

59th IAEA General Conference

Statement by Mr. Daniel VERWAERDE,
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Mr President,

1. Allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of this 59th session of the General Conference.
2. France fully supports the declaration made on behalf of the European Union by the head of the delegation from Luxembourg, which holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for this six-month period.
3. This General Conference, the first I have the honour of addressing, forms part of a chain of positive events, both recent and to come, on which we can build. The agreement reached in Vienna between Iran and the E3+3, endorsed by the Security Council on 20 July, paves the way for settling a serious proliferation crisis. The 21st United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP21) seems to represent a good chance of reaching a global compromise benefiting the climate. The Washington Nuclear Security Summit will consolidate a collective process to tackle the subject of security, which is vital to all, and should ensure a transition to a unifying role of the IAEA in this area. In the fields of nuclear safety, international cooperation and the application of safeguards, this Agency, our Agency, has carried out important work beneficial to all States, in a soothed atmosphere.

These are the issues, and France's efforts to make progress on each one of them, that I would like to raise with you today.

Iran

Mr President,

4. France commends **the agreement signed on the Iran dossier on 14 July**. France sought to contribute to the robustness of the agreement through a firm, yet constructive attitude. Rigorous and sustainable implementation of the agreement should make it possible to re-establish confidence as to the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. The capacity to make full use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is just one of the advantages of an agreement that once again opens Iran's economy up to the world. The agreement should notably allow Iran,

from implementation day, to enter nuclear cooperation with the IAEA and the States that so wish, even beyond the E3+3.

But this agreement can only be a success if it is **scrupulously implemented**. The IAEA will play a determining role in this matter. We will continue to pay special attention to this area.

5. It is vital that the process to **clarify the possible military dimension of the Iranian programme** remains credible. France has taken note of the road map signed by Iran and the Agency on 14 July. We will be paying very close attention to its implementation, and we call on Iran to cooperate fully with the Agency in this area. Subsequent exchanges should be substantial, and not limited to simply applying the procedures.
6. The Vienna agreement will create additional work for the Agency over the long term, with **major implications in terms of human and financial resources**. We are ready to take on our share of this work, as we announced during the extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors on 25 August, but we also know that these operations need to be financed in the regular budget as rapidly as possible. It is in everyone's interest to make this agreement a success; we must all support its implementation.

DPRK and Syria

Mr President,

7. Despite the agreement reached regarding the Iranian nuclear programme, trends towards proliferation remain a concern.
8. **North Korea** openly continues to develop ballistics and nuclear programmes for military purposes and publicly affirms that it intends to equip itself with a deterrent, in defiance of its international obligations and, more specifically, UNSC resolutions 1718, 1874, 2087 and 2094. It continues to develop its nuclear facilities and has threatened several times since last year to proceed with another nuclear test. North Korea must reopen dialogue with the international community with a view to full and irreversible abandonment of its nuclear programme, notably by allowing Agency inspectors to return without delay.

9. Regarding **Syria**, the nuclear situation has sadly not improved since last year. Syria has never cooperated in good faith with the Agency. The tragedy unfolding in this country and the dramatic events being experienced by the Syrian people does not negate the fact that its nuclear issues must be resolved. We consider that Syria remains responsible for the facilities located within its borders and must cooperate with the IAEA as it cooperated with the OPCW regarding its chemical programme, namely by providing access to all the information necessary for completion of the mission.

