



**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE HOLY SEE  
AT THE IAEA FUKUSHIMA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE  
ON NUCLEAR SECURITY**  
Fukushima Prefecture, Japan  
15 – 17 December 2012

Mister President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I have the honour to deliver this Statement in the name of His Excellency Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for the Holy See's Relations with States.

At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to the Authorities of Japan and of the International Atomic Energy Agency for their organization of this most timely Conference dedicated to strengthening nuclear safety worldwide.

2. A few days after March 11, 2011, in his weekly Sunday meeting with the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square, Pope Benedict XVI said: *"The images of the tragic earthquake and the consequent tsunami in Japan have left us all deeply shocked. I would like to renew my spiritual closeness to the beloved peoples of that country who are facing the consequences of such a disaster with dignity and courage. I pray for the victims and their relatives, and for all who are suffering because of these appalling events. I encourage everyone who is working with praiseworthy promptness to bring them aid... May the bereaved and injured be comforted and may the rescue workers be strengthened in their efforts to assist the courageous Japanese people."* Allow me to assure the noble Japanese people of these continued sentiments of prayerful solidarity of the Catholic Church – a solidarity that is reiterated by the international community in this Conference.

3. The participants in this Conference might be interested in knowing that the Holy See is a Founding Member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Obviously, the Holy See has no technical expertise to offer. It is convinced, however, that the constantly increasing world-wide demand for energy requires a serious reflection on the role of nuclear energy, as well as on the importance of nuclear safety. In fact, one of the key elements that has risen to the fore in the post-Fukushima discussions is that nuclear safety is an essential prerequisite for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and that the strengthening of nuclear safety is a continuous process that does not admit of complacency. This was also underscored in the Director General's *Report on Progress in the Implementation of the IAEA Action*

Plan on Nuclear Safety, presented at last November's meeting of the Board of Governors in Vienna.

4. The Holy See closely follows the progress made in the implementation of the *IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety* and commends the IAEA on its implementation, especially the progress made in assessments of safety vulnerabilities of nuclear power plants and improvements both in emergency preparedness and in protection of people and the environment from ionizing radiation. As a result of the nuclear crisis in Fukushima, one point has emerged with ever greater clarity. A shared and co-responsible management of nuclear research and safety and security, of energy and water supplies and of the environmental protection of the planet call for one or more international authorities with true and effective powers. Improving the effectiveness of the international legal framework is an important topic of this Conference.

5. What transpired at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station quickly revealed that a local nuclear crisis is indeed a global problem. It also revealed that the world is exposed to real and systemic risks, and not just hypothetical ones, with incalculable costs and the necessity of developing an international political coordination the likes of which have never been seen, thus raising many questions.

Energy security, as well as nuclear safety and security, require the adoption of appropriate technical and legal measures, as well as action and responses at the cultural and ethical level. In the short term, technical and legal measures are necessary for the protection of nuclear material and sites and the prevention of acts of nuclear terrorism, whose possible devastating effects are truly difficult to imagine. In the long-term, prevention and safety measures are called for, measures that penetrate to the deepest cultural and social roots through, for example, programs of formation for the diffusion of a "culture of safety and security" both in the nuclear sector and in the public conscience in general. A special role must be reserved for codes of conduct for human resources who, in the nuclear sector, must always be conscious of the possible effects of their activity. Security depends upon the State, but above all on the sense of responsibility of each person.

6. The nuclear sector can represent a great opportunity for the future. The so-called "nuclear renaissance" seems to offer horizons of development and prosperity. Yet, it must not be reduced to an illusion without a "cultural and moral renaissance." As Pope Benedict XVI said: "...the commitment...to support the use of peaceful and safe nuclear technology for authentic development, respecting the environment and ever mindful of the most disadvantaged populations, is always more present and urgent" (cf. Angelus, 29 July 2007). For these reasons, the Delegation of the Holy See will continue to follow the deliberations of this important Conference with great interest.

Thank you for your kind attention and thank you, Mr. President.