STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Latchesar Kostov

Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency of Bulgaria

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Madam President,

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria and on my behalf I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the 62nd Session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. I avail myself of this opportunity to assure you of the full support and cooperation of Bulgarian delegation in the fulfillment of your important and responsible task during the session deliberations. I am convinced that under your guidance, we will be able to reach a desirable conclusion through our work this week and the Conference will contribute to the achievement of the IAEA's main objectives: non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, enhancement of nuclear safety, and peaceful application of atomic energy.

The Bulgarian delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries.

Madam President,

Distinguished delegates,

The Republic of Bulgaria is strongly committed to the efforts in further strengthening international non-proliferation regime which remains an important element for preserving global security and stability. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The IAEA Safeguards mechanism is a key instrument for its implementation. Bulgaria once again calls for the universalization of the NPT and the IAEA Additional Protocol. We believe the Agency's Safeguards activities are an indispensable contribution in this regard.

Bulgaria reaffirms its full support to the establishment of a Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East. We encourage all States in the region to renew their efforts for convening a Conference with the participation of all stakeholders. Bulgaria firmly believes that only through the spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding we can reach the desired consensus and make progress towards implementing the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. In this context, we regret to see the item "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities" included in the IAEA General Conference Agenda.

Madam President,

Bulgaria attaches high importance to the continued full and effective implementation of all parts of the JCPOA, which has been unanimously endorsed by UNSCR 2231 and whose implementation by Iran has been verified by the IAEA.

We would like to underline IAEA key role in monitoring, verifying, and regularly reporting on, Iran's implementation of all its nuclear-related commitments. It is important that Iran continue to strictly abide by all its nuclear-related commitments and provide timely and proactive cooperation on all requested access to all the sites and locations in Iran which the Agency needs to visit.

The full implementation of the JSPOA will contribute to build a stronger and more predictable global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. It may provide the necessary gear in addressing other issues, including DPRK nuclear and ballistic missile programme.

Bulgaria welcomes the agreements reached at the meeting between US President and DPRK State Affairs Commission Chairman in Singapore on June 12, 2018. We expect concrete measures, implementing the Singapore agreements to be taken in order to reach the ultimate goal of comprehensive, verifiable and irreversible cessation of the DPRK nuclear and missile programmes.

We call on the DPRK to return to full compliance with all its NPT and IAEA safeguards obligations and to provide the Agency with prompt access to individuals, documentation, equipment and facilities.

Madam President,

Distinguished delegates,

We would like to congratulate the Director General and the Secretariat for the preparation of the 2017 Annual Report. We appreciate the fact, stated in the Report, that the Agency completed the revision of its Safety Requirements taking into account lessons from the Fukushima Daiichi accident. We also appreciate the efforts of the IAEA in supporting Member States in building their capacity to manage nuclear knowledge and information through training activities, schools and on-line courses. We would like to encourage the Agency to continue to support human resources development programs in Member States through different activities like Nuclear Operators Forum held in Vienna last year.

Madam President,

Regarding the nuclear energy activities in my country, during the last year, I would like to mention some of the most important for the future development of this sector in Bulgaria.

At the end of 2013 Program for Unit 5 preparation for long term operation has been submitted to the NRA for agreement. Between 2014 and 2016 Kozloduy NPP performed Periodic Safety Review for license renewal. All documents related to the long term operation of Unit 5 were subjected to review and assessment by the Bulgarian regulator following a specific review program. The general conclusion is that all submitted documents along with the additionally submitted assessments and substantiations demonstrate confidence in the safe operation of Unit 5 during the period of the renewed license. The results of the assessments and external reviews show compliance with the applicable safety requirements and implementation of the criteria for license renewal. Based on these conclusions, on 3 November 2017, the NRA renewed the operating license of Unit 5 for another 10 years.

In March this year the Bulgarian Parliament assigned the Minister of Energy to draw up a report, propose specific options related to the possibility to realize the assets of the Belene NPP project in clearly defined parameters. In May the report was submitted to the Council of Ministers with a proposal to restart the project based entirely on a market principle. The main argument in support of this option is that only the implementation of the project allows the Bulgarian state to fully recover the costs incurred over the years related to the Belene NPP project, as well as to guarantee the country's energy security in the long term. The existences of available paid equipment and licensed site for Belene NPP are factors that give the advantage for project

earlier completion in comparison to other similar projects. In addition, a strong investor interest in the feasibility of the project has been shown for the last year and a half and this should also be taken into account. At the moment, the Ministry of Energy is preparing the procedure for selecting a strategic investor, expected to be finished at the end of October.

Madam President

In June 2018 Bulgaria hosted IAEA ARTEMIS mission. Bulgaria is one of the first Member States to invite the IAEA Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation. We consider ARTEMIS is an important tool for assessing the strategies and programs for managing the activities of the final phase of the nuclear fuel cycle. The mission concluded that Bulgaria is committed to the safe management of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel and the Bulgarian national program contains all the elements for safe performance of these activities. The ARTEMIS mission also noted areas for potential long-term improvements, which Bulgarian authorities will take on board within the future development of the Bulgarian national program.

This summer we had a pleasure to be hosts of the DDG Juan Carlos Lentijo. During his visit in Bulgaria the large scope of questions were discussed among them the IAEA programs on new nuclear capacities, as well as the joint activities of the International agency and the member states on the extension of lifetime operation of Nuclear Power Plants. DDG

emphasizes that the Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency as a regulator is the main national representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency and plays a key role in attracting other Bulgarian institutions to cooperate with the IAEA.

Madam President,

In 2018 the new cycle of the Technical cooperation program started. In accordance with its Country Framework Program's priorities, Bulgaria participated in this cycle with national projects in the field of nuclear medicine, environment and agriculture. Together with the Agency's experts we are working to fulfill the relevant Working Plans and to achieve the expected outcomes. Bulgaria actively participates in the European regional projects as well. Large number of Bulgarian specialists and scientists from operating organizations, the regulatory body, technical support organizations and different institutes attended seminars, training courses, technical meetings, conferences and scientific forums organized by the IAEA.

Our understanding is that the technical cooperation program is the Agency's key mechanism for transferring technology and building capacities in the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. The Program also helps Member States to identify and meet future energy needs, and to improve the nuclear safety and security worldwide.

Madam President,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Bulgaria will continue to support the IAEA activities in promoting the international cooperation in the field of the peaceful use of atomic energy and for the application of the Safeguards. Saying this I am also expressing our confidence in the work of the Secretariat and its Director General.

Thank you, Madam President.