



Statement
of the Republic of Cyprus
to the 61st IAEA General Conference
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by the Head of Delegation H.E. Mr. Marios Ieronymides,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cyprus
to the IAEA and other International Organisations in Vienna

Madame President,

I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as the President of the 61st General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency and assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Republic of Cyprus in discharging your responsibilities.

Allow me also to warmly congratulate Mr. Amano for his re-election as Director General of the IAEA, and express our appreciation to him personally and to the Secretariat of the Agency, for their continuous, dedicated and professional work and.

Cyprus is also pleased to welcome Grenada, the Agency's newest member.

Madame President,

The Republic of Cyprus aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Estonia on behalf of the EU and would like to add the following in its national capacity:

The Republic of Cyprus is proud to have signed and ratified the Agency's statute 52 years ago, shortly after gaining its independence.

Leaving behind the important milestone of the 60th anniversary of the Agency, one cannot but praise the contribution of the Agency to peace, prosperity, and development, taking into account sustainability and respect to the environment and to future generations.

The Republic of Cyprus recognizes the IAEA's key role in strengthening the international nuclear safety and security framework through the promotion and the implementation of relevant international legal instruments, enhancing international cooperation and assisting states in nuclear safety and security capacity building. A Contracting Party to all the major international Treaties and Conventions relating to nuclear safety and security, Cyprus assures its commitment to their full implementation. With regard to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Republic of Cyprus has submitted a national country report and has been found to fulfil its obligations emanating from the Convention in the 7th Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention. Cyprus also participated in the works of the 3rd Extraordinary Meeting under the Joint Convention and expresses its commitment for meeting its reporting obligations and for full participation at the 6th Review Meeting of the Joint Convention in May 2018. Cyprus welcomes the entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material last year and, with respect to this, is looking forward to participating in the International Conference on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities, to be held here in Vienna next November. Finally, the Republic of Cyprus ratified in 2016 the Amendment of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the associated Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment.

While, the Republic of Cyprus does not operate any nuclear power or research reactors or any other nuclear installations and its energy plans for the foreseeable future do not include nuclear energy, nevertheless it attaches great importance to the Nuclear Safety and Security Standards of the IAEA, as a means of ensuring nuclear safety worldwide. Cyprus supports all measures and initiatives that strengthen nuclear safety, both at the national and the international level and urges all IAEA Member States to ensure that their nuclear facilities comply with the highest levels and standards of safety and security. Given the transboundary impact that nuclear accidents may have, the Republic of Cyprus considers international and regional cooperation for nuclear safety and security very important. Therefore transparency, information to the public and consultation with neighbouring states likely to be affected in case of an accident is needed, from the stage of design and over the whole operational life of nuclear facilities. Furthermore, Cyprus calls on all Member States not to underestimate the factor of nuclear security, especially in politically unstable regions of the world, where the probability of terrorist or cyber-attack, cannot be excluded beyond any reasonable doubt.

Madame President,

The Republic of Cyprus joins other in condemning the DPRK's latest nuclear test and all of its Activities which threaten international peace and security in Asia, and the world in general and welcomes the unanimous adoption of UNSC Resolution 2371 imposing further sanctions on the DPRK.

Madame President,

The Republic of Cyprus highly values the Technical Cooperation Programme of the IAEA and its role in enhancing a responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology. Cyprus appreciates the Technical Cooperation Programme's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. The Republic of Cyprus has benefitted from various projects funded by the Technical Cooperation Fund in terms of valuable knowledge and expertise. The Republic of Cyprus has designated this year a new National Liaison Officer, and in addition, two National Liaison Assistants, to make sure that the maximum synergy exists between the Technical Cooperation Programme, the needs and priorities of the country, and the various stakeholders in the country. Cyprus has supported a number of IAEA workshops and training courses in the country and stands ready to host more such activities.

Cyprus continues its efforts to strengthen radiation, transport and waste safety, as well as emergency preparedness and response, and radiation protection. These efforts include strengthening the country's safety infrastructure and legislative and regulatory frameworks, as well as building competence in several areas related to radiation safety of installations and protection of health of the workers, the members of the public and the environment from the risks arising from the use of ionising radiation.

Towards that end, the Republic of Cyprus has recently revised its legislative framework on the safety of installations, in harmonisation with the amending European Directive on the nuclear safety of nuclear installations. This new legislation strengthens existing provisions on functional separation and effective independence of the regulatory authority, on legal powers and human and financial resources necessary for the regulatory authority to fulfil its functions and responsibilities, on arrangements for education and training, on transparency and on information to the workers and the public. Furthermore, the Republic of Cyprus is on track in terms of revising the legislative framework on the adoption of the basic safety standards (BSS), aligning this framework with the respective international and European BSS.

Moreover, the revision of the regulatory and legislative framework takes into due account the recommendations and suggestions of the Agency's Integrated Regulatory Review Service peer review mission held in Cyprus last February, whose final report was delivered last May. At this point, I would like to thank the Member States who provided experts for the mission, as well as the staff of the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security of IAEA for their valuable assistance. In addition, only a few days ago, an informational meeting of the regulatory authority took place in Nicosia on the conduct of ARTEMIS missions, with a view to inviting such a mission to Cyprus in 3 to 4 years-time, close to the Integrated Regulatory Review Service follow-up mission. Taking this opportunity, I invite all IAEA Member States to take full advantage of such missions, as they have proven to be invaluable tools in supporting our national arrangements regarding radiation safety.

New national regulations on the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste have been adopted and a national programme on the safe and responsible management of radioactive waste and sealed disused radioactive sources is being implemented. Also, new regulations on the protection of the health of the general public from radioactive substances in water intended for human consumption have been put into force in 2016, leading to systematic sampling and a measurement programme for drinking and surface water intended for human consumption. The national radiation emergency preparedness and response plan in case of radiological or nuclear accidents or incidents has been aligned with the relevant IAEA standards and in light of lessons identified from the response to the Fukushima accident. This plan has also incorporated the maximum permitted levels of radioactive contamination of food and feed following a nuclear accident or any other case of radiological emergency set in a relevant Euratom Regulation of 2016. The regulatory authority plans to organise exercises and drills in the near future for all stakeholders participating in the emergency plan, and I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Incident and Emergency Center of IAEA for their valuable support and assistance.

The Republic of Cyprus commits itself to maintain and further strengthen radiation, transport and waste safety, as well as emergency preparedness and response, and radiation protection. Among our priorities, is to enhance safety culture both within the regulatory authority and the authorised parties, move towards an integrated management system for the regulatory authority, extend the application of graded approach in the regulatory control over registrants and licensees and the regulatory procedures, further enhance radiation security and radiation emergency preparedness and response in the country, and establish a documented national policy on radiation safety and a national policy, strategy and infrastructure for education and training in radiation protection and radiological safety and security.

Thank you, Madame President.