

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Latchezar Kostov

Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency of Bulgaria

60th General Conference of the IAEA

Vienna, September 26 – 30, 2016

Mr. President,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria I would like to join the other speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of the 60th session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. I avail myself of this opportunity to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in the fulfillment of your important and responsible task during the session deliberations. I am convinced that under your guidance we will be able to reach a desirable conclusion through our work this week and the conference will contribute to the achievement of the IAEA's main objectives: non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, enhancement of nuclear safety and peaceful application of atomic energy.

It is my pleasure to welcome Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and The Islamic Republic of the Gambia as new Member States of the IAEA.

The Bulgarian delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Slovakia on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries.

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

Bulgaria is committed to the efforts of the international community for non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and our policy aims to strengthening the global security and stability. We consider the IAEA Safeguards mechanism as a key instrument for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Bulgaria calls for the universalization of the NPT and the IAEA Additional Protocol and we believe the

Agency Safeguards activities play an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT.

Bulgaria reaffirms its full support to the establishment of a Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East. We encourage all States in the region to renew their efforts for convening a Conference with the participation of all stakeholders. We regret the decision of the Arab States to include the item "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities" in the IAEA General Conference Agenda. Bulgaria firmly believes that only through the spirit of trust and cooperation we can reach the desired consensus and make progress towards implementing the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

Mr. President,

Bulgaria considers the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) signed last year between E3+3 and Iran as a diplomatic achievement with historical significance. The Agreement clearly shows that active diplomacy and political determination always bring positive results, even on issues that have remained in a long-term deadlock. It has opened the door for normalization of Iran's relations with the world.

The full, verifiable and irreversible implementation of the JCPOA by Iran is of paramount importance. This is the only way for Iran to convince the international community that its nuclear program is designed for peaceful purposes only.

We look forward to the ratification of the IAEA Additional Protocol by Iran and also urge more countries to do so.

On September 9, 2016 the Democratic People's Republic of Korea carried out its fifth consecutive nuclear test in direct violation of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and the IAEA Safeguards Agreement. The test, which was one of a series of severe provocations by the DPRK this year, will inevitably aggravate the tension in the region.

Bulgaria remains seriously concerned about the nuclear and ballistic missile programs of the DPRK and its decision to cease the cooperation with the IAEA.

We call on the DPRK to return to full compliance with all its NPT and IAEA safeguards obligations and to provide the Agency with prompt access to individuals, documentation, equipment and facilities and to abandon all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile activities, including its uranium enrichment program, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

We would like to congratulate the Director General and the Secretariat for the preparation of the 2015 Annual Report. We note with satisfaction that it reflects the full scope of the Agency's activities for the period covered. My delegation commends the efforts that Agency continues to provide in supporting new IAEA Member States and countries with established nuclear power programs in human resource development, training, stakeholder involvement and management systems.

As stated in the Report the knowledge networks continued to grow and played an integral part in the Agency's support of capacity building in Member States. The Agency started discussions with various international groups in Europe and Central Asia on establishing a new regional safety network under the Global Nuclear Safety and Security Network with a view to involving those countries that currently are not members of any safety network. My country expressed readiness to become a member of this Network and made appropriate steps in that direction.

My delegation would like to emphasize its appreciation that the Agency continued to analyze the relevant technical aspects of the Fukushima Daiichi accident and to share lessons learned with the wider nuclear community. They provide a description of the accident and its causes, evolution and consequences, based on the assessment of data and information from many sources, including the results of the work carried out in implementing the Action Plan. Early this month Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency jointly with the IAEA organized a presentation of a Report of the Director General regarding Fukushima Accident, which was

delivered by Mr. Gustavo Caruso, Head of Nuclear Safety and Security Coordination Office. Many Bulgarian organizations from nuclear sector including regulatory body, NPP, different ministries, scientific institutes, technical support organizations attended the seminar and expressed their interest in the Report.

Mr. President,

In April 2016 the Integrated Regulatory Review Service Follow-up mission of IAEA was held in Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency. The general conclusion is that the BNRA has made significant progress in addressing the findings of the 2013 IRRS mission and shown its commitment to an effective implementation of the IAEA safety standards. It was also noted that BNRA is in a strong position to address any considerable regulatory challenges that may arise in the future. The international experts have also emphasized that the representatives of the Bulgarian regulator showed openness and transparency during the discussions and full support to them.

