

**Statement by Ambassador Alphons C.M. Hamer**

**Resident Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the International Atomic Energy Agency**

**Vienna, 16 September 2009**

Madam President,

I take great pleasure in congratulating you, Madam President, on the assumption of your important task as Chair of the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Conference. You can count on our full support. Also, let me express the Netherlands' appreciation for the Director General, Dr ElBaradei, for his leadership and the dedication with which he has carried out his duties over the past twelve years. Dr ElBaradei has shown exceptional leadership, and skilfully steered the Agency through twelve years that have seen a big increase in both membership and its tasks and responsibilities. We wholeheartedly support the conferment on Dr. ElBaradei of the title of Director General Emeritus.

Allow me also to congratulate Ambassador Amano on his election as Director General of the Agency. He faces a daunting task, but we are convinced that he will make an excellent Director-General. We pledge him our full support.

Madam President,

We fully share the comments made by the Swedish Presidency on behalf of the Member States of the European Union. I shall limit myself to some additional remarks of particular interest to the Netherlands.

Madam President,

These are challenging times for the non-proliferation regime. The ongoing efforts by the DPRK to produce nuclear weapons, Iran's lack of cooperation in allowing the agency to verify the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme, outstanding questions

about Syria's nuclear programme, the danger of nuclear material falling into the hands of terrorists and other non-state actors: these are all matters of grave concern; matters that require action.

But despite these worries, there are grounds for cautious optimism. Since last year's General Conference we are witnessing a new momentum. President Obama's vision of a world without nuclear weapons, set out in his Prague speech, has inspired a renewed international effort toward a strengthened non-proliferation regime. Let us not waste this moment.

Madam President,

The Netherlands will take up its seat on the Agency's Board of Governors for the next three years. We want to work hard for the Agency and take an active part in shaping its future.

#### *Safeguards and Verification*

The IAEA's international safeguards system forms an essential part of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. But there is room for a further strengthening of this system. A Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement together with an Additional Protocol constitutes *the* verification standard. We call on all member states to conclude, ratify and implement these instruments. In today's world, the Additional Protocol is an essential tool to enable the Agency to verify that no nuclear material is diverted to other than peaceful purposes. Such verification is pivotal for building trust, a commodity of which there can never be enough, but which is often scarce in international relations. As trust is needed for enhanced nuclear cooperation, a strengthened nuclear safeguards system is to the benefit of all.

However, strengthening safeguards is not enough. We also have to ensure compliance. In order to guarantee the integrity of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the IAEA's inspection regime, we need a strong policy against non-compliance.

Madam President,

## *Nuclear Security and Safety*

We need to be continuously aware of new, emergent security and proliferation risks. Nuclear terrorism is one of the biggest threats to international security.

We warmly welcome President Obama's initiative to host a nuclear security summit next year. Nuclear security is a topic of crucial importance and deserves the attention of our Heads of State and Government. We believe it is important to avoid a duplication of instruments: rather the summit should bring about the maximum cross-fertilisation of existing instruments

One of these instruments is the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which has made major progress since it was launched in July 2006. In close cooperation with the co-chairs, the United States and the Russian Federation, the Netherlands hosted the fifth plenary meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in June 2009. Later this year, we will also organise an international Global Initiative Exercise on the prevention of nuclear terrorism. The IAEA is fully involved in both events.

The Nuclear Security Fund is an important instrument to improve nuclear security. All of us have an interest in the greatest possible security of nuclear material. Through multilateral cooperation, we can maximise efficiency and, as a result, maximise our effectiveness. The NSF should be supported by all of us and not just by a few donor countries. In our view, the Fund's activities should be funded out of the Agency's regular budget. In the meantime, we call upon all member states to contribute to the Fund. The Netherlands has donated substantially and without conditions for several years now, and my Minister for Foreign Affairs has pledged another 250.000 Euros for 2010 at the GICNT-plenary in The Hague.

