

Director General, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing, on behalf of the Norwegian government, our condolences and sympathy to the government and people of Japan, who have suffered the triple tragedy of earthquake, tsunami and a nuclear accident. Together with the rest of the international community, Norway stands ready to assist Japan in her recovery efforts.

The nuclear accident in Fukushima has once again demonstrated uncertainties and risks linked to the development of nuclear energy. We must draw lessons from this and improve nuclear safety and emergency preparedness and response both nationally and at a global level. I thank the IAEA for all the efforts of the Agency in recent months and Director General Amano for having called this Conference in order to discuss further improvements. We need to identify and implement measures of improvement as a matter of urgency. But we should also remind ourselves of a fundamental lesson: that even remote or improbable circumstances sometimes do combine and create disasters in the real world, and that we therefore need to be prepared for the unthinkable.

The accident in Fukushima confirmed that nuclear accidents will never be a national concern only. Although the physical, radiological effects on people and environment to a large extent were confined to a limited geographical area, the accident clearly had, and continue to have, international repercussions, and could only be dealt with through international co-operation. Information sharing between nations, both directly and through the IAEA, and not least the provision of accurate and timely information to the public at large is crucial in this respect.

Fukushima has also rendered our efforts to prevent nuclear accidents in the future more urgent. Even with the closing down of some nuclear facilities and additional precautionary measures being implemented in many countries, the risk of future

accidents may actually be on the rise, given the likely increase in the use of nuclear energy worldwide.

In our view, both the IAEA and its member states have a critical role in reducing the risk of future accidents to a minimum. We welcome the EU decision to review the safety of all nuclear plants and call for similar stress tests to be carried out for all existing and planned nuclear facilities worldwide.

In addition we should increase efforts to ensure multilateral co-operation on the safety of nuclear installations. We must review IAEA safety standards, the safety conventions and other international instruments to strengthen requirements for reporting, review, transparency and information sharing. The extraordinary meeting of the contracting parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety next year represents an important opportunity in this regard. Norway calls upon all states to join and adhere to the relevant conventions and to the code of conduct on the safety of research reactors, and to recast the code of conduct into a legally binding instrument.

Moreover, Norway has consistently for many years argued that in order to ensure a sustainable effort in the field of nuclear safety, the regular budget of the IAEA must increase in proportion to the tasks. Funding for necessary IAEA activity in this field is still not adequate. In the meantime, Norway has allocated 2.5 million euros to support the IAEA's work to strengthen the safety capacity of developing countries.

Furthermore, nuclear power is an important part of the energy mix in several countries near Norway. Although all use of nuclear power involves a certain level of risk of accidents and spread of nuclear material, some of the oldest Soviet-type reactors represent a particular problem as they have design flaws that cannot be corrected. Reactors with such serious design flaws should be closed. We appreciate the close cooperation we have with Russian regulatory authorities with regard to emergency

preparedness, radiation protection and safety. In this regard we welcome the recent Russian review of nuclear safety in nuclear power plants as well as the planned actions to improve safety. In the interest of transparency and cooperation, Norway would also encourage such information to be shared with neighbouring countries.

Norway has during the last 15 years funded projects that are designed to reduce the risk of accidents and irregularities at the Kola and Leningrad nuclear power plants, without prolonging the lifetime of the old reactors. This has led to a significant decrease in the number of incidents. This also provides a basis for a common understanding of the importance of protection of people and environment in the high north from potential accidents and from legacy waste.

The Fukushima accident also shows the need to further develop both the IAEA's and our national capacities for emergency preparedness and response, and the co-operation between us to efficiently make use of these capacities. We have seen once again that accidents do happen and may be catastrophic. And again the IAEA has a key role to play, both in its own right as the prime multilateral forum for the issue at hand, and as a facilitator for increased international co-operation in this field.

Norway was one of the initiators behind the International Action Plan for the preparedness and response system for nuclear and radiological emergencies. We would like to take this opportunity to commend the IAEA Secretariat and member states for their comprehensive and excellent work in this regard. The challenge now, for all of us, is to ensure a proper implementation of the recommendations of this Action Plan.

We should also actively consider and discuss additional measures in the emergency preparedness and response field. There is clearly a need to review the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, and the thresholds for such notifications must be reduced. The fact that both the Early Notification Convention and the Assistance

Convention lack mechanisms for regular review and improvement is clearly not sustainable. Further proposals for measures to improve emergency preparedness and response, will be presented in more detail later this week.

Finally, nuclear safety can never be dealt with in isolation from nuclear security and non-proliferation. It must be of global concern to make sure that nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation are all dealt with together to minimize the various inherent dangers of nuclear power. There is still much scope for better co-ordination of safety and security work, both multilaterally through the IAEA and nationally.

Nuclear safety efforts will always be essential to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As such nuclear safety is complementary to our joint efforts of non-proliferation and for a world free of nuclear weapons. Only through a comprehensive approach to these issues can we make sure that nuclear power will be safe, secure and not used for military means.

The IAEA must remain the primary instrument of the international community both to ensure that the use of nuclear materials is done in the safest and securest way possible – and, not least, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In brief, Norway would like to see an IAEA that is as strong as possible in all these fields.

Thank you.