

**Mr. Director General of IAEA,
Distinguished Ministers,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a highest honor for me to represent the Republic of Bulgaria at the Ministerial Conference on nuclear safety. I would like to express our deep sympathies to the government and to the people of Japan for their dedication in this hard times not only for them but for whole world.

I would like also to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Amano, director general of the IAEA ~~for~~ not only for the initiative to organize this conference, but ~~and~~ ^{also} for entire IAEA efforts to make nuclear energy safer.

Nuclear energy is one of the key branches of the economy. It plays ^{the} a role of a base load power in the Bulgarian economy and in the last 3 years it has an important share of 35% ⁱⁿ of the total energy mix of the country. In this sense, in implementation of the sustainable development policy and development of low-carbon economy, the Government has declared its institutional support for the development of nuclear energy, in full respect of the internationally approved principles for nuclear safety and radiation protection, and also taking into account the economic viability.

Bulgaria supports the position that each member state has the right to define its own energy mix, taking into account the highest safety requirements. In this aspect I would like to underline that the Republic of Bulgaria develops its nuclear energy program for peaceful purposes since the beginning of 60-ies of the past century and is an active member of the IAEA from the beginning of this period (it is one of the 30 states that have signed the Memorandum for the establishment of the International agency).

Bulgaria is one of the states using nuclear energy, that have ^s accumulated a significant experience in the operation of nuclear power plants and in ensuring the security and the safety of their operation.

The Bulgarian government supports the position that nuclear energy development is a strategically important element of the policy for limitation of the energy sector emissions harmful for the environment and the climate, and substantially supports the competitiveness of the national economy.

The safety has to be an absolute condition both for power plants already in operation and for the new-build power plants. Investments have to be done in the improvement of the safety of the power plants and in the high technologies related to this. In this aspect Bulgaria fully supports the serious steps undertaken by the EC for unification of the methods for safety assessment, and a series of meetings at expert and political level have been held.

In this context I would like to underline the position of the Republic of Bulgaria:

The Republic of Bulgaria is among the member states that have paid a very high price in order to respond to the safety requirements, closing down its older nuclear reactors and now the state insists that the high security standards have to be applied for each nuclear power plant in the world.

The achievement of the highest safety standards of the nuclear power facilities has a key role for the development of the sector after the events in Fukushima. In the same time no requirements impossible for implementation have to be established, which may block the technological and commercial development of the nuclear energy,

Bulgaria is one of the states, that ^{has} first ~~have~~ undertaken steps for organization and implementation of stress-tests after the accident in Fukushima.

For each state developing nuclear energy program the issue of qualified human resources development for the nuclear energy is of substantial importance, in order to ensure the reliable operation of the nuclear reactors, the nuclear safety and the radiation protection of the workers and the population.

The issue of the competence needs is fitting in international context and the idea for establishment of international consortia for common use of resources among universities, research institutes and industry will help the development of the human resources for nuclear energy as well as the nuclear knowledge preservation.

Convinced that the transparency policy is an important aspect of the

international cooperation, as well as internally for achievement public acceptance, we believe that the established cooperation mechanisms have to be deepened and developed. With the best practices in the framework of the IAEA the exchange of information shall be stated and regulated as mandatory in the search of transparency and guarantees.