



**Statement by H.E. Musthafa M. Jaffeer,  
Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka  
IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety  
Vienna: 20 – 24 June 2011**

Mr. President,  
Hon. Ministers,  
Director General Yukiya Amano  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies & Gentlemen,

At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you, Ambassador Antonio Guerreiro, on your assumption as President of this Ministerial Conference. We are confident under your able guidance and wisdom, this conference will achieve every success.

May I join other speakers in extending our deep condolences to the people and government of Japan, for the tragic events that took place at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear plant in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami. As a country that has faced the brutal affects of a tsunami, we are aware of the devastating impact of death and destruction that it unleash and we express our sorrow for the loss of live and property and hope that the Japanese people may quickly be able to recover from this tragedy and rebuild their lives.

We commend the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Yukiya Amano for taking the timely initiative to call for this high level conference, so we can discuss the impact and consequences of the nuclear catastrophe, and learn lessons from the incident. We look forward to continue this process at the High Level meeting in New York at the UN General Assembly in September 2011. We appreciate the IAEA's efforts at keeping member states regularly briefed with information regarding the Fukushima Daichi situation since it began.

The nuclear crisis that was triggered by the natural disasters on 11 March 2011 was unprecedented. It has starkly shown that although the peaceful application of the atom has among the greatest potential for development and progress, during a radiological accident it can pose great threats, not only to the country concerned but has wider transboundary effects for safety, human health and the environment. Such incidents may also have serious impacts on its society and create economic hardships to livelihood of people.

Sri Lanka believes that this is the opportune time to discuss the consequences of the Fukushima Daichi Nuclear Power Plant by the nuclear power industry to review safety standards for the future benefit to the industry. We hope that the conducive atmosphere of cooperation would result in greater evaluation by member states of nuclear power plant safety features and measures that can be taken to ensure that they are able to withstand natural disasters and function in emergency situations.

Their efforts made in mitigating the consequences will contribute to the enhancement of the public confidence of the safety and viability of nuclear power.

We would like to support the Director General's call to strengthen IAEA Safety Standards; regular systematic safety review of all nuclear power plants, and strengthen the global emergency preparedness and response measures.

Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the mandate and functions of the IAEA in the peaceful use and application of nuclear energy and technology for economic and social development. In recent years with globalisation, we are faced with several challenges with regard to our energy needs. With the depletion of non renewable energy sources, escalation of fuel and growing challenges of climate change have made countries show renewed interest in nuclear energy to meet their demands of national development and power generation.

Following the nuclear accident, there is diverse debate. While some countries have decided to halt nuclear power plant plans, others are pursuing new programmes for nuclear power generation.

We can learn lessons from the Fukushima incident. There must be greater cooperation in handling nuclear emergencies and a country has to be responsible towards its own people and to those in nearby countries at risk. A system of early warning and notification, measures taken to minimise the spread of radiation, the evaluation of the extent of any harmful affects to the environment and human health, and a mechanism to bear liability should be in place and functional.

We are still evaluating the effects of the incident and its aftermath and in this regard, appreciate the efforts of the Japanese government to share its information, data and experiences, of the crisis so that we may all learn valuable lessons and evaluate existing systems. The offer to host an international follow up conference with the IAEA in the latter half of 2012, to share experiences and its assessments, is welcome.

It is clearly evident that the safety of many existing power plants in the world need to be reviewed and evaluated. Initiatives to subject nuclear power plants to stress tests- is a positive measure, and should be widened.

For new comer countries and those considering nuclear power programmes, post Fukushima provides a valuable opportunity to evaluate safety aspects and enhance existing plans to address natural disasters and various scenarios.

Considering the past growth of the Nuclear Power Industry as a solution in meeting ever increasing demand for energy at affordable cost while controlling emissions, the enhanced knowledge base will help in decision making in number of member states of the IAEA. As we go through this conference we note that important subject areas have been selected for working sessions and deliberations will bring out useful conclusions.

The nuclear accident caused public concern in many countries, including Sri Lanka. We appreciate the cooperation of the Agency and the CTBTO to provide timely information with regard to the Fukushima situation to member countries. Such system wide cooperation and action among international organizations at times of crisis needs to be enhanced.

The Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Authority in cooperation with the IAEA provided timely information and data to allay public concerns. The Government has also taken action to strengthen the Atomic Energy Authority at this juncture to prepare for emergency situation. The Atomic Energy Authority has also conducted monitoring exercises on radiation levels in food, health and environment. We urge the IAEA to enhance its technical assistance programmes to member states in these areas to build capacity for nuclear emergency preparedness. Such cooperation should also be encouraged through regional cooperation programmes.

As a party to the Convention for Nuclear Safety since 1999, Sri Lanka welcomes any steps taken to review and enhance international safety measures.

The Ministerial Declaration that we adopted yesterday, highlights our collective commitment to work towards enhancing knowledge in nuclear safety and standards worldwide. We are confident that through this common purpose, we will be able to enhance the international nuclear safety regime to ensure nuclear energy is a safe and viable source of energy to meet demands of development and restore public confidence in nuclear energy.

Thank you Mr President.