

STATEMENT BY FINLAND  
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to the

53<sup>rd</sup> General Conference of the  
International Atomic Energy Agency

Madame President,

1. On behalf of the Finnish delegation, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Conference. I would like to assure you of our full support in fulfilling your important task this week. I would like to use this opportunity to welcome the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Rwanda.

2. I associate myself fully with the statement made by Sweden on behalf of the European Union. I would like to comment on a few issues that are of particular interest to Finland, and the recent developments in Finland in nuclear sector. The full version of my statement is circulated in written form.

Madam President,

3. As this General Conference will be the last General conference of Dr ElBaradei as Director General of the IAEA I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to him for the outstanding way in which he has carried out his tasks during these challenging years. Despite of these challenges Dr ElBaradei has

managed to achieve impressive results and his integrity, personal commitment and diplomatic skills are widely recognized and highly appreciated. The Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 was a just recognition of the achievements both of the Director General and of the Agency.

4. I would also like to convey Finland's warm congratulations and full support to the new Director General, Ambassador Amano. We are convinced that under Ambassador Amano the Agency will continue its professional, objective and impartial work to the benefit of the whole membership.

Madam President,

5. To my government, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT, and its integrity remain the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In this regard, I would like to note our long standing and strong support for achieving the universality of and universal compliance with the NPT, and the relevant safeguards agreements, including the additional protocols thereto.

6. Nuclear weapons proliferation remains to be a serious concern to my government. The NPT can only fulfil its role if we can be confident of the compliance of all states with the obligations of the Treaty. The international community must take the appropriate measures in the cases of non-compliance in order to preserve the integrity and authority of the system. Finland is determined and dedicated to ensuring success for the 2010 NPT Review Conference and to addressing the challenges we face.

7. We will continue to promote also other issues of key importance such as the strengthening of export controls, entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as immediate start of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) and its early conclusion.

Madam President,

8. I would like to underline once again that safeguards and verification is an inseparable part of nuclear activities at large. Well-functioning verification and safeguards is a prerequisite for public trust in the use of nuclear energy in the longer term. It is important to ensure that the Agency can fully continue its highly professional and impartial work in the safeguards implementation, and has sufficient financial and other resources for its verification activities in the future.

9. Finland strongly supports developing efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's safeguards system. In particular, the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and the Additional Protocols, which together form a solid basis of the safeguards system, and constitute the current verification standard, should be brought promptly into force and implemented in all member states.

10. In Finland, the experience from the implementation of Integrated Safeguards started about one year ago has been most encouraging. In accordance with the Additional Protocol, Finland has provided the Agency with broader information covering all aspects of our nuclear fuel cycle related activities. Collecting and providing this information has not been as burdensome as we expected and after the preparation of the first declaration, updating it has been straightforward. Also broader rights to access facilities and to use advance verification technologies have been provided to the Agency without problems. The overall number of annual IAEA inspection missions to Finland has decreased by about 60 %.

11. In future, we would welcome and support further use of modern state of the art verification technologies, which can provide quick and reliable verification results. Another area, where we would like to support the Agency taking more practical steps, is enhanced cooperation with the State Systems of Accounting for and Control of Nuclear Material (SSAC).

12. Since Finland is at an advanced stage in the development of an underground final disposal facility for spent nuclear fuel, high priority is given to the development of the safeguards system for a geological repository of spent fuel. The implementation of safeguards in a new type of facility is necessary at national as well as international level. We note with great satisfaction that the IAEA has drafted integrated safeguards approaches for both the spent fuel encapsulation plants and for the repositories. Finland is pleased to note that major progress has taken place recently in this area to develop an Integral Safeguards Approach for the Repository.

Madam President,

13. The growing interest in the use of nuclear power is obvious. Consequently, the challenges for the IAEA in all its areas of activity grow. Finland has more than 30 years of experience from operation of nuclear power plants. We have a very good safety and performance record. Besides the 4 existing nuclear power plant units, we have one unit under construction. At the same time, three companies, each aiming to build a new nuclear power plant unit, have applied for a Decision in Principle for their projects. This decision made by the Government and endorsed by the Parliament is needed before concrete steps for constructing a new nuclear power plant are permitted.

14. The national climate and energy strategy recognises that nuclear power will play a significant role in the energy mix of Finland far into the future. With the new 1600 MW reactor under construction, the nuclear power is expected to cover over 35 % of the electricity demand in Finland. A diversified and sustainable energy mix is the continuous goal of climate and energy policy. The share of the renewables is now close to 30 % of our energy consumption. The strong promotion of renewable energy, intensified energy efficiency and increased self-sufficiency are the important elements of our energy strategy.

Madam President,

15. Public acceptance of nuclear power needs to be earned every day, and it is to a great extent related to nuclear safety. Any major plant damage, anywhere in the world, may have major impact on the public acceptance worldwide. This underlines the importance of improving nuclear safety worldwide. Continued safe operation of nuclear power is therefore necessary and there cannot be any exception in any Member State. The IAEA is a major player in these efforts. Now that so many new countries are planning to go for nuclear power, the role of the IAEA will be even more important. Finland strongly supports the continuation and further development of the IAEA activities in this area.

