Seventy-Second UNGA First Committee

Thematic Discussion on Regional Disarmament and Security
(Nuclear Safeguards, Safety & Security)

23 October 2017
19th Meeting, agenda items 52 (b) and 90 to 106

Mr Chair,

First and foremost I would like to thank you for the dexterity you have shown in handling the deliberations of the First Committee. I would also like to align my country with the statement made earlier by the EU.

I take the floor at this time to make a statement regarding IAEA nuclear safeguards and the broader issue of nuclear safety and security.

Greece, as a signatory and a staunch proponent of the NPT, places particular emphasis on nuclear safety and security. We consider these two areas as intertwined foundations of a country’s legitimate right to peaceful use of nuclear technology. Thus, for Greece, the application of comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear material, activities and related facilities is of the utmost importance.

Since both nuclear safety and security are global challenges, Greece would like to point out the need for responsible and transparent national efforts, as well as strengthened regional cooperation when it comes to nuclear power production.

IAEA is the only international institution, unanimously accepted by all NPT and non-NPT states, in fulfilling compliance with the highest and most rigorous international nuclear safety standards.
In this spirit, Greece has signed and ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel, the Convention of Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and the Protocol for the Amendment of the Convention for the Liability in the Sector of Nuclear Energy.

Furthermore, Greece signed, and ratified the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (EIA Convention).

We consider the EIA Convention as a sine qua non path towards the absolute transparency for a country aspiring to peacefully use of nuclear energy in the future.

Let me reiterate that, during our rotating presidency of the EU, in the first semester of 2014, Greece worked copiously towards reaching an agreement among member states on amending the European Directive on Nuclear Safety, which aimed at obliging member states to establish and maintain a national framework for nuclear safety.

Mr. Chairman,

Greece is especially sensitive when it comes to the application of the «important elements that help to achieve a strong nuclear safety culture». The IAEA has a vital role in strengthening States’ capacity to ensure that the development and use of nuclear energy take place under the most rigorous safety conditions for the protection of people and the environment, especially in regions with dynamic seismic and earthquake activity.

Thus, we call upon all States, regionally and internationally, to implement the IAEA’s nuclear security guidance documents. We encourage States to use advisory services of the Agency and to host peer review and follow-up Missions.
Current developments and tensions in the political environment, both globally and in particular in our neighboring region of the Near East and Eastern Europe, created a volatile environment that requires additional precautions, especially when it comes to the safety and security of current and future nuclear installations.

Mr. Chairman,

For Greece, nuclear power has not been an option for the national energy grid, but as more and more countries in the region are beginning to express a strong interest in nuclear power, we would like to reiterate our strong conviction that nuclear safety and security are two sides of the same coin, and we should approach all nuclear technology developments related to energy production in a comprehensive manner by taking all necessary precautions in order to ascertain all three relevant areas of Non-proliferation: IAEA Safeguards, Nuclear Safety and Nuclear Security.

Thank you.