national technical co-operation project, an IAEA Expert Mission to support the Bulgarian regulator in the assessment of the PSA was carried out. A preliminary mission and an expert mission were carried out in February and in May 2009 respectively. In June 2009 the final report was submitted officially to Bulgarian authorities. I would like to use this opportunity to express our thanks to the IAEA for their prompt and adequate response and for

their well organized work, which assists the Bulgarian regulatory authority in its licensing activities. Regarding Intermediate Safety Analysis Report on the new build we receive good support from leading European technical support organizations, whose experts rendered assistance to the regulator pertaining to the quality and adequacy of the documentation, compliance with the Bulgarian legislation, international standards, good international practices, additional research and verification of selected safety aspects.

Madam President,

In July this year the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Forum of the State Nuclear Safety Authorities of the Countries Operating WWER Type Reactors (WWER Forum) was held in Bulgaria. The main objective of the meeting was to exchange experience and information on WWER specific issues and practices. The meeting was attended by the heads of the regulatory authorities or their representatives of all countries operating or constructing WWER type reactors. Observers from the IAEA also attended the meeting. All WWER Forum members had the opportunity to present reports on the recent most important national issues and developments in the field of nuclear regulation and safety, followed by discussions among peers. We appreciate the IAEA's support for this forum and we believe that it will have an overall positive impact on future regulatory activities.

Madam President,

Technical cooperation has always been and will remain an important activity of the Agency's programs. As a EU member, we consider our changing role within

TC partnership and we try to define a new strategy and mechanisms for future cooperation. We share the view that cooperation among the countries from the region should be based on the exchange of information and know-how on regional level, rather than the procurement of tools for responding to individual national needs only. Our opinion is that the main task for the Europe region is to promote the sharing of knowledge and best practice within the region. Bulgaria is ready to continue providing experts and training facilities. Taking into account that financing of the TC activities should be assured, sufficient and predictable, my country pays its annual contribution to the TC fund fully and on time. As every year, I am pleased to inform you that Bulgaria pledged its contribution during the General Conference proceedings.

In conclusion, I would like to confirm that Bulgaria will support future IAEA activities in the promotion of international co-operation in the field of the peaceful use of atomic energy and the application of Safeguards.

Thank you, Madam President.