

Statement by Ľubomír Kuchta
Head of the Delegation
Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic
at the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power
in the 21st Century
Abu Dhabi, UAE

Dear President, Director Generals, Ministers,
Dear High Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first express my gratitude to the IAEA for organizing this Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power, which my country finds very useful and topical. I also would like extend my gratitude to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for hosting this conference in such a beautiful place.

Mr. President,

Nuclear power continues to be an important option for many countries, including Slovakia, when addressing their energy needs at affordable and stable generating costs taking into account environmental protection.

Nuclear power in Slovakia has more than 50 years of experience and tradition with a continuous development of our national nuclear power programme as a clean source of energy. Nuclear energy has a stable position in our energy mix. An optimal and well-balanced energy mix with an emphasis on low-carbon technologies is one of the most important pillars of Slovakia's

energy policy. Due to the fact that Slovakia is highly dependent on foreign supply of primary energy sources, the nuclear sector shall retain its significant position in domestic energy sector. Beside 4 reactors in operation, the construction of 2 new units at the Mochovce site is under way and, in addition, a new nuclear source is being considered at the Jaslovské Bohunice site. These additional units should provide sufficient energy generating capacity for Slovakia in the years to come.

In accordance with this policy, our government has set the following priorities in the nuclear area: 1. further enhancement of the dynamics for completion of units 3 and 4 at the Mochovce Nuclear Power Plant; 2. analysis of needs and preliminary requirements for construction of a new nuclear power plant; 3. maintenance of a high level of nuclear safety and its continuous improvement.

Mr. President,

I am pleased to see that this conference is dedicated to engagement in high-level dialogue aimed to address the issues related to the future use of nuclear energy in all its aspects. The European Union, in its effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 to 95% by 2050, has prepared a Roadmap for advancing to a low-carbon economy. Slovakia is closely following this plan and we headed/directed our energy policy towards low-carbon economy by relying on a high share of nuclear power.

Moreover, Slovakia is of view that nuclear power contributes significantly to meeting the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global temperature rise, mitigating climate change and plays an important role in reaching the Sustainable development goals. In this regards, Slovakia fully supports the IAEA leading role in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Among many aspects of nuclear energy, I would like to bring your attention to an issue that is of particular importance to Slovakia, namely nuclear safety as the highest priority in the use of nuclear power in a peaceful way.

Nuclear safety is one of the key preconditions for the use of nuclear energy. Slovakia supports all efforts aimed at globalizing nuclear safety by networking, integrating safety-related activities, assisting other states in the application of Safety Standards, and promoting adherence to the relevant international conventions (in particular Convention on Nuclear Safety and Joint Convention).

In support of these activities, I would like to mention that the new amendment of the Slovak Atomic Act has entered into force in August this year. It fully transposes the amended Euratom Directive on Nuclear Safety of 2014, as well as selected provisions of the Euratom BSS Directive of 2013 laying down basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionizing radiation. The amended Act, together with the existing legislation, incorporates into our national legal framework all provisions introduced in the abovementioned Nuclear Safety Directive, thus, inter alia, making mandatory the CNS objective to prevent accidents and mitigate radiological releases. It also sets up a concept of regular topical peer reviews on specific nuclear safety-related issues, strengthens the role of national regulatory authorities, enhances their independence in regulatory activities and increases transparency on nuclear safety matters.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to state that just at the time when the nuclear energy sector, as in the past, is facing new challenges due to the various external

events, all platforms and open discussions serve as appropriate tools for maintaining such technology as a strategic energy source for the present and future generations. A transparent dialogue between both supporters and opponents of nuclear power is, and will continue to be, stimulation for maintaining high quality and professionalism in the nuclear industry. Therefore, I am convinced that the exchange of views and outcomes of this conference will significantly contribute to the further advancement of political and technical dialogue on all aspects related to the nuclear power development. Discussions at this level have a highly-rational justification while always sending a clear signal about our common interest in carefully managing the challenges of energy security, safety and environmental protection.

Thank you for your attention.