16. Finland believes that Member States and the Agency should strengthen and coordinate their efforts to ensure that countries embarking on nuclear power programmes develop sound safety infrastructures. Notwithstanding the central role of the Agency in contributing to conditions which allow safe use of nuclear energy, it needs to be underlined that the responsibility of safe and secure use of nuclear power lies solely with the national authorities and the operators. The IAEA can give them advice and support, and develop robust international standards, but it cannot be expected to assume the responsibilities of the national authorities. In this context, Finland underlines again the importance of a strong national safety culture and a strong and independent national regulatory authority that enjoys trust of the citizen. Finland continues to actively share with other countries its experience in building national infrastructure and making arrangements that are necessary for ensuring safety of nuclear power plants.

17. Finland appreciates very much the work that the Agency has done in setting up modern safety standards and is ready to keep providing expert resources to that work. Finland is a party to all international safety conventions and has participated actively in their review meetings. We call upon all countries to accede to the safety conventions and apply the resulting obligations in full.

18. I would also like to underline the importance of the nuclear waste management issue. A clearly defined waste management policy openly declared by the Government and including solid financing arrangements defined in the nuclear legislation are essential for enabling progress in practical implementation of nuclear waste management. The Finnish nuclear waste management and disposal programme has systematically progressed in accordance with the target schedule established by the Government's policy decision already in 1983. In line with the national strategy, the final repositories for medium and low level radioactive waste have been in routine operation at each nuclear power plant site since 1990's.

19. The Finnish fuel cycle is based on the once-through option. In accordance with the Finnish legislation, spent nuclear fuel is considered as radioactive waste which has to be disposed of in the Finnish bedrock. The long site selection and concept development, including environmental impact assessment (EIA) processes, resulted in a plan for final disposal in Olkiluoto. After a favoring safety appraisal by the regulatory authority and the approval by the host municipality, having legal veto-right, the Government made the Decision in Principle (first step in licensing) in late 2000, and this decision was endorsed by the Parliament in 2001.

20. The nuclear waste management company Posiva is conducting an extensive program aiming at gaining preparedness for the submittal of the Construction License application 2012. An underground rock characterisation facility called "Onkalo" plays a crucial role in Posiva's program. The construction of this facility, which is foreseen to operate as part of the final repository, started in July 2004. At the end of August 2009, the access tunnel of the facility has progressed close to the final depth of the repository. Fuel disposal is scheduled to start in 2020,

21. The safety demonstration and safety assessment of spent fuel disposal take into account the IAEA safety standards and other international guidance. International cooperation and transparency are emphasized as cornerstones of the spent fuel and waste safety.

Madam President,

22. Finland welcomes the progress achieved in the field of nuclear security. Regarding the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), Finland has completed the required amendments to the national legislation and is ready to deposit its ratification instrument. Finland calls upon all states for early ratification of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), and the Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism that will strengthen the global nuclear security regime.

23. The Agency has an important role in the fight against nuclear terrorism. Finland has provided support to the Agency's nuclear security activities and we are pleased to announce another voluntary contribution to the Nuclear Security Fund (NSF).

24. Finland is pleased of having received in June 2009 an International Physical Protection Advisory Service mission (IPPAS). Recommendations given by the review team were found most useful and many of them are already being implemented. Finland can recommend IPPAS missions also to other Member States as effective means to get guidance for enhancing physical security of the nuclear materials, facilities and radioactive sources.

Madam President,

25. Finland recognizes the importance to the Technical Co-operation Programme of the Agency. Finland has always paid its share in full and on time both to the Regular Budget and to the Technical Co-operation Fund (TCF) and calls upon all member states to do so. The demand for technical cooperation activities related to the introduction of nuclear power, particularly in safety, is increasing. It is important that the Agency can respond to that demand, and that the methods of technical cooperation are developed further. The

most efficient ways to transfer knowledge/technology should be utilized and the emphasis should be on long-term capacity building.

26. As regards the content of the Technical Co-operation Programme, the projects should be fully within the Agency's terms of reference and based on national development strategies. Finland fully recognizes the important role of non-power applications related technical cooperation and assistance. We hope the Agency continues to develop more cost-effective and sustainable methods, and partnerships with other organisations, such as WHO and FAO. The technical expertise of the Agency and the sectoral and development expertise of the other organisations should be productively put to the service of the recipient countries in a coordinated, effective and sustainable manner.

Madam President,

27. We warmly welcome the interactive discussions on the Future of the Agency being chaired by the Ambassador Vallim Guerreiro. Finland will take active part in these discussions and hopes that this process will produce concrete results to be presented to the Board of Governors.

Finally, Madam President

28. I would like to conclude my remarks by reiterating, on behalf of my government, Finland's full support to the Agency and its activities.

Thank you, Madam President.