



**STATEMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

TO THE 53. SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

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Vienna, 14 - 18 September 2009

Mme. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to address you on behalf of the Delegation of the Republic of Serbia and to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mme. President, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to this high office. I want to assure you of our full support and wish you every success in your work.

I want to extend my congratulations and thanks to the Director General, Dr. Mohammed ElBaradei and his associates for the outstanding efforts and excellent work done in achieving the goals of the Agency in the previous period. Those years will be remembered for Dr. ElBaradei's dedication, professionalism and remarkable personality. I greatly respect Mr. ElBaradei's work and his achievements during the challenging period in which he headed the Secretariat of the Agency. Serbia was very fortunate to host Dr. ElBaradei in July of this year, which marked an important event in the cooperation between Serbia and the Agency. This highly publicized visit gave additional support to the successful realization of the repatriation of Serbian spent nuclear fuel and raised general awareness of the importance of nuclear technologies and their development in the forthcoming years.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the newly appointed Director General of the Secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Yukiya Amano, on this election and to wish him success in

his work. I believe that the Agency headed by Mr. Amano will continue to successfully face upcoming challenges and to fulfill the fundamental principles, goals and directions it has set to achieve.

Mme. President,

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Rwanda as new Members of the IAEA family.

Mme. President, Distinguished Delegates,

Let me address now some issues that are of great importance to Serbia. We remain committed to all the fundamental principles and goals of the Agency towards safe and secure applications of nuclear energy for the benefit of human society and in accordance with global international directions and practices. My country will continue to support efforts in strengthening and developing an integrated safeguards regime in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to which it has been a party since the very beginning. We commend the Agency Secretariat on implementing the Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols. To that aim, during Dr. ElBaradei's visit in July of this year, Serbia signed the Additional Protocol with the Agency. This will enable the application of verification measures in the future in a more effective, efficient and comprehensive way and will contribute to the strengthening of the overall safeguards regime.

Mme. President,

The Government of the Republic of Serbia attaches great importance to nuclear security issues. It is committed to strengthening the national nuclear security systems and mechanisms, as well as international cooperation in this field. With the assistance of the IAEA and other international actors, our country is making permanent progress in upgrading its capabilities for combating illicit trafficking, improving the national physical protection system, and implementing measures for gaining control over orphan sources. All this is aimed towards having an efficient national nuclear security system in place. Only with such a system set up in all countries and through strong international cooperation, can terrorism be countered on the global stage.

We have accelerated our decommissioning efforts and work on the repatriation of spent nuclear fuel in order to finally take the Vinča Institute for Nuclear Sciences off the list of potential global threats. Progress is being made through national efforts and international support of the Agency and other partners. One of the important steps in this project was realized in June when we signed the necessary intergovernmental agreement with the Russian Federation. Another major step, the signing of The Foreign Trade Contract, has been accomplished during this session of the General Conference. In addition to strong national efforts, it was the support of the Secretariat of the Agency and of Dr. El Baradei that made it possible to accomplish these major steps successfully and on time.

I want to thank all the international donors, in particular the USA, the EU, the Russian Federation, the Czech Republic, NTI and Slovenia, for making it possible to close the financial construction of the project and therefore proceed with its realization. As agreed, Serbia will at all times cover at least half of the necessary financial resources for decommissioning.

Mme. President,

Besides completing the international legal and financial framework for this project, significant internal restructuring has been done in order to ensure the efficient realization of the repatriation and decommissioning and to fulfill international norms in general. The Serbian Government established in July of this year a Public Company under the name of "Nuclear Facilities of Serbia". This new company will assume control and responsibility for the management of all nuclear liabilities and assets throughout Serbia, including all facilities involved in the Vinča Institute Nuclear Decommissioning (VIND) program. The institute, which was founded as the biggest Serbian institute in 1948, and has a long tradition in nuclear science and other multidisciplinary research, will co-exist with the Public Company and will focus its activities as one of Serbia's leading research institutions.

Mme. President, Distinguished Delegates,

The activities of the Agency in improving nuclear and radiation safety, one of the main institutional pillars of the IAEA, are of great importance. Serbia is committed to further strengthening its nuclear legal system in order to adequately protect both society and environment from potential risks and to ensure that nuclear energy is applied towards a prosperous future and for the benefits of future generations.

Although applications of nuclear energy have been covered by a vast set of national legal instruments, in order to make the legal and statutory framework more comprehensive and in compliance with international safety standards and practices, a new, comprehensive act on nuclear energy – the Law on Ionizing Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety was adopted by the Serbian Parliament in May of this year. It aims to modernize and harmonize our national legislation with international standards and requirements and provides a base for the establishment of an independent regulatory authority, the Serbian Agency for Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety. The Agency will be responsible for radiation protection, nuclear safety and radioactive waste management. Preparations for its establishment are currently under way. Properly staffed, structured and organized, the Agency will provide better and extensive regulatory control and will develop a new set of bylaws and track their implementation.

The Serbian Agency for Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety will also enable that all operations, practices and activities, including nuclear

decommissioning of the “Vinča” Institute of Nuclear Sciences, as well as other activities in the sector of civil society are performed at the highest possible level of radiation control and safety measures.

Mme. President,

I would like to stress on this occasion that Serbia strongly supports further improvement of technical cooperation as one of the main pillars of the Agency’s activities and a key tool for reaching its goals. I take this opportunity to thank the Department of Technical Cooperation and, in particular, the Europe Division headed by Mr. Peter Salema, for the dedicated work and efforts in enhancing cooperation with the Member States. Serbia appreciates the assistance received through various modalities of cooperation aimed at restoring and upgrading the field of nuclear technologies. The support of the Agency is indispensable, in particular for Serbia and other countries in transition. Therefore, we hope that the Agency will continue its activities in this domain and support us in realizing the decommissioning programme, upgrading the national regulatory infrastructure, safety and security, establishing various nuclear coordinating mechanisms, preserving and managing nuclear knowledge, and applying nuclear technologies to the sector of human health, agriculture, veterinary medicine, water resources management, cultural heritage preservation and other areas of civil society. An improved frame for technical cooperation in the coming period will be the new Country Program Framework for Serbia, which has been signed during this Session of the General Conference. This document will replace the existing one, signed in December 2003.

Mme. President,

I would like to add that the Republic of Serbia, has, as usual, met all its financial obligations towards the Agency timely, and will continue to do so in the future.

Let me conclude by reassuring you Mme. President and Distinguished Delegates that the Republic of Serbia, as a reliable partner, will continue to lend its full support to the Agency and the Secretariat in the future.

Thank you, Mme. President.