

59th General Conference of the IAEA
Statement
The Republic of Latvia
Mr. Guntis Pukītis, State Secretary on the Ministry of
Environmental
Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia,
Vienna, Austria, 14-18 September 2015

Mr President, Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to highlight Latvia's views also in a national capacity.

Let me thank you, Mr. President, for taking up the important task of chairing this year's General Conference. Equally, Latvia would like to express its gratitude to the IAEA Director General and the Secretariat for their professionalism and dedication to the work of the Agency.

We also want to congratulate and welcome the two new Member States to the Agency – Djibouti and Guyana. In terms of a wider reach of the IAEA we commend the applications for membership by Antigua and Barbuda, Turkmenistan and Barbados.

Nuclear non-proliferation

Latvia is fully committed to promoting universal adherence to the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agreements.

We call for the states that have not yet done so, to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and to adhere to its terms.

The NPT remains as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. Even though this year's NPT Review Conference concluded without consensus, we remain committed on implementing the Action Plan adopted during the NPT Review Conference in 2010.

We regret that it has not been possible to organize the Conference on the establishment of a Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East. It is of vital importance to build on the excellent and effortless work by the Facilitator, Ambassador Jaako Laajava, and to continue the engagement of all States in the region to pave the way for a meaningful conference.

Safeguards and Nuclear Verification

We commend the IAEA for its indispensable work on the safeguards system, which is a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and in the implementation of the NPT. Latvia firmly supports the continued evolution of safeguards, notably, the development of the State-level concept, which will further strengthen the Safeguards System.

Two months ago, we witnessed the historic agreement between the E3+3 and Iran on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. This is an important step to ensure the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. Latvia has supported and will continue to support the Agency's task of verification

and monitoring of Iran's nuclear commitments. We are looking forward to the implementation of the agreed further steps by Iran, which will lead to a comprehensive long-term settlement to benefit regional and international peace and security.

Nuclear Safety

Latvia attaches great importance to the worldwide implementation and continuous improvement of the highest standards of nuclear safety.

As one of the most significant related developments this year, we would like to salute the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety, which was unanimously adopted at the Diplomatic Conference of the Convention on Nuclear Safety in February this year. The Vienna Declaration is the result of tireless international efforts to strengthen nuclear safety globally, following the Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear accident in Japan.

We want to underline that the safe construction, use and maintenance of nuclear facilities impacts not only the security of the country where the facility is located, but also its neighbours.

Technical Cooperation

Latvia commends the IAEA Technical Cooperation Department for their invaluable support to Member States, particularly its guidance on adjusting regulatory frameworks to ensure the high standards of safety, security and safeguards.

With a view to our national activities, Latvia plans to improve its radiation safety through additional training and education activities in the next programme cycle of 2016-2017. Special attention will be paid to public awareness-raising activities and augmenting the society's understanding of radiation safety.

With regards to activities involving the use of ionizing radiation, Latvia strives to maintain the highest standards in the supervision of these activities. Latvia continues to introduce new technologies in the medical sphere by advancing the development of cyclotron technology. It is our priority to maintain the safety standards at medical institutions, as well as continuing our work regarding radiation control on our borders and monitoring radiation more broadly.

I would also like to highlight that Latvia continues to improve monitoring of radiation protection infrastructure in order to ensure the best possible protection of public health and safety. We also promote high nuclear safety standards among operators in order to facilitate their awareness and their responsibility for managing ionizing radiation risks.

In line with the Agency's recommendations and safety principles Latvia is currently concentrating its efforts towards a speedy implementation of the EU's radioactive waste and spent fuel management Directive.

For all those reasons, I would like to underline that Latvia attaches great importance to the continuation of collaboration with the Technical Cooperation Department and the ongoing exchange of best practices with international experts on radiation security and nuclear safety.

Mr. President,

Finally, I would like to note that Latvia has the honour to become a member of the Board of Governors for the period of 2015-2017. Over the course of those two years, our priorities will be to promote the worldwide implementation and continuous improvement of the highest standards of

nuclear safety. Equally, we will focus on the IAEA safeguards activities, particularly on the implementation of Iran's Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. I assure you that, as members of the Board of Governors, we will do everything in our capacity to contribute to the efficient and professional work of the Agency in this particularly critical time.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me reiterate Latvia's strong support to the Agency and its work.

Thank you!