COP21

Mr President,

10. The second major deadline affecting our joint work is the **21st United Nations Conference on Climate Change**. As you know, France is hosting this conference in Paris from 30 November to 11 December this year. It is a major deadline for the international community and, according to the negotiators themselves, the conditions are much more favourable to reaching a solution than in the past. States as well as societies, NGOs and companies have mobilized to face the climate challenge. France, in its role as host, is working transparently with all countries to outline a **collective ambition that meets the expectations of all countries, particularly the most vulnerable**, through a universal agreement. The aim of building, together, a "**Paris Climate Alliance**" that allows us to limit the rise in the planet's average temperature to less than 1.5°C or 2°C in relation to pre-industrial levels and adapt our societies to existing changes, is within reach. The IAEA and the forms of cooperation it encourages have an important role to play in this effort.
11. In practice, the success of COP21 will rely on the decisions of all our countries to undertake sustainable energy policies. In this respect, France, together with the whole European Union, has set ambitious objectives. A new **law on the energy transition for green growth** entered into force in August. It expresses, at a national level, this ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce final energy consumption and reduce the consumption of fossil fuels.
12. **France thereby reaffirms its decision to opt for a diverse energy mix**, combining two low-carbon sources, nuclear and renewable energies, to contribute to combating

climate change and guarantee our security of supply. The proportion of nuclear power will reach 50% of the energy mix by 2025.

13. To this end, the President of France has decided to **resfound the French nuclear sector**, which we consider vital to the energy independence of our country, the success of the energy transition via the generation of low-carbon energy, and the development of French industrial and technological know-how abroad. EDF and AREVA's reactor design, project management and marketing activities will be initiated to generate industrial synergies that will strengthen the capacities of the French nuclear sector, with competitive products and services that meet the highest standards of safety.

Nuclear security

Mr President,

14. Two major events are scheduled for next year in the field of nuclear security: the **Nuclear Security Summit** taking place in Washington D.C. in spring 2016, and the **2nd International Conference on Nuclear Security** organized by the IAEA in December 2016.
15. On this subject, France wishes to congratulate the Agency for maintaining and extending these activities, as described in its Nuclear Security Report 2015, notably as regards its offer of training and advice for States. However, these activities need to be developed still further. The United States, which was behind the Nuclear Summit initiative, was right to put civil nuclear security in the political spotlight. The stakes are high. Beyond the 2016 Summit, it is extremely important that the Agency's central role in leading and coordinating international technical work on nuclear security is unequivocally recognized. It should mobilize to provide a framework for the political work of States on the subject through its Nuclear Security Conferences.
16. For ten years, France has also been contributing to the IAEA's efforts to strengthen nuclear security via a bilateral arrangement. I would like to reiterate here our **commitment to backing, both technically and financially, the activities of the IAEA** in support of its Nuclear Security Plan 2014-2017.

17. Improving the management of **radioactive sources** is one of the main priorities of this cooperation, in accordance with the wishes of the French President, as expressed at the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit. France is therefore working with the IAEA to identify, and, where appropriate, repatriate, high-activity disused sources of French origin. An operation was carried out in May in Morocco. It follows several similar operations, conducted in no fewer than ten States in recent years. Preparations are also under way for further operations in Lebanon, Cameroon and Tunisia in the months to come. All States exporting sources can contribute to this effort, which is of concern to all.
18. France encourages the Agency and the Member States to reflect on the development and **use of alternatives technologies to high-activity radioactive sources**. It thereby seeks to promote the long-term development of such alternative technologies, which should be technically realistic and economically relevant. This would involve, while respecting the technological choices of States, and without calling into question the applications for which high-activity sources offer a noticeable advantage, limiting, over the long term, the inventory of sources that present the highest risks in the event of malicious use, by making use of credible alternatives. I would like to welcome the recent establishment of an ad-hoc working group in this area and can only express the strongest encouragement for the work it is undertaking.
19. Increasing nuclear security also requires all of us to adopt robust, shared rules. France therefore encourages the States that have not yet done so to ratify the **texts that contribute to the security of radioactive sources**.

Nuclear safety

Mr President,

20. The year 2015 marks the end of an important work cycle for the IAEA in the domain of nuclear safety.
21. The Director General's presentation of the report on the **accident that occurred at the Fukushima-Daiichi plant** is the concrete result of three years of work that mobilized a very broad range of expertise involving numerous French experts. It is a major contribution to learning from the lessons of the accident and improving nuclear safety worldwide. France wishes to congratulate the Agency for this considerable work and calls for **this report to be presented and distributed as widely as possible**.

