

## **S T A T E M E N T**

**by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Latchesar Kostov**

**Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency of Bulgaria**

**63<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the IAEA**

**Vienna, September 16 – 20, 2019**

Madam President,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria and on my behalf I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the 63<sup>th</sup> 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 the Bulgarian 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.

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

Let me express our sadness at the untimely demise of Director General Mr Yukia Amano. Under his leadership the IAEA has achieved enviable results that have helped to strengthen the Agency's role worldwide. We lost a professional and a capable diplomat.

Madam President,

Distinguished delegates,

The Republic of Bulgaria is strongly committed, to the efforts for further nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. For 50 years the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons as well a firm basis for the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The IAEA Safeguards mechanism is a key instrument for its implementation. We once again call for the universalization of the NPT and the IAEA Additional Protocol.

Bulgaria reaffirms its full support to the establishment of a Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East. Only through cooperation and mutual understanding we can reach the desired consensus and make progress towards implementing the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

Madam President,

Bulgaria believes the diplomatic settlement of the problem with the Iranian Nuclear Program is the only effective solution and deem the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action a success in strengthening the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. In this regard, we underline IAEA's key role in monitoring, verifying, and regularly reporting on Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments.

Regarding DPRK we hope they will seize this historic opportunity and engage seriously in negotiations with a view to abandon all its nuclear weapons program as well as its delivery systems in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and achieving lasting peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. We hope DPRK to return to compliance with the NPT and the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, and sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Madam President,

We would like to congratulate the IAEA for the preparation of the 2018 Annual Report. We appreciate the fact, stated in the Report that the Agency continues to support Member States with existing nuclear power plants to enhance performance and ensure safe, secure, efficient and reliable long term operation, including development of human resource capability, leadership and management systems. We also appreciate the approach of the Agency to provide support to its Member States through publishing Nuclear Energy Series in the field of long term operation.

Madam President,

The nuclear energy sector in Bulgaria continues to be a major factor in the country's energy balance, under conditions of high technology, production efficiency, competitive prices and maintaining of a high level of nuclear safety and radiation protection. Ensuring the safety of nuclear facilities is a national policy in the development of nuclear energy in my country. In the beginning of this month Kozloduy NPP celebrated 45 years of its commercial operation. During these years the plant guarantees energy supply not only for the country but also for the region and the savings of the carbon dioxide emissions over that time are above 743 million tons. In September 2018 the operator of Kozloduy NPP submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Agency the necessary documents regarding license renewal of Unit 6. All the documents among which Periodic Safety Review and Report on the Assessment of the Rest Life Time of the Unit are subjected to review and evaluation by the Bulgarian regulator following a specific review program.

In implementation of the decisions of the National Assembly and of the Council of Ministers from 2018, Bulgarian National Electric Company announced a call for selection of a strategic investor for the construction of the new Nuclear Power Plant on Belene site. After closing date for submission of offers on 19th of August this year seven companies applied

for strategic investor, two for equipment supplier and implementation of technical activities and four for minority participation and purchase of electricity. The indicative deadline for completion of the whole procedure is mount of May 2020.

Madam President,

Distinguished delegates,

From 17 to 20 June this year, the Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency hosted the 26th Annual Forum of the Regulators of the WWER-Operated Reactors. Representatives from Armenia, Bulgaria, Belarus, the People's Republic of China, the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Iran, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Ukraine, Germany, as well as representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency took part in it. The participants presented reports on the operation of nuclear power plants and introduced the novelties in the field of nuclear and radiation safety in the countries they represent.

Madam President,

Last September Bulgaria signed its 4<sup>th</sup> Country Program Framework for cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The new CPF is in compliance with the Europe Regional Profile for 2018–2021 adopted in April 2018 and identifies the cooperation fields of Bulgaria with the IAEA,

namely nuclear and radiation safety, protection of nuclear facilities, application of nuclear technology in agriculture, healthcare and competence building.

Our understanding is that the Technical Cooperation Program is the Agency's key mechanism for transferring technology and building capacities in the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. This Program also helps Member States to identify and meet future energy needs and to improve the nuclear safety and security worldwide. Regarding the financing of the Technical cooperation activities we consider that it should be ensured, sufficient and predictable and my country pays its annual contribution to the TC fund fully and on time.

Madam President,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Bulgaria will continue to support the IAEA activities in promoting the international cooperation 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, Madam President.