

Albania Statement

Distinguished President,

At the outset, I would like to commend you and the IAEA DG Mr. Amano, for organizing this very important and timely Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety.

The Albanian Government would like to express once again its most sincere condolences and deepest sympathy to the people and government of Japan for the tragic loss of human life which has resulted from the 11 March earthquake and the tsunami which came in its aftermath. In the last three months we have noticed with admiration the way in which the Japanese people are coping with the effects of the disaster and the enormous efforts and sacrifice invested by Japanese personnel in the fight to control the situation at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant.

We welcome the various activities already undertaken by the IAEA with regard to the Fukushima accident. We consider the sending of the Agency's expert's teams to Japan, the technical briefings which have been provided by the Agency on the developments, the established cooperation with other international organizations, including CTBTO and the fact-finding mission, timely and extremely useful measures. We would like to express our appreciation for the IAEA Incident and Emergency Centre, which stood ready and continuously made available essential information to all Member States around the clock in accordance with the Early Notification Convention.

This Ministerial Conference provides an opportunity to start a lessons-learned process with follow up actions to strengthen nuclear safety, emergency preparedness and radiation protection of people and the environment worldwide. These subjects will be addressed in various international fora, but this Conference should discuss and recommend a working plan and action to be taken in order that such kind of situation to be mitigated in the near future.

Mr. President,

Many IAEA Member States consider nuclear power as a viable option in meeting their energy needs. It is imperative for States planning to embark on a nuclear power programme to create an appropriate nuclear

safety infrastructure based on IAEA safety standards and relevant guidance and assistance, using, among others, effective IAEA technical cooperation mechanisms for supporting the safe and secure use of nuclear technologies. The legal framework regarding nuclear safety could be reviewed under the leading role of the IAEA. The International Atomic Energy Agency's safety guidelines should be made compulsory.

Nuclear power contributes significantly to global electricity generation. This important capacity cannot easily be replaced. Its cessation would require us to tear up our decarbonisation goals. Whether we like it or not, nuclear will be with us for many years to come. Mankind's need for energy requires us to take risks. The important thing is that those risks are well managed. For all its terrors, Fukushima has not demonstrated that they cannot be.

Mr. President,

The increasing demand on electricity is a long-term and worldwide issue, as well as a challenge to be successfully faced. Based on the National Strategy on Energy, needs for energy are continuously growing in Albania. Over the last 10 years, there has been a 70% increase in demand for energy. Albania is, for the moment, benefiting only from its hydropower plants to get electricity. The actual installed capacity is around 1500 MW, which is only 35% of the water potential reserves. The water regime of rivers in Albania is strongly depending on the climate conditions. It is thus a strategic need to diversify the electricity generation portfolio. The target of the Government for Albania to become an exporter country of electricity in the coming years is an ambitious, but possible strategic objective.

Based on all these considerations the Albanian government considers the safe and secure nuclear power, as a real and reasonable alternative, to be seriously taken into consideration in the future. It is in this framework that the Albanian government has already launched the National Nuclear Program. In support of the National Nuclear Program, the National Nuclear Agency (NNA) has been established early last year.

The main objective of the NNA for the moment is to prepare the legal and regulatory frameworks related to this Program. With the assistance of the IAEA, the National Nuclear Agency has been developing the proper infrastructure for the introduction of the Nuclear Power Energy in Albania.

Albania has been participating in European Regional projects in the field of nuclear energy introduction. The objective of the project RER/0/029 is to strengthen national and regional infrastructures of interested Member States for the planning and development of nuclear power programmes and to ensure that any Member State planning the introduction and expansion of nuclear energy has a complete understanding of the range of issues and activities to be addressed before implementation of a nuclear power project.

The IAEA has transmitted clear message to Albanian lawmakers and government - embankment in nuclear power offers a lot of possibilities and challenges for further economic development but at the same time a lot of responsibilities to be taken over.

The cooperation with IAEA will continue under both regional and national Technical Cooperation projects. A new national TC project "Development of and integrated infrastructure framework for the introduction of Nuclear Power in Albania", with emphasis of safety aspects, is under preparation for the next cycle. This project aims to strengthen the country's safety infrastructure.

By way of conclusion, **Mr. President**, I would like to reiterate that we fully endorsed the Ministerial declaration, convinced that it constitutes the much needed political support to a process that officially starts now under the leadership of the IAEA. We took note of the statement of Mr. Amano. We support all his five proposals and find them appropriate with direct impact to the nuclear safety strengthening.

Thank you, Mr. President.