22. The **IAEA's Action Plan on Nuclear Safety**, launched after the Fukushima accident, also reaches its term this year. This action plan has greatly contributed to integrating the lessons from the Fukushima accident into post-accident management practices. It is now important to maintain the Agency's activities in the field of safety over the long term through a **multi-year programme integrated into the regular work of the IAEA** and extended to all priority safety issues on an international scale. It is in our common interest to **establish a real international safety culture at both decision-making and operational levels**.
23. Strengthening nuclear safety also requires the **universal application of existing legal instruments**. Although it was not possible to reach a consensus on a legally binding revision of the international Convention on Nuclear Safety, France is pleased that the Contracting Parties have engaged in the matter by adopting the **Vienna Declaration** to tighten nuclear safety requirements and report on their ongoing efforts to improve nuclear facilities in their territories.
24. The proper management of radioactive waste is another vital condition for the responsible development of nuclear energy. France, which has a good level of experience in the matter thanks to **Cigéo**, its project for the deep geological disposal of radioactive waste, is ready to share this knowledge with the members of the Agency.
25. I would finally like to reiterate the importance, for every country, of adhering to one of the existing **international nuclear civil liability regimes**, whether it be the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC), or the revised Paris Convention (alongside the Brussels Convention) or the revised Vienna Convention, linked by the Joint Protocol.

Safeguards system

Mr President,

26. I would like to address the issue of safeguards. They have, together with technical cooperation, played a founding role in the work of the Agency. In the eyes of the world, inspections are in the IAEA's DNA. And France is convinced that the existence of a credible safeguards system, under the responsibility of the IAEA, is a fundamental condition of nuclear non-proliferation, and thus for the development of all peaceful

uses of nuclear energy. France will therefore continue to help strengthen the resources of the IAEA in this area, in particular by making its skills and expertise available under its **National Safeguards Support Program (PFSG)**. All French civil nuclear facilities, particularly those used for generating electricity, are subject to Euratom safeguards.

27. France would like to reiterate the importance it attaches to progression towards an ambitious universal safeguards system. In order to fulfil the goals of article III.1 of the NPT, France believes that inspection standards should be founded upon the implementation of a **comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol**. Indeed, only an additional protocol can ensure that the Agency can provide credible guarantees that States are respecting their obligations, notably with regard to the NPT.

Mr President,

28. The IAEA is the place where multilateral cooperation is organized, and which gathers together the technical knowledge required to give all States access to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and other peaceful nuclear applications. Without going into too much detail, I would like to draw the attention of the Conference to **some of my country's initiatives**.

29. France wishes to contribute to making the necessary skills available to countries that wish to develop a civil nuclear programme. In this respect, the "Nuclear Technology Review 2015" shows that a significant number of countries accessing nuclear power for the first time will need new skills to this end. The development of human resources is vital in this process. This is why France proposed, a year ago now, an initiative to develop human resources and build capacity, the **"Capacity Building Initiative"**.

30. France invites all interested countries to participate in this initiative in relation with the IAEA. Several concrete actions have already been carried out since the launch of the initiative, in order to establish a **global inventory of training offered in the field of nuclear energy** and develop the network of *International Centres Based on Research Reactors* (ICERR). On this subject, allow me to add that France is very proud to have received **the first ICERR accreditation** from the IAEA for its Jules Horowitz and ISIS research reactors at Cadarache and Saclay respectively.

Mr President,

31. Access to energy and science for all, the development of energy and science under safe, secure conditions, and international confidence in non-proliferation in nuclear cooperation are all vital missions. They are vital for development, the climate, and international peace and security. **This year, the IAEA, France, and the international community have made a great deal of progress in this regard.** We wil stand by the Director General, by the inspectors and experts, together with all States that wish to do the same, in order to contribute to this common goal. Thank you.