

**STATEMENT BY MR. MANUEL FERNANDEZ RONDON, PRESIDENT OF THE
CUBAN AGENCY OF NUCLEAR ENERGY AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES
AND HEAD OF THE CUBAN DELEGATION TO THE 53 GENERAL
CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)**

September 15, 2009

Madam President:

At the very outset, let me add the voice of the Cuban delegation to those who have congratulated you on your election as President of the General Conference. We are confident that with your wide diplomatic experience, you will lead our work to a happy ending. I would like to express my delegation's readiness to give all our support to the success of the Conference.

Likewise, we welcome the inclusion of Cambodia and Rwanda as Members of the Agency.

Madam President,

For the developing countries, the need for nuclear applications in solving our problems is increasing, hence the significance of the promotional activities that the Agency provides to our countries, which constitute its primary *raison d'être*.

In Cuba, the application of nuclear technologies in vital areas of the economy is highly appreciated and, therefore, let me reiterate our commitment to technical cooperation activities. Our participation in regional projects has increased, especially those framed in ARCAL program, in accordance with the priority we attach to cooperation among developing countries.

As usual, my country has fulfilled on time its financial commitments to the Technical Cooperation Fund and covered the 100% of the National Participation Costs. Last year, Cuba contributed with half a million dollars to support one project in the form of "cost sharing". Also, we achieved a rate of implementation of national projects of 80%, higher than the overall average.

Moreover, in 2008, Cuba continued to increase contributions to the Technical Cooperation Program through various activities, among which the contribution of 29 experts from 53 international missions of the Agency and 8 teachers for technical cooperation activities can be highlighted. Also, 9 specialists from other countries implemented training activities in Cuba.

Let me reiterate the importance that Cuba attaches to the Program of Action for Cancer Therapy and Treatment (PACT) and to acknowledge the results achieved in the last period. In particular, we highly value the synergies that have been

established with different international institutions and agencies under PACT and welcome the entry into force of the joint WHO / IAEA programme to combat cancer.

My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Latin American division of the Department of Technical Cooperation's efforts in 2008, with the objective to improve the various performance indicators and to strengthen national capacities for managing the program.

Moreover, we stress the importance of maintaining a suitable balance between the human-resource and equipment components in the design and implementation of technical cooperation projects, given the essential role of the Agency in managing the acquisition of materials and high-tech equipment, access to which is sometimes difficult for our countries.

Madam President,

At this point I would stress the damaging effect against the Cuban people of the unjust economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed to Cuba by the government of the United States. The difficulties faced by the Procurement and Technical Officers to purchase scientific equipment projects approved in Cuba have been maintained and increased and it stresses the implementation of our projects from having to buy equipment in remote locations and adversely affects the achievement of its objectives.

While denouncing this policy, which is contrary to international law and the Statute of the IAEA, we recognize the continuous efforts of the Secretariat to find alternatives and solutions. Because of it, despite the above difficulties, it has been possible to achieve the mentioned high rates of implementation .

Madam President

We note with satisfaction that the activities related to nuclear and radiological security continued to develop satisfactorily in 2008.

In this area we would highlight that, thanks to the efforts of the Government and optimal use of aid received in training and infrastructure by the IAEA, Cuba has achieved full control of personnel exposed to ionizing radiation, through a national system for monitoring and control. Similar experiences are taking place in other countries in the region with the help of Cuban experts.

Madam President,

The Agency is in a process of analysis for its improvement, with the aim of achieving greater effectiveness of its work in the future. Cuba believes that for this exercise to

be successful, it must take into account the great differences that exist between the nuclear programs of member countries of the IAEA.

In this regard, it is appropriate to recall that an important part of Member States possesses small quantities of nuclear material, and that many did not even have nuclear facilities defined in terms of safeguards. You can not, therefore, devise comprehensive measures thinking of those that have nuclear programs of large or medium-sized and pretend that all can fulfil them.

Moreover, we must ensure that the verification process is conducted fairly and impartially, as a prerequisite for preserving peace and security of our countries. It neither can be without limits or boundaries, as some seek to impose, because of purely geopolitical interests and in violation of norms enshrined in international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We finally must eradicate from this process any attempt of pressure or undue interference that undermine the efficiency and credibility of the verification process of the Agency.

A long time ago it should be stopped the political manipulation that characterize the so-called Iranian nuclear case, and eliminating double standards, as also happens with the charges to the Syrian Arab Republic or the unacceptable failure to achieve a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East -that has been a permanent claim of the international community in recent decades.

As noted on previous occasions, we reaffirm the need to respect the inalienable right of all States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and that, under no circumstances, voluntary measures should become obligations of Member States.

We also stressed that the IAEA is the sole competent authority for verifying compliance with its obligations under the respective safeguards agreements of Member States. We trust that the Agency's work will continue without external interference and I want to take this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation to the professional and technical work undertaken by the Secretariat in this regard.

Once again, Cuba reaffirms the importance of prioritizing peace and negotiation in resolving all international issues and reiterates his conviction that it is necessary to uphold the unconditional dialogue on a basis of equality and mutual respect, to focus on our differences.

Madam President,

Many developing countries make an effort to meet our obligations under safeguards agreements, and my country devotes considerable human and financial resources to this end. We carry out such actions as part of our political commitments, as part of the NPT and the Treaty of Tlatelolco, with the hope that these mechanisms lead to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Original in Spanish
(Unofficial translation)

At this point, we consider it vitally important to reaffirm the indissoluble link between non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Our position is well known and fully identified with that expressed by members of the Non-Aligned Movement, reaffirmed at the recent XV Summit in Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt, in July.

However, despite the hopes for change, it is worrying that continues the developing of militarist policies and that more than a trillion dollars are spent annually in the war industry, which includes further development of nuclear weapons and strategies.

It is in our hands to reverse this reality. The coming months bring new opportunities and the NPT Review Conference of 2010 will be an opportune time to assert the rationale for multilateral action, to establish a real commitment to the development, non proliferation, nuclear disarmament and world peace.

Finally, Madam President, let me reiterate the respect and high appreciation by the authorities of my country to Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his leadership and management in the Agency. We are confident that his legacy of professionalism, independence, impartiality, courage and sense of justice remains a source of inspiration for the work of the Secretariat.

We also reiterate our congratulations to HE Mr. Yukiya Amano on his election as new Director General and the assurance that he can count, as always, with Cuba's support for the IAEA, to maintain its high international prestige.

Thank you very much.