

Remarks Made by Vice Premier Mr. Zhang Dejiang at the Opening Ceremony of the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century

Distinguished Director General Dr. Elbaradei,
Distinguished Secretary General Mr. Gurria,
Distinguished ministers and high level representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century organized by the International Atomic Energy Authority and hosted by the Chinese Government opens in Beijing today. I would like to express warm congratulation on behalf of the Chinese Government to the opening of the Conference and extend heartfelt welcome to all participants.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nuclear science and technology is one of the greatest scientific and technological achievements of mankind in the 20th century. Nuclear science and technology is widely applied in various sectors with over 50 years of development, such as energy, industry, agriculture, health, and environment protection, and is playing an important role in prospering economy, improving people's livelihood, and promoting sustainable development. With global economic development and rising energy consumption, supply of traditional energy source is becoming more stretched and climate change is becoming an increasingly severe challenge. It is a common task of the international community to develop and utilize clean and renewable energy sources and properly address growing contradiction among economic development, energy development and environment protection. Given its advantage as clean, safe and could be applied in large scale, more and more countries are placing importance on nuclear energy. Accelerating peaceful uses of nuclear energy is the common wishes and inevitable choice of many countries.

China started the development of nuclear energy in the early 1950s, and with the efforts of over half a century, China has established a relatively complete nuclear industry system. The installed capacity of nuclear power reached 9100 MWe, and nuclear power generation accounts for 2% of the national total electricity generated. Nuclear energy is playing an incremental role for China's economic development. However, nuclear energy utilization is rather insufficient in China, its development level is behind countries which are advanced in nuclear energy use such as the United States and France, the rate of nuclear power generation in the total electricity generated still falls behind the world average level. China's energy supply mix is featured by coal dominant and low proportion of clean energy. To achieve sustainable energy and socio-economic development, China has formulated the energy development strategy of active promoting energy conservation and optimizing energy

structure. Accelerating nuclear power development and enhancing the ratio of clean energy such as nuclear power in the aggregate energy supply is the priority of China's energy development strategy. Currently, peaceful use of nuclear energy has entered a stage of rapid development. A batch of new nuclear power projects are starting construction in coastal areas, and preparation for other new projects is going on in orderly manner, demonstration projects of the introduction of third generation nuclear power technology are moving on smoothly. Scientific and research engineering programs such as China experimental fast reactor, high temperature gas-cooled reactor, and thermal nuclear fusion device are in positive progress. Nuclear fuel cycle industry continues its development and the ability of assured supply of nuclear fuel is being enhanced.

China has always attached great importance to nuclear safety in its promotion of nuclear energy utilization, and established a fairly complete nuclear safety legal, regulatory and emergency management system which is in line with international best practices. China has issued series of instruments such as nuclear safety regulations, rules, guidelines, standards. Independent, strict, and efficient nuclear safety supervision and management and scientific management of nuclear facility operators have been put in place to ensure safe and secure operation of nuclear facilities. All these efforts have led to sound nuclear safety record and boosted public confidence in nuclear energy.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a responsible and peace-loving country, China consistently advocates complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapon, and is sternly against any form of proliferation of nuclear weapons, and engaging in active international cooperation in non-proliferation. Through the years, in addition to its efforts in nuclear energy development, the Chinese Government has been actively participating in international non-proliferation cooperation. China has joined all the major international non-proliferation mechanisms and established a complete domestic nuclear safeguards, nuclear material management and nuclear export control system, making notable contribution for maintaining and promoting global and regional peace and stability, and ensuring peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its establishment, the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) has faithfully performed its missions entrusted by the Treaty on Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the IAEA Statute, and made unremitting efforts and remarkable contribution to promote world-wide development of peaceful use of nuclear energy, and prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Chinese Government would like to express appreciation in this regard.

The Chinese Government highly values the Agency's role in peaceful use of nuclear energy and non-proliferation and actively participates in deliberations of relevant issues under the IAEA's framework, and earnestly undertakes its international obligations. At the same time, China has strengthened cooperation with the IAEA and conducted fruitful cooperation in nuclear technology, nuclear safety, nuclear safeguards, and enhanced the overall capability of China's nuclear energy development. The Chinese Government will as always support the IAEA and would like to continue to enhance and expand cooperation in various fields.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The current global financial crisis has severely hit world economic development, and resulted in new challenges for international nuclear energy development. It is the right timing to hold this Conference, which is a rare opportunity for international nuclear community to exchange experiences in nuclear energy development, explore future strategies and deliberate on plans of sustainable nuclear energy development. I hope that delegates of all parties could center on issues of common concerns, conduct in-depth communication, increase understanding, narrow differences and reach consensus. I believe that with the joint efforts of the international community, this Conference will reach expected goals and make significant contribution for promoting world nuclear energy development.

In conclusion, I wish the Conference a complete success and good health and pleasant stay in Beijing to all.