



# **STATEMENT**

**By**

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Mr. President/ Distinguished Delegates,

Let me begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Philippo Formica, Permanent Representative of Italy, on your election to preside over the 59th General Conference. I can assure you Mr. President of the full cooperation of my delegation in carrying out your important mission. I also congratulate the new members of the Agency: Turkmenistan, Barbados, and Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. President,

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, was celebrated yesterday. It provides me an excellent opportunity to review Israel's overall cooperation with the Agency over the past twelve months.

Mr. President,

The past year has demonstrated the centrality of the IAEA to the issues that dominate the international agenda. These issues range from evolving threats, to global and regional security, and to growing demand for energy.

Israel attaches great importance to the IAEA's objectives and mission. Israel actively participates in a wide range of the Agency's activities, in the fields of safety, security, emergency response, and technical cooperation. Israel has committed its best people to these activities, and likewise, benefits from the expertise and knowledge possessed by the Agency and its member states.

Earlier this year, the Government of Israel decided to provide the Agency with an extra-budgetary financial contribution, through the "Peaceful Uses Initiative", for the Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories. This contribution attests to Israel's longstanding support for the Agency's objectives, especially assisting countries in developing nuclear technologies for a wide range of peaceful applications.

Israel is an active participant in the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Program, including in the fields of health and agriculture, and has concluded several successful projects. Next month, Israel would be pleased to host an interregional training workshop on Quality Assurance in Radiation Therapy.

The workshop will take place in a unique Israeli training center, a world leader in simulation-based medical education. Israel looks forward to hosting experts from all member states, who will gain experience and knowledge in this important area.

I wish to commend the Technical Cooperation Department of the Agency for its achievements over the past year.

Last year, Israel conducted an emergency response exercise, which simulated an incident, due to a malicious act in our research reactor, at the Soreq Nuclear Center. The purpose of the exercise was to test and evaluate an effective response, in accordance with established international and national emergency procedures. Foreign observers, including from the IAEA, participated in this exercise. The exercise also provided an opportunity for the Agency to observe some of the capabilities that Israel had registered in the IAEA Response and Assistance Network.

Mr. President,

I would like to congratulate the IAEA and the Government of Kazakhstan for signing the Host State Agreement, establishing an IAEA Bank of low-enriched uranium. The LEU fuel bank provides assurances for countries with a nuclear power program for a sustainable supply of nuclear fuel.

Mr. President,

Regrettably, I am obliged to refer to another issue. The contentious and politically motivated draft resolution "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities" – INC - has been submitted once again by the Arab Group. This resolution is meant to single out the state of Israel and to isolate my country. Among the co-sponsors of this draft resolution are member states such as Syria, Libya and Iraq, all known for their notorious record of non-compliance with their obligations in the WMD domain. The resolution, if passed, would harm the Agency's credibility, by politicizing it, and drain its scarce resources. It is clearly beyond the scope of the Agency's Statute and mandate. Debating this resolution has been imposed on the General Conference year after year. This was clearly recognized by a majority of member states of the Agency, who rejected it three times in recent years.

Mr. President,

Israel is committed to direct and open dialogue with its neighbors on all matters of regional security. Accordingly, Israel constructively engaged in an effort to advance regional dialogue, in five rounds of multilateral consultations facilitated by Ambassador Laajava of Finland. Regrettably, some key states in the region preferred to avoid these consultations altogether. Others opted to bring this meaningful regional engagement to an end by rejecting further consultations.

During these five rounds of multilateral consultations, Israel elaborated its policy and approach to regional security and arms control. Israel reiterated its position that the nuclear issue, as well as all regional security issues, could only be realistically addressed within a regional context.

A direct dialogue between all states of the Middle East must be based on the indispensable principle of consensus among the parties, as has been demonstrated repeatedly in other regions of the world.

Mr. President,

The submission of the biased, politically motivated resolution "INC" is intended to divert attention from the dire situation in many parts of our region. This draft resolution negates dialogue, trust and confidence. Israel believes that this conference must stand up for the IAEA's mission and object to this draft resolution.

Mr. President,

This brings me to the greatest threat in our region, Iran. Iran stands above all others, in its destabilizing role and subversive activities, across the region and around the world. Iran's unbridled aggression is felt in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iraq and elsewhere. Iran's fingerprints are found in every corner of our region, where it finances, trains and arms terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

Mr. President,

Against this background, for decades, Iran has been pursuing a secretive nuclear program. Iran came to the negotiating table only under the heavy pressure of international sanctions. Yet, the same political leaders in Teheran, who vow to bring "death to Israel", have given no indication that they have abandoned their strategic goal of acquiring nuclear weapons. When the agreement with the P5+1 expires, Iran will be in a better position to do so, even if we assume that Iran is not engaged in undeclared nuclear activities.

Allow me to remind you that Iran has a long record of duplicity. Iran seemingly cooperates with the IAEA inspections, in its now-declared facilities. At the same time, Iran has carried out covert activities, about which it refuses to come clean.

Mr. President,

Iran will continue to provide misleading explanations while concealing, or destroying, incriminating evidence as shown in the desperate, massive clean-up operation it carried out in the Parchin test-site over the past three years.

The international community should maintain pressure on Iran until the IAEA reports without question the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities. The termination of UNSC and IAEA resolutions on Iran, prior to such a clear-cut conclusion, will send the world a very dangerous message about nuclear proliferation.

Mr. President,

An Iran within reach of nuclear weapons, once the current agreement expires, is not an option that Israel, the region or the world can tolerate.

Mr. President,

The Middle East is at a critical crossroads. It presents great threats and dangers. Decades-long quest for a WMD free Middle East requires a realistic evaluation. The Middle East is changing dramatically. Old boundaries and entities are melting down, sending shock-waves far beyond the region. Israel, however, remains committed to its long held vision of a more secure and peaceful Middle East. Direct engagement, based on confidence building and trust, is essential to make progress towards the fulfillment of this vision.

Israel believes that a meaningful regional dialogue, based on mutual recognition and respect, could benefit all Middle Eastern parties, with no exception. I would wish that our neighbors will react positively to this Israeli constructive approach at this critical juncture in the Middle East.

Thank you, Mr. President, and a happy New Year to all of you.

