

Statement of the United Arab Emirates at the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century

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Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen..

At the outset, I would like to thank the Government of the Russian Federation and the IAEA for organizing such an important and timely event, and for the hospitality afforded to us.

It has been more than two years since the accident of Fukushima Daiichi took place. Looking at the global picture of nuclear sector today, countries with nuclear reactors continue to operate their reactors, 434 nuclear power reactors are in operation today ; 69 under construction, and more are planned . This demonstrates, despite the challenges, that nuclear energy will continue to play a significant role in the global energy sector.

My country made the decision to embark on a national nuclear energy programme upon considering the significant growth in the future energy demand. Our aim is to ensure energy security and reduce the effects of climate change. Nuclear energy emerged as a reliable source that is environmentally and economically competitive.

UAE has taken significant steps in the development of its nuclear power programme and the related infrastructure, following the IAEA guidance and international best practices. These steps included enacting of new legislations and the establishment of a competent and independent nuclear safety regulator. The construction of the first nuclear reactor in the UAE began in July 2012 following a detailed evaluation of the design by the nuclear safety regulator (FANR) which took into consideration early lessons learned from Fukushima Daiichi accident . The UAE is the first country to start the construction of its first nuclear power plant in 27 years .

As the case of previous major nuclear accidents, Fukushima highlighted the need to strengthen nuclear safety worldwide. Early lessons learned should be adopted in the current and future designs. UAE, as a policy principle, is committed to adopt current and future lessons learned in its reactors design as part of its commitment to the highest standards of nuclear safety.

As a nuclear newcomer, UAE highly values the international nuclear cooperation framework as a crucial platform for strengthening safety and emergency response during accidents. International conventions in the area of nuclear safety provide opportunities for exchange of experience and peer reviews with an objective to ensure and strengthen safety measures in nuclear facilities. UAE is an active state-party in the review process of the convention on nuclear safety (CNS) and to the efforts aiming at strengthening its implementation. I take this opportunity to call on countries with nuclear facilities, who have not done so, to join and implement the safety convention at an early date.

The nuclear accident at Fukushima Daiichi plant highlighted the need to develop further the international framework for emergency response and assistance during nuclear accidents. The IAEA role is central to this end , UAE is fully committed to the IAEA Safety Action Plan adopted after Fukushima Daiichi accident and welcomes the efforts in by the IAEA and member states in implementing it so far.

Mr. President ,

UAE is of the view that nuclear energy can only be pursued through a responsible and transparent approach. The development of the required infrastructure is essential for the safe and sustainability of the nuclear energy sector.

In continues efforts to establish the adequate legal framework, the UAE has recently established a national nuclear liability regime, and became party to the Vienna Convention on Civil Nuclear Liability. Efforts to harmonize civil liability regimes for nuclear damage should continue and we encourage states who have not done so to join and implement multilateral conventions based on the principles of Vienna Convention on civil nuclear liability.

IAEA Peer-review missions are critical to ensure the adequacy of safety measures and relevant national infrastructure. With its firm commitment to transparency, the UAE has requested and received multiple comprehensive reviews from the IAEA. Among these were the Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR) mission, and the Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission. The review missions were conducted successfully and highlighted the positive advancement of UAE nuclear infrastructure. The outcome reports of such missions were made public consistent with UAE transparency approach. We encourage member states to benefit from such services.

Communication and active public engagement is another essential tool for transparency. UAE national stakeholders have been conducting nuclear energy public forums aiming to raise awareness throughout the UAE. Such engagement along with other reach out efforts has contributed to the positive public perception of nuclear energy in the UAE. Additionally, interest in the nuclear energy sector is being fostered and encouraged through educational scholarships and training programmes for Emirati nationals.

To conclude,

Nuclear energy will play significant role in the UAE future energy mix. A sustainable nuclear sector is one that is based on highest standards of safety and transparency. UAE is committed to adopt early lessons learned from Fukushima Daiichi accident and implement as appropriate.

Sharing experience and continuous improvement is a key to sustainable and safe nuclear energy sector globally. International framework for cooperation in the area of nuclear safety and emergency should be strengthened, the IAEA role is essential to achieve such goal.

UAE looks forward to working closely with the IAEA and our international partners to achieve our common objectives.

Thank your Mr. President.