

**63<sup>rd</sup> Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference**

**Statement of the Czech Republic**

**Delivered by Ms. Dana DRÁBOVÁ**

**Chairperson of the State Office for Nuclear Safety**

**Vienna, 17 September 2019**

Thank you, Madam President,

First and foremost let me congratulate you on behalf of the Czech delegation on your election as the President of this Conference. Please accept the assurance of our full support and active cooperation.

Our delegation would also like to add our congratulations and join those who have welcomed the new member of the IAEA – Saint Lucia.

Madam President, your Excellencies, distinguished guests,

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by Finland. In addition, I would like to highlight some points in my national capacity.

Madam President,

All of us have been deeply saddened by the passing of the late Director General, Yukiya Amano.

It is noteworthy that the tragic loss of such a great person at the forefront of the IAEA represents a great challenge especially in these difficult times – in times when the situation is complex and tense. It requires the ability to make objective and impartial evaluation of the situation and to take carefully considered decisions.

While the Czech Republic has no doubts that the IAEA will continue to operate with high degree of technical expertise and be able to fulfil its statutory functions, Mr Amano's determination and tireless pursuit to ensure the nuclear energy is used for the benefit of all will certainly be greatly missed. The IAEA's reputation of an impartial international organization seeking to enlarge the contribution of the nuclear energy to peace and development through international cooperation and ensuring that it is used peacefully and safely, was truly embodied by Mr. Amano.

Nevertheless, we should strive to maintain the Agency's excellent reputation and not allow the weakening of its position and endangering of its mission. Hence, it is of utmost importance that, despite the complex debates which can be expected in relation to the election, the new Director General is appointed without undue delay and is fully supported by all of us.

The Czech Republic has therefore welcomed to note that all of the candidates nominated for the post of Director General – Mr GROSSI, Mr FERUTA, Mr ZERBO and Ms ŽIAKOVÁ – are strong, reputable and highly-experienced professionals who are well-acquainted with the issues related to peaceful uses of nuclear energy and ionizing radiation.

Allow me now a personal remark. I have been, in particular, pleased to find Ms Žiaková among these candidates. Not only that I have the honour to call her my friend but also she is the only woman nominated and a candidate who has potential to bring a longstanding technical expertise to the highest managerial level of the IAEA and thus to reaffirm the excellent reputation of the Agency as a centre of nuclear scientific knowledge and excellence.

In any case, in the light of these nominations, I am convinced that the new Director General will be an excellent choice and will bring new ideas and perspectives for the benefit of all Member States. I see some difficult challenges and tasks already ahead on the horizon.

Madam President,

The Czech Republic has long been staunch supporter of the peaceful uses of nuclear science technologies for energy and other applications, based, inter alia, on intense bilateral and multilateral cooperation. In 2016, following the JCPOA agreement, I held talks with H. E. Dr. Ali Akbar Salehi, the Vice President and the Head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization. Among other things, the cooperation in the area of civil use of nuclear energy and nuclear safety were discussed. We agreed that such activities could further contribute to enhancing the transparency of the Iranian nuclear program and to strengthening mutual trust. Time has passed and the situation has changed substantively but we still deem it essential to support the JCPOA framework and the irreplaceable role of the IAEA to monitor and verify Iran's commitments. It is still the case that only its unimpeded implementation and sincere cooperation in the area of peaceful use of nuclear energy will lead to confidence building on all sides.

Madam President,

Allow me now to address some topics we deem important from national perspective. I will start with a concise description of existing situation.

Currently, there are six nuclear power reactors located in two sites in the Czech Republic. Last year nuclear power produced 30 TWh which corresponds to 34 % of

total electricity production in our country, making it the second largest source of electricity. Our plan is to gradually decrease the share of coal in electricity generation and substitute it with low-carbon energy sources, in particular with nuclear and renewables, and energy savings in a sustainable and cost-efficient manner. The new nuclear power plants are foreseen by the State Energy Policy and one is currently planned to be commissioned between 2035-2040. When this time comes, the new reactor will probably primarily replace its predecessors. Additional reactors could then help to replace the outdated coal-fired power plants.

The nuclear safety is in consequence one of the priority areas and the Czech Republic attaches significance to ensuring effective and robust nuclear regulatory and legislative framework in which the IAEA has always played a unique role.

It is therefore no surprise that I am very honoured to serve as the President of the 8<sup>th</sup> Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS). Please be assured that I attach a great importance to this task. The CNS entered into force in 1996 and, since then, proved to be a significant incentive instrument based on a common interest to achieve higher level of nuclear safety. This aim is essential for the future of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy worldwide and CNS obligations provide for the necessary international legal basis for safe operation of nuclear power plants all around the world. I am committed to build on the outcomes of the previous Review Meetings, to continue with the effort to promote and strengthen the CNS framework and peer review mechanism and use this platform as an opportunity to discuss technical issues of mutual interest in greater detail.

The accessibility of the technical expertise is provided, inter alia, through Advisory and other Services which are invaluable tools for improvement of national regulatory and institutional frameworks. Their regular use should therefore be encouraged. It is for this reason the State Office for Nuclear Safety (SONS), after having successfully undergone the IRRS and follow-up mission in previous years, has decided to request and host the International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) mission in 2020. The entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material has demonstrated the determination of the international community to strengthen nuclear security worldwide. Its principles and new requirements have been incorporated into the new Atomic Act and its implementing legislation, together with a new, broader concept of Security. The IPPAS mission and findings will certainly provide us with an excellent opportunity to evaluate our new national nuclear security regime and to confirm the good direction of our efforts and to demonstrate the high level of protection to which nuclear

materials are subject to. It will also be an occasion to exchange information and experience with the IPPAS team members.

It is undeniable that documents drafted under auspices of the IAEA, despite their mostly non-legally binding nature, represent a gold-standard in health protection and safety. For years now, I have had the privilege to chair the Commission on Safety Standards (CSS) and, based on this experience, I can only confirm that such documents are drafted with careful vigilance. An example of such well-written document is the Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources and, therefore, we have decided to make a political commitment to act in accordance with it. The new national legislation reflects the fundamental principles on which the guidance is based. We encourage other countries that have not yet made such commitment of support to do likewise.

Madam President,

The Czech Republic is well aware of the importance of the IAEA's activities and their valuable positive impacts in many different areas. In this regard, let me assure you that we attach a great weight to the Technical Cooperation activities as it is apparent that supported projects may have a significant impact when they are managed effectively and transparently and correspond to actual needs of a Member State.

The SONS closely cooperates with the IAEA, our experts are frequently participating in various technical committees, expert groups and other Agency's activities. It gives me a great pleasure to see that our experts involved have been occasionally commended even at the highest managerial level. The Czech Republic recognizes how important it is to ensure a regular and predictable funding of the IAEA. Hence, we pay our Regular Budget and Technical Cooperation contributions in full and on-time. We are also pleased that the Czech Republic continues to hold the status of a "net contributor" providing extra budgetary contributions to continue to assist Armenia in upgrading its national regulatory infrastructure on nuclear safety.

In conclusion, the Czech Republic is convinced that the IAEA has contributed significantly to ensure that the nuclear energy and ionizing radiation are used safely and securely for peaceful purposes and will continue with this mission. Such mission deserves our full support.

We wish You, Madam President, and the conference every success.

Thank you Madam President.