



Statement

by

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Madame President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, allow me to convey the congratulations of my delegation to you, Madame President, on your election as President of 53rd Session of the IAEA General Conference. Rest assured that my delegation will support you and the other members of the bureau in your efforts to ensure that this Conference successfully addresses the important items on its agenda.

I also wish to take this opportunity to express sincere appreciation to Director-General Dr. Mohammed ElBaradei for the outstanding manner in which he has led the IAEA. At times confronted by unprecedented challenges, Dr. ElBaradei has led this Organization with exemplary diplomatic skill and integrity. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 was fitting acknowledgment of the contribution not only of the Agency but also the Director-General at the service of peace.

I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Yukiya Amano on his appointment as the new Director-General of the IAEA. Malta is convinced that Ambassador Amano has the skills and experience necessary to be able to effectively tackle the numerous challenges facing the Agency.

I also wish to welcome the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Rwanda as new Members of the IAEA and wish them a rewarding relationship with the Agency.

Malta associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore limit my intervention to a few additional remarks on issues that are of particular interest to my country.

Madame President,

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Treaty represents a bargain between disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Malta looks forward to a successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and is encouraged by the outcome of the third session of its Preparatory Committee. Malta calls on States that are not Parties to the NPT to join as non-nuclear weapon states as soon as possible.

The role of the IAEA in ensuring that States comply fully with the safeguards obligations under the NPT is an integral and indispensable part of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. For this reason, the Agency must be provided with the tools needed to detect and deter the diversion of nuclear material for illicit use. Malta considers that Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with the Additional Protocol constitute the current IAEA verification standard. We urge States to bring into force Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement as required under the NPT without delay. At the same time, we call on all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify an Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

Madame President,

The continuing uncertainty surrounding the nature and scope of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a matter of serious concern. Despite some recent modest progress, we regret that after six years the IAEA is still unable to provide assurances on the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. We hope that in the coming weeks, steps will be taken to rebuild confidence between Iran and the international community. The implementation of the Additional Protocol would be an important step in the right direction. My delegation wishes to thank the Director-General and his dedicated staff for their tireless and impartial efforts to resolve all outstanding issues.

Similarly, we are also concerned by actions taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The recent nuclear test by the DPRK makes the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty a matter of even greater urgency. Malta hopes that, to this end, important progress will be registered in the coming months. Malta urges the DPRK to return to the Six-Party Talks and to resume cooperation with the IAEA without delay. In the interest of regional and global security, we urge the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons programme in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Madame President,

As more and more countries consider adding nuclear power to their energy mix, the need for the highest standards of nuclear safety is self-evident. A decision by a State to exercise its right to develop nuclear energy requires that it does so in a safe and secure manner. Safety and security remain primarily the responsibility of the States themselves. At the same time, we applaud the important role played by the IAEA in supporting Member States efforts to enhance their safety and security infrastructures. Malta believes that new or expanded nuclear energy programmes must be developed only when the strictest safety standards can be assured.

The potential of malicious acts using nuclear material remains a continuing threat that requires our constant vigilance. We appreciate the important role played by the Agency in assisting States to control nuclear material and

radiological sources, protect nuclear facilities and strengthen border controls. Malta believes that the illicit trafficking of sensitive nuclear material presents an enormous challenge in the area of non-proliferation. We support measures that enhance the capabilities of States to prevent and respond to illegal acts involving nuclear and other radioactive material. In this connection, I am pleased to announce that Malta has become the 107th Member State participating in the programme of the Illicit Trafficking Database. Malta is also taking steps to ratify the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

As a coastal and leading maritime flag State, Malta views with serious concern the increase in incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea. Malta supports recent efforts to address this new threat at the global as well as regional level.

Madame President,

The Technical Cooperation Programme of the Agency continues its sterling work in different sectors addressing also development needs in some of the world's poorest countries. Malta benefits from technical cooperation in a number of fields and also participates in several regional programmes in areas ranging from human health to the preservation of cultural heritage artifacts. The Agency's assistance has also extended our public health services in the field of cancer treatment and medical imaging, which will culminate in the establishment of a new Specialized Oncology Centre. Malta highly values the

Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme and welcomes the initiative of the Secretariat to prepare a Strategy for Technical Cooperation in Europe.

Thank you, Madame President