

HUNGARY

Statement of  
**H.E. Mr. Péter HÓNIG**  
Minister, Ministry of Transport, Telecommunication and Energy  
Republic of Hungary  
At the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Conference of the IAEA

Madame President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you upon your election to preside over the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in exercising your important duties. Let me also welcome the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Rwanda new Members of the Agency.

I would like to underline that Hungary fully associates itself with the statement made earlier by the Representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

Madame President,

Distinguished Delegates,

At this crucial juncture, when the challenge of a global economic crisis forces all governments to abandon old policies and mechanisms, the International Atomic Energy Agency is starting a new era as well by electing a new Director General of the organization. We appreciate and applaud the efforts and achievements of Dr Mohammed ElBaradei to guide the Agency throughout the past 12 years, and strongly believe that the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the right organization and to the right person in 2005. At the same time, we congratulate Mr. Yukiya Amano, the next Director General of the Agency. I am convinced that his diplomatic skills and experience in managerial work will help the Agency tackle the challenges that lie ahead. I would like to assure Mr. Amano of Hungary's full support.

Madame President,

Hungary remains committed to and participates in all aspects of the Agency's work. The reason for this is twofold: on the one hand, there is the widespread use of nuclear energy in Hungary. On the other hand, we attribute great importance to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in general. We believe that the Agency has an important role to play in ensuring that nuclear energy is used solely for the benefit of the people.

The IAEA, together with the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, is at the very center of the so-called nuclear non-proliferation regime. The purpose of this regime – a purpose that Hungary has supported right from the beginning – is to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons technologies and materials, while enabling all interested countries to benefit from nuclear science and technologies. Through its safeguards and verification system, the IAEA has played a key role in the international efforts aimed at meeting the challenge of nuclear proliferation. Member States should give their full support to the Agency in fulfilling its mandate in this regard and Hungary urges all Members to sign, ratify, and implement a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocols.

This brings me to some of the current proliferation challenges. Hungary joins the international community in condemning the DPRK for its recent underground nuclear test explosion, conducted in contravention of UN Security Council resolutions. The nuclear program of Iran is also a source of great concern, since Iran refuses to comply fully with its obligations under relevant UN Security Council resolutions and make the program transparent in order to clear the remaining doubts regarding its true nature. Hungary fully supports the efforts of the international community to find a diplomatic resolution of the dispute.

Madame President,

Taking a closer look at the agendas of Board meetings, we have to conclude that the Agency tackles challenges in ever-growing numbers and magnitude, such as the implementation of safeguards in more countries, budgetary issues, the effectiveness and efficiency of programs implemented by the Agency, nuclear safety and security, as well as developments in the field of application of new technologies using ionizing radiation. These challenges are compounded by an apparent “nuclear renaissance”, as more and more countries declare their intention to embark on nuclear energy programs.

Hungary is joining the “nuclear renaissance” club as our Parliament has passed a decision in principle paving the way to build new units to the Paks Nuclear Power Plant. In its almost unanimously adopted resolution 25/2009 (2 Apr), the Hungarian Parliament gave permission in principle to the government to start preparatory work on

the expansion of the Paks NPP. The resolution mandates the government to have authorities execute environmental assessment, study energy markets and needs in the projected time of the availability of the new unit(s) and finally contract the new capacity. According to the timetable of the activities following this decision, some 5 years are needed to conclude administrative activities before the new units could be procured and built, which is estimated to take an additional 6 years.

Besides this decision, Hungary made important steps in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy: By the end of 2008 the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority received the program from the operator of the NPP that leads to the extension of the lifetime of the NPP. The Authority examined and evaluated the program and in its decision made comments and gave instructions. In the overall evaluation of the program, the Regulatory Body concluded that by executing the program and the additional measures the lifetime extension of the existing 4 units seems feasible.

As we reported earlier to the General Conference, the power upgrade is nearly finished at the NPP and according to the plans all four units will be able by the end of this year to deliver 500MW electricity to the grid that is 108% of their previous nominal performance.

Madame President,

Last May, the third Review Meeting of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management took place. I am proud to inform you that the reports about the activities in the field in Hungary were well received, with some of them having been declared as “best practice”. During the review meeting, all countries – among them Hungary –intending to construct new nuclear units underlined that dealing with the safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste could not be started early enough. Let me take this opportunity to encourage Member States that have not done so to join this important Convention.

In the context of radioactive waste, as we already reported to the General Conference in previous years, a suitable site was identified for the National Radioactive Waste Repository in the vicinity of Bataapáti village, where the low and intermediate level

radioactive waste of the Paks Nuclear Power Plant can be safely disposed at intermediate depth in granite host rock. At present, the construction of the repository is still in progress. The above-surface facility was completed in September 2008, and after receiving the necessary license, the first waste packages were subsequently delivered to the repository for buffer storage. According to plans, the first underground disposal chambers will be ready by the end of 2010.

We already reported about the preparation for the repatriation of highly enriched spent fuel from the Budapest Research Reactor last year. Now I am happy to report that we have successfully completed the return of the spent fuel to its country of origin. I am taking this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the Agency and to the generous supporters of the program.

Madame President,

In 2005 we have hosted a QUATRO (Quality Assurance Team for Radiation Oncology) audit at the National Institute of Oncology. The findings of the inspectors showed that the equipment needed significant renewal in order to assure up-to-date treatment to patients. The Institute of Oncology followed the recommendations and this year a completely new irradiation lab was procured and installed to serve the patients. With this, and following planned second similar installment, the Institute will apply for the title of an internationally accepted reference institute.

Last year we have completed a regional project, in which we sampled the water of the Danube river and analyzed the samples using isotope measurement techniques. With this method, we were able to learn about the quality of the water and discover the areas of pollution. Encouraged by the success, we have initiated a new regional project for a more thorough analysis of the water of the Danube for the new TC cycle.

Madame President,

Turning to the issue of Technical Cooperation, I would like to emphasize that Hungary attaches great importance to the third pillar of the Agency, and has been always an active participant of the Agency's TC Program. We are willing to continue this

tradition. However, we would like to be involved in the other “end” of the activities, and share the knowledge we have accumulated throughout the years of cooperation with the Agency. I am sure that with the increasing interest in nuclear energy and the limited number of available experts Hungary has plenty to offer. I encourage Member States and the Secretariat to rely on Hungarian experts and expertise. This is in line with the spirit of the will of the “founding fathers”, and a good opportunity for Hungary to reciprocate the goodwill experienced in the previous years.

Hungary is also taking part in the Safeguards support program this year by providing training to trainees in the field of safeguards inspection as we have done it in the past.

Madame President,  
Distinguished Delegates,

To conclude, let me wish all the success to the outgoing Director General in his future endeavors and, at the same time, a smoothly going “nuclear renaissance” to the newly elected DG. I am sure that the forthcoming years will put all of us to the test and that the Agency will have much more to deal with than in the past. Yet, we have to remind ourselves that overcoming all difficulties has been a traditional feature of this Agency. I am confident that together, we will be able to keep this tradition. Hungary has always been a partner and will remain a partner in supporting the work of the Agency and cooperate fully in the peaceful use of atomic energy.

Thank you, Madame President!