

*Statement of the Permanent Representative of GREECE to the IAEA,
HE Ambassador Themistoklis Dimidis*

**International Conference on Nuclear Security: Enhancing Global Efforts
Vienna, 1-5 July 2013**

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, allow me to express my sincere gratitude to DG Amano for convening this Conference, which we deem essential for strengthening global nuclear security, as well as for reinforcing international nuclear non-proliferation efforts.

I would like to note Mr. President that Greece aligns itself fully with the statement made by Lithuania on behalf of the EU and that it fully supports the declaration adopted by this Conference

Greece assigns paramount importance to efforts related to reducing the threat of nuclear terrorism, including combating illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials.

Furthermore, we consider that progress in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is necessary, in order to ensure international peace and security and to contribute to global efforts against terrorism.

Greece has a long and successful cooperation with the IAEA in the fields of nuclear safety and security. We recognize that the common aim of both is to protect human health, society and the environment; however, we do acknowledge the distinctions between the two areas and lay particular emphasis on coordination in this regard ensuring that the peaceful use of nuclear energy is in accordance with the highest possible standards of nuclear safety and security.

Our commitment in assigning high priority to nuclear security issues, is attested by ratifying and using all the relevant IAEA instruments such as, the Additional Protocols, the CPPNM (Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material) and its amendment, the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, the Guidance on Import and Export of Radioactive Sources, the Incident and Trafficking Database, etc.

A major challenge came with the occasion of hosting the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004; back then, the Greek Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC), the nuclear safety authority in the country, collaborated with the IAEA and the US-Department of Energy for the development of a comprehensive nuclear security programme. The objective, prior, during and beyond the Games, was to prevent, detect, assess and respond to the threat of nuclear terrorism.

The ultimate goal, the organization of secure Games, was achieved.

In a long-term perspective, we accomplished:

- the upgrading of physical protection of radiological and nuclear facilities,
- the installation and provision of radioactivity detectors in the country's entrance points,
- the upgrading of the infrastructure for emergency response, and
- the training of all involved personnel, such as personnel in customs and first responders (for example, police officers and firemen).

We certainly believe that the nuclear security infrastructure, the training and the nuclear security culture acquired, are some of the components of our Olympic Games heritage. But

the Athens Olympic Games belong to the past; for some years now, the sustainability of the project is a challenge we are dealing with.

Mr. President

I can reassure you that Greece is still attributing high priority to nuclear security issues, by carrying out various relevant activities. These are: the continuous upgrade of installations, analyses of data acquired, the participation in research projects of the European Research Programme, the sharing and dissemination of lessons learned.

The investment that the IAEA made in Greece in the field of nuclear security is bearing fruits. The regulatory authority's expertise and its state-of-the-art laboratories and training facilities, are used on a regular basis for knowledge management and dissemination among the IAEA's member states. From the year 2005 until now, about 250 officers from more than 20 IAEA member states have been trained in the GAEC during 16 nuclear security related training activities.

In 2010, the IAEA and GAEC signed Practical Arrangements for enhancing their cooperation through the exchange of experience and information in the area of nuclear security.

In 2011, the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the IAEA signed a Long Term Agreement on supporting the GAEC functioning as a Regional Training Centre in Europe for Radiation, Transport and Waste Safety. This Long Term Agreement was ratified in 2012 by the Greek Parliament and is currently in force.

Mr. President,

My Government, embracing the Practical Arrangements signed in 2010 and in accordance to their provisions, has signed, earlier today, with IAEA DG Amano a set of new Practical Arrangements, which will render the Greek Atomic Energy Commission, a Regional Training Centre in Europe for Nuclear Security.

Greece attaches particular importance to a high level of nuclear security worldwide.

Greece believes that regional initiatives in nuclear security contribute effectively to strengthening national and global security. In this respect, my country recognizes the IAEA's leading role and supports its continuous work and contribution on establishing effective and sustainable nuclear security system and commits itself to this effort.

In particular, we note the contribution of the three IAEA Nuclear Security Recommendation documents to the comprehensive approach to Nuclear Security, including measures to protect against sabotage of nuclear facilities and look forward to the preparation of further guidance on the implementation of such measures, including during the process of construction and maintenance of nuclear facilities.

Greece supports the IAEA's efforts to continue developing and publishing nuclear security guidance and urges the Agency to invite its member states to take this guidance into account in their effort to strengthen and continuously improve their nuclear security.

Finally, my Government congratulates the IAEA for its continued effort to foster international cooperation for establishing an effective global nuclear security framework and in particular for organizing this highly important international Conference, which will undoubtedly provide valuable input to the upcoming IAEA Nuclear Security Plan for the period 2014 to 2017.

Thank you Mr. President.