

Check against delivery!

Statement of Hungary

Pál Kovács, Secretary of State, Ministry of National Development

Fukushima Ministerial Conference, 2012 December 15-17.

Mr Co-Presidents, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to participate at the present Ministerial Conference in Fukushima prefecture. Let me seize this occasion to remember those who lost their lives in the natural catastrophe in 2011. Their memory will stay with us and our prayers are with their families.

I am very grateful for the unique opportunity to have a personal experience of the site of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. This was actually my fourth visit in Japan. During my visits I had met some of those people who later took part in the accident management and the remediation process. In my view, the people, whom I met yesterday, are real heroes who deserve our highest appreciation.

Mr Co-Presidents, Distinguished Delegates,

The Hungarian Government has always been dedicated to the issue of nuclear safety. In March 2011, at the time of the unfortunate event here, Hungary held the presidency of the Council of the European Union. On the 15th of March I was negotiating in Brussels on the next step to be taken by the EU in response to the accident. This step forward was the

comprehensive risk and safety assessment, widely known as the “Stress Test”.

According to the accurate safety assessment in the course of this test, the outcome for my country was positive; no immediate actions were needed for the Hungarian NPP.

This positive feedback is due to our safety philosophy and commitment to continuous improvement. As early as the 1990’s Hungary’s goal was to increase the safety level of the Paks NPP to the same level of those in Western Europe. Based on the Periodic Safety Assessment practice Hungary executed a safety enhancement program at the Paks NPP. The program included among others the reinforcement of the plant to withstand earthquakes not considered at the commissioning of the plant, as well as severe accident management measures.

Mr Co-Presidents, Distinguished Delegates,

The Fukushima accident has inevitably changed our approach towards nuclear safety and security. For some countries it even caused a dramatic change in their nuclear policy. I believe that it is the discretion of every country to decide on their energy mix.

Nuclear is part of Hungary’s long term energy strategy. In 2011 we have elaborated our National Energy Strategy in the light of the challenges related to the global climate change, the growing competition for the steadily shrinking global fossil fuel reserves and in the wake of the Fukushima Daiichi accident.

The basic pillars of the long-term strategy are: security of energy supply, increasing of competitiveness and sustainability. We aim to achieve these

goals by increasing energy efficiency, growing share of renewable energy resources, ensuring sustainable and responsible use of inland coal, lignite and hydrocarbon resources while maintaining and even increasing the role of nuclear energy.

The European Union's highly ambitious decarbonisation targets are also reflected in the Hungarian Energy Strategy. We examined six possible energy mix scenarios concerning the electricity demand trends until 2030. Each version includes the lifetime extension of Paks NPP, since in medium term there is no alternative technology that fundamentally secures energy supply with zero CO₂ emission. The final Nuclear-Coal-Green scenario also envisages the construction of new nuclear units with an additional capacity of 2000 MWs.

Mr Co-Presidents, Distinguished Delegates,

As far as peaceful nuclear technology and nuclear energy related decisions are concerned, we must not forget that the basic and most essential criterion is the protection of the health, life and property of the population, therefore nuclear safety must have a priority above all other considerations.

We greatly appreciate the IAEA's dedication and commitment to this end, which constitutes an essential pillar of its work. I would like to commend the IAEA Action Plan on nuclear safety which is on its way to full implementation, since its unanimous adoption in 2011.

Hungary continues to cooperate with the IAEA in these efforts and to share the lessons learned. **We are strongly convinced, and we have a**

joint, global and general responsibility also, that the same level of nuclear safety must be applied without distinction to embarking countries as to states already using nuclear energy, irrespective of their degree of economic development or the dimension of their nuclear programme.

We also believe that international co-operation and sharing of experience and expertise are valuable means of enhancing the level of nuclear safety globally.

We consider that the quality of nuclear education is the foundation of nuclear safety. I am delighted that there is a growing interest from a number of states concerning the experience and know-how sharing, which Hungary can offer in the field of nuclear power plant safety, operation and maintenance. These months the Maintenance Training Center of Paks NPP is hosting over one hundred Vietnamese experts for a nuclear safety related training course.

We also provided a workshop for Iranian NPP maintenance managers. That workshop was organized within the framework of the IAEA's Technical Cooperation project for Iran as approved by the Board last year. The Paks Maintenance Training Center was chosen by the IAEA to administer this training which is intended to contribute to the safe operation of the Bushehr NPP.

Mr Co-Presidents, Distinguished Delegates,

Nuclear technology is widely used in many areas of our everyday life. I am not only talking about the electricity or heat generation since the utilization of such technology goes far beyond that. Clear water,

preservation and disinfection of food are also provided through nuclear applications, and we cannot imagine our everyday life without its medical use.

In my view, nuclear energy production is beneficial for the mankind, as it contributes to the struggle against climate change and reinforces the security of supply, and is a valuable option to satisfy growing electricity demand worldwide.

The use of nuclear energy requires a long term commitment. It takes decades of sacrifice, dedication and devoted work. Once we have put into operation the first nuclear facility, we are committed to it until the end of the back end management of the fuel cycle, and we shall not abandon it when difficulties are encountered.

That is the reason why we are convened: To further enhance nuclear safety, to improve safety culture in order to increase the national and international emergency response preparedness, and to acquire knowledge and share best practices.

Mr Co-Presidents, Distinguished Delegates,

Finally, as a closing remark, let me wish all the participants successful and constructive discussions, and let me express my highest appreciation to our hosts for organizing the present conference, the technical visit to the site of the Dai-ichi plant here in Fukushima prefecture.

Thank you for your kind attention.