

IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE

14-18 SEPTEMBER 2009

NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT

Madam President

I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of this year's General Conference.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Yukiya Amano on his election to the post of Director General of the Agency. We look forward to working with Mr Amano, and we assure of him of New Zealand's full support as he embarks on his challenging task.

Finally, New Zealand would like to welcome the latest States to join the family of IAEA Member States. We are confident that the new members will make a positive contribution to the IAEA, and we assure it of our support in the years ahead.

Madam President

Creating a world free of nuclear weapons is one of New Zealand's longstanding goals. We are under no illusion that achieving that goal will be simple, but we

have been heartened by recent signs that the disarmament landscape has been changing for the better. We must all take full advantage of this opportunity.

Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons through the implementation of safeguards under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is a fundamental pillar of the Agency's work.

Next year will be a critical one for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The 2010 Review Conference will provide the opportunity to ensure that the Treaty remains relevant, effective and credible, and that its implementation is carried out to the fullest extent. New Zealand participated actively in the third preparatory meeting earlier this year. We found that meeting constructive and positive. We look forward to working towards a successful Review Conference next year.

Madam President

As a strong supporter of the NPT, New Zealand endorses the principle that nuclear technology should be available for peaceful uses in conformity with Article II of the Treaty for all the many civilian applications which enhance the lives of millions of people worldwide.

But with the expansion of the use of nuclear energy also comes a growth in the risks associated with that use. For that reason, New Zealand will continue to strongly support the Agency's work on safety and security measures and on verifying and assuring member states that nuclear material is not being diverted from peaceful uses.

New Zealand attaches importance to ensuring that the IAEA has all of the tools necessary to provide robust assurances to the international community that nuclear activities undertaken by States are purely for peaceful purposes.

Current proliferation challenges mean that the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement alone is not adequate to provide the Agency with the necessary authority to carry out fully its verification mandate. The Additional Protocol forms the contemporary verification standard, and should always feature as a condition in new supply arrangements for nuclear and associated material.

New Zealand strongly urges all States Party which have not yet done so – particularly those with significant nuclear activities – to conclude and to bring into force an Additional Protocol without delay.

Madam President

New Zealand shares the assessment that the possibility of terrorists obtaining nuclear or other radioactive material remains a grave threat. We note the concern that the uncertainty in funding makes the Agency's programme planning and prioritization in the area of nuclear security difficult.

New Zealand has been pleased to be able to continue to support the Nuclear Security Fund over the last year. Our participation in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, to which the IAEA is an observer, and our decision to chair the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2010, are further components of our commitment to prevent nuclear materials falling into the hands of terrorists.

Madam President

Nuclear safety constitutes another important pillar of the Agency's work. New Zealand is committed to the principles and objectives of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Sources.

The safe transport of radioactive materials remains of fundamental importance to New Zealand. Such shipments must take place against a backdrop of the highest possible safety and security standards. Appropriate information in advance of any transports that may take place must be provided to coastal states. Proper emergency response systems must be in operation. There must

be an effective liability and compensation mechanism in place to ensure against harm to human health and the environment, as well as possible economic loss, due to an accident or incident during the transport of radioactive material.

New Zealand is pleased that progress is being made in many of these areas, and indeed we note evidence of that progress can be found in the reintegration of the transport resolution into the omnibus safety resolution this year. Nevertheless, we will continue to urge all parties to continue to strive for improvements where possible.

We welcome the continued dialogue between coastal and shipping states on these issues, in particular on the exchange of information regarding these shipments. New Zealand is pleased that constructive talks between coastal and shipping states will be held on this issue in Vienna this week and we look forward to further progress on this issue.

Madam President

New Zealand condemned the nuclear test carried out earlier this year by the DPRK. The test had dangerous implications for the security of the Korean Peninsula and the region. It was a significant step backwards for global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. New Zealand has implemented the sanctions mandated by the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 1874.

We join others in urging the DPRK to return to the Six Party Talks process and to IAEA safeguards and the NPT.

New Zealand shares the concerns of the international community about the questions that remain regarding Iran's nuclear programme. We urge Iran to suspend its enrichment and heavy-water-related activities, to implement the Additional Protocol and to reconsider its decision to suspend implementation of the modified text of its Subsidiary Arrangements under modified Code 3.1.

New Zealand continues to support strongly a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear programme based on Iran's compliance with IAEA and UNSC requirements. Iran must, however, play its part to realise this outcome.

In line with recent discussions at the Board of Governors, New Zealand also calls on Syria to be more cooperative and transparent in its provision to the Agency of information about, and access to, the Dair Alzour site and other related locations.

Madam President

The challenges facing the international non-proliferation regime are numerous, and are only likely to grow. It is imperative that the international community works together to agree and coordinate effective responses to meet those

challenges. The Agency has a vital role in this collective response, working with member states to safeguard and secure nuclear materials for exclusively peaceful purposes to the benefit of the global family.

New Zealand welcomes and supports the Agency's work in applying the benefits of nuclear technology to the fields of human health, water quality, crop enhancement, and pest control. We also welcome the efforts made by the Secretariat to develop national capacity in member states, and promote regional and international cooperation, in these areas. These issues need urgent action on a global scale. Progress in them will make a considerable difference and, over time, benefit many millions of people.

Finally, it is a pleasure for me to take this opportunity to express New Zealand's deep appreciation for the unstinting service and commitment over the years of outgoing Director General ElBaradei. He has made an outstanding contribution not only across the Agency's entire programme of work, but also to the cause of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation internationally. We wish him well for the future.

Thank you, Madam President.