



Statement

By

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Mr. Chairman, Director General, distinguished delegates,

Israel strongly supports the IAEA's Director General Initiative, to convene this high-level conference, drawing on the lessons from the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plants, and to raise awareness to high standards of nuclear safety in order to create a new safety culture.

[At the outset, I would like to express Israel's sincere condolences to the Government of Japan and its people on the loss of life caused by the massive earthquake and the subsequent Tsunami.]

Mr. Chairman,

[Israel appreciates the efforts made by the IAEA Director General and his staff, to work closely with the Government of Japan.] The early visit of the Director General to Japan followed by the IAEA team, have made a significant contribution to the flow of information and crisis assessment. They were also important in coordinating international assistance and support. Israel recognizes the central role of the IAEA in strengthening the global nuclear safety regime, promoting nuclear safety culture worldwide and in providing expertise and advice.

Following the early news from Fukushima, Israel offered its assistance to Japan. A national emergency response team, composed of medical personnel as well as radiation monitoring

experts, was dispatched to the affected region. During its operation, the Israeli delegation was highly impressed by the resilience and the determination of the local population to overcome the terrible consequences of the disaster.

Mr. Chairman,

[The Israel Atomic Energy Commission advises its Government on all nuclear matters, including research and development, and determining policies and priorities in this domain. The IAEC is also responsible to implement policies outlined by the Government and represents the State of Israel in relevant national and international institutions.]

Israel operates two nuclear research reactors, at the Soreq Nuclear Research Center and at the Negev Nuclear Research Center. Both reactors are located within a safe distance from populated areas, and are operated according to high safety standards, which are compatible with IAEA standards. Israel allocates appropriate human and material resources to maintain and operate its nuclear centers by qualified and experienced personnel.

In the draft report of the IAEA fact-finding team to Japan, the team identified several lessons to be learned. Among those lessons, the importance of national Emergency Response

Centers, with adequate provisions for handling all necessary emergency functions. Israel has long recognized the importance of enhancing these capabilities in its nuclear centers.

Even though Israel considers the risk of leakage or emission of radioactivity in its nuclear centers as very low, it has placed a contingency plan for such an emergency. Israel also conducts periodic national preparedness exercises in this context.

Mr. Chairman,

[The draft report of the IAEA fact finding team states, inter-alia that "nuclear regulatory systems should address extreme events adequately, including their periodic review, and should ensure that regulatory independence and clarity of roles are preserved".]

Israel's two research reactors operate under the supervision of both the IAEC and an independent public Advisory Safety Committee which reports directly to the Prime Minister. Besides, the Ministry of Environment Protection is assigned with the task of conducting routine monitoring of the adjacent environment. Furthermore, early this year the independent status of Israel's Nuclear Regulatory and Safety Office was approved by the Government. We believe that the independence of both the Public Advisory Safety Commission and the Nuclear

Regulatory and Safety Office, conveys to the public a message of transparency and contributes to public confidence.

In line with its policy and practice of maintaining high level expertise, the IAEC is promoting cooperation between its safety experts and their colleagues in other countries, including regular participation in the work of the IAEA safety Committees.

Mr. Chairman,

No less important lesson of the nuclear crisis in Fukushima addresses the need for regional and international concerted emergency preparedness and response.

Israel respects the aspirations of its neighboring countries for peaceful nuclear research and energy. As the consequences of a possible nuclear accident cannot be contained within national boundaries, Israel emphasizes the merit of national and regional emergency preparedness and response including regional cooperation. Israel proposes to study jointly in the region the lessons learned in Fukushima and to promote such cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

As part of implementing Israel's nuclear safety and risk reduction policy, Israel recently completed a project of returning

highly enriched uranium spent fuel from its Soreq research reactor to the US. The Soreq reactor is fueled by US-origin HEU and operates under IAEA safeguards. The Government of Israel is appreciative of the support and cooperation of DOE/US in this important project, which has both safety and nuclear security benefits.

Mr. Chairman,

We must all admit that the Fukushima crisis has changed public perspectives regarding utilization of nuclear energy. Israel concurs with the conclusion of the Government of Japan in its report that "we will be able to overcome this accident by uniting the wisdom and efforts of not only Japan, but also the world". The nuclear energy is vital as ever and many states consider nuclear power as a viable option which plays an important part in meeting fast growing energy needs. We must all raise awareness to safety culture and re-evaluate safety measures in our facilities to meet the challenge. I can assure you that Israel will carefully study the assessment and the lessons of the Fukushima nuclear crisis and act accordingly.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.