Regarding the nuclear energy activities in my country during the last year I would like to mention some of them, which are important for future development of this sector.

In July – August this year a Pre-SALTO peer review mission was held at unit 5 of Kozloduy NPP. This is a first in a series of peer reviews regarding long term operation of units 5 and 6, which the NPP management has planned to carry out. The expert's team of the IAEA concluded that the management and the staff of the Kozloduy NPP have done considerable work for preparing the unit for long term operation. The same peer review is scheduled in 2018 for unit 6, and in 2020 a SALTO mission will be held for both units.

In January BNRA used a license to Kozloduy NPP for operation of the Spent Fuel Dry Storage Facility. The term of this license is 10 years and it allows for the plant to store the spent fuel from WWER 440 reactors there. It also foresees transportation of the spent fuel from Spent Fuel Ponds near the reactors to the new storage facility.

Mr. President

Distinguished delegates,

In 2016 several high officials from IAEA visited Bulgaria. First of all I would like to express our thanks to the Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Nuclear Energy Mr. Michail Chudakov. During his visit we discussed topics related to knowledge management, nuclear applications, safety assessment of NPPs and participation of the Bulgarian specialists in IAEA activities in these areas. The meetings with the Minister of Energy, Parliamentary Committee on Energy, scientists from Technical University and the visit to Kozloduy NPP contributed to better understanding of nuclear energy issues of Bulgaria and enhancing cooperation with the IAEA in that field.

Another important visit was that of the Director of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, Mr. Qu Liang, which took place in July. Mr. Liang held meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Agriculture Academy, University of Forestry, Sofia University, Bulgarian Agency on Food Safety, Vegetable and Crops Institute and Nuclear Regulatory Agency. These meetings are of significant importance for the Bulgarian organizations, which apply nuclear techniques in the agriculture and livestock breeding. In this context I would like to express once again our sincere thanks to the Secretariat of the IAEA for its prompt assistance rendered to my country in April – May this year regarding mitigation and preventing the spread of lumpy skin disease in cattle. The disease had been kept from spreading further and had been brought under control within one month. It is an excellent example of using atomic energy for peaceful purposes in agriculture and illustrated the Agency's core role in that field.

Mr. President

We commend the Agency for its efforts to contribute to global efforts to secure nuclear facilities and to ensure the security of radioactive material in use, storage or transportation. In October 2015 the Director of the Division of Nuclear Security Mr. Mrabit visited Bulgaria on the occasion of launching the Master's Degree Program in Nuclear Security at Sofia University of National and World Economy. The objective of the Program is to prepare highly qualified managerial personnel in that area. This Program is developed on the basis of the Practical Agreement signed in Sofia in 2014 by Director General Yukiya Amano and relevant Bulgarian authorities.

Mr. President,

In 2016 the new cycle of the Technical cooperation program started. In accordance with its Framework Program's priorities Bulgaria participated in this cycle with national projects in the field of nuclear medicine and nuclear applications. The successful beginning of these projects will allow the beneficiary organizations in my country to meet the addressed challenges and to promptly resolve relevant, specific issues. The visit of the Country Officer for Bulgaria under the TC program Mr. Chupov early this year contributed to the smooth start of the new cycle. Talks conducted with representatives of interested institutions helped them to organize the beginning of work in a fruitful manner.

Bulgaria actively participates in European regional projects as well. Large number of Bulgarian specialists and scientists from operating organizations, the regulatory body, technical support organizations and different institutes attended seminars, training courses, technical meetings, conferences and scientific forums organized by the IAEA.

We regard the Agency's Technical Cooperation Program as a main tool for supporting the efforts of Member States to address the priority issues in human health, food and agriculture, water and environment, industry etc. The program

also helps Member States to identify and meet future energy needs, and to improve the nuclear safety and security worldwide.

Development and application of nuclear science continue to be of great importance for Bulgaria. We see this as a tool for the technological and economic growth. That is why my country is actively participating in the work of the different international scientific organizations as the Joint Institute for Nuclear Researches in Dubna, Russian Federation, and CERN, near Geneva.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Bulgaria will continue to support the IAEA activities in promoting the international co-operation in the field of the peaceful use of atomic energy and for the application of the Safeguards. Saying this I am also expressing our confidence in the work of the Secretariat and its Director General.

Thank you, Mr. President.