

Statement of the Netherlands
IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety,
20 - 24 June 2011

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Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Dutch minister of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, Mr Maxime Verhagen, at this Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety.

First of all, let me express sympathy and solidarity with the people of Japan, so severely hit by the natural events last March and by the subsequent accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Ever since the nuclear accident in Fukushima, the international community has been determined to cooperate on improved nuclear safety in order to prevent a similar disaster in the future. Improved nuclear safety is of paramount importance to human society. In this respect, my government fully endorses the statement adopted by the G8 in Deauville, further elaborated at the ministerial seminar in Paris on June 7, on promoting the highest levels of safety worldwide, consistent with the principles

of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. We must learn the lessons of the Fukushima accident and strengthen international cooperation on safety practices, crisis management and transparency.

I should like to thank Director General Amano for taking the initiative to organise this conference which will lay the foundation stone of a revised and strengthened international safety regime. The IAEA is the right forum for this work. First steps to be taken in the framework of the IAEA should include:

== review and revision of the Safety Standards, in particular by incorporating the lessons learned and by strengthening the technical content and detail of the Safety Requirements and Safety Guides;

== also, as proposed by the G8, the European Commission and several Member States, consideration should be given to making the Safety Requirements binding for Member States;

== thirdly, Member States should be encouraged to make better use of IAEA technical safety review services, in particular those aimed at preventing or mitigating severe accidents. These include review and advice on Accident Management Programmes, technical provisions for coping with or mitigating severe accidents and Probabilistic Safety Analysis.

My government welcomes the recent decision of the European Council to carry out comprehensive risk and safety assessments of all the existing nuclear power plants in the EU. It fully supports the scope and modalities of these stress tests including natural disasters, man-made failures, actions such as plane crashes and explosions close to nuclear plants and terrorist attacks. It is extremely important that these stress tests be carried out at short

notice – even though we realize that the time-frame set is very ambitious. My government reiterates that the results of the stress test should be made public and if the findings necessitate this, immediate measures should be put into place. I can confirm that this will be the line followed in the Netherlands. My government also calls on countries outside the European Union that have nuclear power plants to launch similar safety assessments.

Finally, Mr President, the Dutch government believes - and continues to believe in the aftermath of Fukushima - that nuclear energy has an important role to play in supplying affordable, secure energy. But the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan has reinforced our view that safety must come first. Therefore, the lessons learned from the Japanese disaster will be duly reflected in our nuclear energy policy.

Thank you for your attention.