

65th 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

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Mr. President,

First, let me congratulate you on your election as the President of this year's General Conference. I assure you of our full support and commitment to the success of this conference.

Mr. President, Mr Director-General, your Excellencies,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the EU statement delivered on Monday by Slovenia. Additionally, I would like to add the following remarks.

Mr. President,

I am especially pleased to attend this year's General Conference in-person. It is an opportunity to reflect on COVID-19 related challenges we face. Extraordinary circumstances should not be mistaken with normal ways of working nor should the shortcomings of virtual tools be ignored. We should strive for physical meetings whenever possible while ensuring, at the same time, that the benefits of virtual tools are not lost.

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic fully supports the important work carried out by the IAEA in developing and promoting widespread applications of nuclear technologies. We recognize they could make a significant contribution in improving our lives and the environment. We therefore praise the Director General and the Secretariat for their relentless efforts to ensure the continuity of the IAEA's mission.

The help provided by the Agency to Member States fighting with COVID-19 is a commendable example. Like many others, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the support provided by the Agency to help us to address the pandemic.

Mr. President,

This year we remind ourselves of the two most serious nuclear accidents ever occurred. On April 26, 1986, an explosion ripped through unit four of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and on March 11, 2011, a tsunami struck Fukushima-Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Lessons learned from these events are not to be forgotten. We are therefore looking forward to the upcoming Conference on a Decade of Progress after Fukushima-Daiichi.

Despite these being tragic disasters, one of the lessons that should be drawn from the worst nuclear accidents is that nuclear energy has always been one of the safest means of energy production – if technical limitations are respected and political priorities are not given preference instead.

We are convinced that the planned discharge of treated water from the Fukushima Daiichi accident takes place in line with international safety standards and under

independent and objective supervision of the Agency, thus posing no real risk for human health and environment. In this context, Japan and the IAEA have our full trust.

Mr. President,

Regrettably, the ongoing pandemic is particularly difficult for planning any event. The 8th Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety is no exception. It is already clear that it will be held jointly together with the 9th Review Meeting in 2023. As the President, I do not take this situation lightly. I would like to use this opportunity and assure all Contracting Parties of my continuous efforts to navigate us through these uncharted waters. Likewise, I encourage all Contracting Parties to continue in their constructive engagement and thank them for their support.

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic remains to be a strong supporter of nuclear energy among other uses of nuclear technologies. Currently, nuclear reactors generate about one-third of our electricity. It is our largest low-carbon energy source and should play an important role during the phase-out of coal from our energy mix.

In this context, I am pleased to inform you that earlier this year our national nuclear regulatory authority issued a siting licence for two new reactors at Dukovany site.

We therefore fully support the Agency's efforts to highlight the role of nuclear power and other applications in tackling climate change on various occasions, including at COP26 in Glasgow. Furthermore, we look forward to the International Conference on Nuclear Power in Washington.

Mr. President,

The application of the IAEA safeguards remains to be an indispensable tool for ensuring global peace and security. We applaud the Agency for ensuring this core, essential mission continues unimpaired.

I am proud to report that the IAEA was able, with our support, to carry out all safeguards inspections on our territory. And this in spite of significant challenges associated with the pandemic. In addition, this year we have also succeeded at hosting the very first Technical Visit to the Czech Republic, as part of the IAEA's Safeguards Traineeship Programme for nuclear experts from developing countries. Our involvement in this programme underlines a long tradition of safeguards related training in our country.

We also join many others in our call for the universalisation of the Comprehensive Safeguards agreement and the Additional Protocol. They undoubtedly constitute the standard to be achieved in safeguards. Widest possible application of the State-level

Approaches would be of a great benefit as well – especially in increasing effectiveness and efficiency of the IAEA’s safeguards system.

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic fully supports the Agency’s long-term verification and monitoring mission and remains convinced of its technical expertise, objectivity and impartiality. We deem it essential to support the JCPOA framework and the irreplaceable role of the IAEA to monitor and verify Iran’s commitments.

Like many others, we remain seriously concerned and urge Iran to return to full compliance with all nuclear commitments under the JCPOA – in particular, to reverse all measures that reduce transparency – and expect prompt and full resolution of all outstanding safeguard related issues.

In this context, we are encouraged by the Joint Statement of the Vice-President and the Head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran and the Director General.

Mr. President,

Let me emphasize that we recognize and appreciate the major contribution of the Agency in assisting in many areas to ensure nuclear technologies are used effectively in safe and secure way. The IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme plays an invaluable role for achieving this.

Thus, we proudly hold a long-term status of a “net contributor” and further demonstrate our support to the Agency’s mission by our extra budgetary contributions through the Peaceful Uses Initiative. The Czech Republic provides this voluntary contribution annually and will continue to do so.

In conclusion, we remain convinced that the IAEA’s mission deserves our full support.

Thank you Mr. President.

We wish You and the conference every success.