

Statement of the Head of the Slovak Delegation

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IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety, Vienna, 20-24 June 2011

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Slovakia welcomes the initiative of IAEA Director General, Mr. Y. Amano, to organise the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety. In this respect, Slovakia joins the countries expressing solidarity and support for Japan over the extraordinary natural disaster of 11 March 2011, leading to the Fukushima NPP accident. We are convinced that the Conference represents a very useful opportunity for sharing experience, discussing the lessons learned and exchanging views on the measures to be taken after Fukushima accident.

Nuclear energy plays an important role in contributing to the overall energy needs of the world. This is also true for Slovakia, where more than 50% of the electricity is produced by nuclear power plants. Domestically, we pay the utmost attention to the safe use of our nuclear plants. All Slovak nuclear installations comply fully with international standards and are subject to regular safety assessment based on IAEA safety standards and peer reviews.

Mr. President,

As a Contracting Party to all conventions concerning nuclear safety, Slovakia is committed to mitigating any risks that may arise from the use of nuclear energy. In this context, we very much welcome the process initiated by this Conference and leading to the identification and formulation of proposals on specific issues to be implemented within the existing international nuclear safety framework.

As many other countries present here, Slovakia participated in the Convention on Nuclear Safety 5th Review Meeting this year (Vienna, 4-14 April 2011). At this occasion we provided an overview of the progress achieved since the last Review Meeting (in 2008). The review included measures aiming at the implementation of national action plan as well as prospects of the safety assessment based on the principles agreed by the March 2011 European Council. We expect that the “stress tests” will confirm high safety standards of the Slovak nuclear power plants but we are ready to take appropriate measures, would these tests reveal any inadequacy. In addition, the Slovak government in May decided to prepare and implement a national emergency exercise simulating an accident at a nuclear power plant in Slovakia.

Let me say clearly that Slovakia is in favour of strengthening the role of international safety review missions. Slovakia itself has invited several international missions in the past. The latest WANO (World Association of Nuclear Operators) Peer Review of the Mochovce NPP took place in May 2009, reviewing nine areas including operations, radiological protection. In January 2011 WANO organised a follow-up mission. The IAEA OSART (Operation Safety Review Team) Mission on NPP Bohunice V2 took place in November 2010. On top of that and following good practices of the IAEA Member States, we have for the second time invited the IRRS (Integrated Regulatory Review Service) Mission to Slovakia to review relevant areas of regulatory framework, in particular those related to nuclear safety of NPPs. The IRRS Mission is expected to take place in the first half of the next year.

Mr. President,

Whereas nuclear safety is a national responsibility, the existing framework of international legal instruments represents – in our opinion – an adequate base for preserving and increasing nuclear safety - nationally and internationally. Slovakia supports the steps leading to accession of new countries, developing their nuclear power programmes, to all relevant international Conventions, and in particular, to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and Joint Convention.

We welcome the explicit recognition of this IAEA ministerial conference declaration that nuclear power is considered as a viable option in meeting our energy needs. At the same time we fully recognize the importance of implementing enhanced national and international safety measures. We are confident that the strengthened international nuclear safety framework will contribute to the enhanced public confidence in the nuclear energy.

We are ready to participate in the working sessions of this Conference and actively contribute to the various sessions conclusions.

Thank you for your attention.