Madam President,

From 22 till 30 June of this year an International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) mission visited the Netherlands at our request. With this third IPPAS – mission all nuclear installations in the Netherlands as well as the National Regulatory Body have been reviewed. A follow-up-mission is planned for 2010 to consider the implementation of the recommendations and suggestions. Furthermore - in close cooperation with the Agency and the European Nuclear Security Regulators Association (ENSRA) – a regional training course for security regulators will take place at Delft Technical University in the Netherlands later this year. We hope that this pilot course will result in a 'permanent' European Training Centre.

Madam President,

### *Science and Technology*

Many speakers have voiced serious concerns about the shortage of supply of medical isotopes. My country is host to the world's second largest producer of radio-isotopes for medical use. After technical problems in the cooling circuit in August last year, the reactor was shut down. Initial investigations revealed that the necessary reparations would be complex. Because of the global implications of a lengthy suspension of isotope production, the reactor's operator NRG requested a restart pending the reparation work, while ensuring adequate safety measures. After the Dutch regulatory body assessed these measures to be sufficient - an opinion which was confirmed by an IAEA review mission - my government granted permission to restart the reactor for a period of one year. I would like to underline the importance of close cooperation between member states and the IAEA and other international organisations to deal with the vulnerable global supply of radioactive medical isotopes, on which so many patients around the world depend.

My government is very pleased that earlier this year the Reactor Institute Delft was designated an IAEA Collaborating Centre. The staff of the RID has worked long and hard to obtain this well-deserved recognition of their academic work. The world hosts 260 reactor institutes, and only thirteen of them have been granted this special status, so RID has good reasons to be proud.

Madam President,

### *Technical Cooperation*

We attach great importance to partnerships with developing countries. We provide technical expertise, specialised equipment and training and we support research and development on critical problems facing development. Nuclear and radiation technologies can make a difference, which is why the Agency's technical cooperation activities are important catalysts for sustainable development. We strongly support the Agency's Technical Cooperation activities and pledged our full target share to the Technical Cooperation Fund for the year 2010 before this Conference started. We hope that member states, who have not yet done so, will pledge their share as soon as possible.

We would like to commend the Secretariat on the progress the Agency is making in streamlining its Technical Cooperation Programme. Yet, we believe that the effectiveness of the programme must and can be improved by further increasing the coherence between different projects and activities. This will be another priority during our tenure on the Board.

Madam President,

### *Nuclear Energy & Multilateral Nuclear Approaches*

States are increasingly concerned about their ability to guarantee energy security for future generations. Looking at their long-term energy needs, an increasing number of states is coming to the conclusion that nuclear power needs to be part of their national energy mix. Whatever our stance on nuclear energy, the growing interest in nuclear power is a fact.

Secure access to and supply of nuclear fuel, and thus increased energy security, is a key interest of states operating nuclear power programmes. If we are to be sure that the development of nuclear power is consistent with the highest safety, security and non-proliferation standards, we must ensure that the issue of security of supply is properly addressed. The Netherlands has always actively supported multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. We welcome the various proposals that have

been made so far as valuable contributions to the discussion. They do not impinge on anyone's rights, but on the contrary can help in realising states' inherent rights to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We believe it is time to move forward in this debate, and will continue to actively seek a dialogue with all parties concerned.

Madam President,

*Future of the Agency*

The Netherlands attaches great importance to the discussions on the future of this agency. It is for the member states to decide what instruments, role and tasks they want the Agency to have in order to perform its statutory mandate. But with a 'nuclear renaissance' on the horizon, we need to provide the IAEA with the necessary means, financial and other, to fulfil its mandated tasks.

Madam President,

Let me finish by briefly touching upon some recent developments in our national energy arena.

The increasing urgency of climate change and the scarcity of energy sources requires that thinking about nuclear energy in the future fuel mix continues. My government does not expect to decide on the construction of new nuclear power plants during its current term in office. Meanwhile, three scenarios are being worked out ranging from the phasing out of nuclear energy to commissioning new nuclear power plants. These scenarios should allow a future government to come to an informed decision.

Madam President,

The Agency's role in strengthening disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, in guaranteeing the safety and security of nuclear energy and in advancing nuclear technology to the benefit of all, cannot be overestimated. We hope that during this General Conference dialogue will be constructive and that negotiations will be open, transparent and inclusive, so as to uphold and strengthen the true Vienna Spirit.

Thank you, Madam President