

FUKUSHIMA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**ON NUCLEAR SAFETY*****STATEMENT BY SWEDEN***

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first of all thank the Government of Japan and the IAEA for hosting this ministerial conference. I would also like to thank the City and people of Koriyama for the excellent arrangements and for their warm hospitality!

Mr. Chairman,

This conference is important in many ways. First of all, it gives us an opportunity to discuss the crucial issue of nuclear safety, and to draw conclusions for the future. This will constitute an important further

step in our joint efforts to strengthen nuclear safety. At the same time, since we are meeting here in Fukushima Prefecture, we are able to express our solidarity with the people of Japan, who have suffered much, yet dealt so courageously with the tragic consequences of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the ensuing accident at TEPCO Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant (NPP).

Mr. Chairman,

It is now 70 years ago that the first nuclear reactor – known as the Chicago Pile-1 reactor - started operation. From the very beginning, nuclear energy was viewed both with great hope – as a clean and almost limitless source of energy – as well as with considerable trepidation – due to the inherent risks involved. This dualism remains today.

After the accidents at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, we saw a marked decline in the expansion of nuclear energy. But during the first decade of the new century interest and investment in nuclear energy rebounded, and the expression "nuclear renaissance" was frequently used. Following the accident at TEPCO Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), however, there has been a widespread feeling that we might have reached another crossroads in the development of nuclear energy.

Mr. Chairman,

In Sweden, nuclear energy will continue to play an essential part of our national energy mix. The Swedish government has decided that existing nuclear power plants could be replaced with new reactors at the end of their operating life. This eventual new build would in itself further improve nuclear safety. Also, the construction of new nuclear power plants must take into account the possibility of

accidents, which were not foreseen in the original design of nuclear power plants currently in operation. Therefore, we have to include in the design of new power plants, as well as when upgrading existing plants, systems that are able to withstand serious incidents, including where the integrity of a confinement is threatened.

Mr. Chairman,

Sweden has long been active in improving nuclear safety at home. In the aftermath of the accident at Three Mile Island the Swedish government requested that systems for filtered pressure release of the confinement should be installed at all nuclear power plants.

After the accident at TEPCO Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant several new and encouraging initiatives have emerged to review and improve nuclear safety on national, regional and global levels. In this context, we would like to underline the essential role

of the IAEA as well as the adoption last year of the *Action Plan on Nuclear Safety*.

In the European Union we have gone through a process of comprehensive risk and safety assessments of nuclear power plants – so called “stress tests” - which will lead to many concrete improvements.

Mr. Chairman,

Before I conclude, let me briefly come back to what I said at the outset, namely that nuclear energy has now been with us for some 70 years. It is a fact that some nuclear power plants, which were originally constructed for a life time of 30 to 40 years, now are scheduled to operate for up to 60 years. Naturally, for such time spans, highly complex technical systems, such as nuclear reactors, need recurring safety reviews and upgrades to ensure safety. In

addition, human resources remain crucial. Consequently, the latest technical developments and findings through operational experience need to be taken into account throughout the life time of a reactor.

We believe that it is time to consider the inclusion of such requirements on safety reviews and upgrades, as well as systems for accident mitigation, in the global nuclear safety regime, primarily through the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

I thank you.