



Statement by Ambassador Andrej Benedejčič, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia and Head of Delegation, at the Sixtieth Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference, Vienna, 27 September 2016

Mr. President,

Let me first congratulate you on your election as the President of this jubilee session of the General Conference. The session is special, because it marks an important milestone for the IAEA. During the past six decades the Agency has significantly contributed to a safer and more secure world through its verification activities. It has advanced the efficient and safe use of nuclear power. It has also contributed to a steady progress in nuclear science, technology and applications by helping a number of countries in realizing their development prospects. Moreover, the Agency has made concrete steps in strengthening the international standards of nuclear safety and security. It is because of all this and 60 years of dedicated work and professionalism that the Agency has become well-known for its unique and essential contribution to global peace, security and development.

Mr. President,

Slovenia is a member of the European Union and I therefore support the statement delivered yesterday by the distinguished representative of the Slovak Presidency. However, Slovenia is also one of only thirty countries with a nuclear power reactor, which is why I would like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

In our view, nuclear power is a clean energy source that meets future energy needs without emitting carbon dioxide and other atmospheric pollutants. The Krško Nuclear Power Plant therefore remains one of the biggest producers of electricity in Slovenia. Its post-Fukushima Safety Upgrade Program remains unchanged, with an ambitious deadline set for the end of 2018. The bunkered building, with injection systems capable of assuring reactor cooling for at least 30 days, will be finished in 2021. This March the plant also hosted a successful nuclear emergency exercise INEX 5, with the participation of the IAEA and all the four neighboring countries.

Let me also use this opportunity to point out that the TRIGA research reactor at the Jožef Stefan Institute in Ljubljana celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in May. It continues to operate safely and is widely recognized for its well-defined neutron flux, making it suitable for benchmark experiments. Last December the IAEA INSARR Follow-Up Mission visited the reactor and verified the fulfilment of the 2012 recommendations and suggestions. It found out that clear progress has been made, with most issues declared closed.

In this connection, I would also like to point out that this April my country adopted a new Resolution on the National Program on Radioactive Waste and Spent Nuclear Fuel Management for the period 2016-2025. Its ultimate objective is the disposal of radioactive waste, which will be safe for all future generations. Also, to meet the obligations of the

Convention on Nuclear Safety my country has prepared its seventh National Report, which describes the latest situation in this area, as well as the implementation of the Vienna Declaration provisions. Let me say that we attach great importance to the review process and welcome all efforts in making it more efficient.

Mr. President,

Slovenia notes with satisfaction that the scope of the technical co-operation program is growing. This is all the more impressive, because it has to bridge big differences in individual country priorities. We would therefore like to commend the Secretariat for its good work. Slovenia has always had and will continue its good cooperation with the Agency in this area by accepting as many IAEA fellows as possible and organizing scientific visits for those who would like to learn from our experts and familiarize themselves with our practices. At the same time, Slovenia also wishes to thank the Agency for supporting our young staff in attending courses, workshops and meetings, as well as for enabling them to take part in other technical cooperation activities. This kind of capacity building is vital for any country dealing with nuclear technology or radiation techniques, including ours.

Mr. President,

Before concluding, I would like to underline that Slovenia strongly supports the visionary, universal and people-and-planet centered 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted last year at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit. We therefore welcome and support the Agency's decision to join the efforts of the international community and actively contribute to the realization of Sustainable Development Goals.

It was also last year that a historic achievement on Iran's nuclear program was reached. We therefore welcome Iran's on-going implementation of its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and commend the IAEA for its responsible work of verification and monitoring. In this connection, let me point out that Slovenia strongly supports the universal adherence to and full implementation of all non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and conventions, in particular the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Finally, let me say that the Agency has been always at the forefront of ensuring safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy. Slovenia therefore deeply values activities of the Agency and is grateful to the Director General and the Secretariat for their untiring and impartial work. We will continue to strongly support the Agency in achieving its noble goals. In that sense we also count on the support of other Member States in endorsing our candidature for membership on the IAEA Board of Governors for the period 2016-2018.

Thank you.