High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security
(New York, 22 September 2011)

Interactive Session on “Strengthening Nuclear Safety and Nuclear Disaster Risk Preparedness”

Introduction by H.E. Mrs. Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet
Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing

(check against delivery)
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I first of all wish to reiterate my solicitude and my solidarity for Japan, whose people showed their courage and composure in response to the terrible events that they had to confront.

The Fukushima disaster struck Japan, but the entire planet was shaken to its core.

That is why today the international community is forced to draw lessons from this catastrophe, in order to reinforce nuclear safety mechanisms everywhere, in each and every country.

Since Fukushima, ambitious commitments have been made: at the G8 Summit in Deauville; at the Paris Seminar on 7 June, organized at France’s initiative and at the IAEA Ministerial Conference on 20 June.

The IAEA Action Plan, adopted on 13 September last, was fuelled by this debate and today it proposes a road map of actions to be carried out in order to reinforce nuclear safety at a worldwide level.

We must make a firm commitment to reflect on the current nuclear safety regime and promote the highest possible standards through reinforced international cooperation. We must make a veritable international culture of safety emerge, particularly in risk prevention, crisis management and transparency.

France, for its part, has decided to immediately subject all its nuclear power installations to further safety assessments, in keeping with a common approach at EU level.

France considers that these assessments must be carried out everywhere in the world, and today I call once again on all the States concerned to undertake these tests.

The Fukushima disaster reminds us that even though nuclear safety is a national domain it is also a collective concern. We must therefore work together to reinforce and universalize the existing legal instruments. We support the development and the widespread use of peer review on
a regular basis, in each country with a nuclear power program and whose results should be made public. France shall continue to request that the IAEA carry out such missions for its own installations.

In the area of crisis management, France considers that effectiveness at international level must be reinforced by the implementation of a rapid intervention mechanism, to offer emergency assistance to a State in the case of a nuclear disaster, if it so requests.

The creation of an international training center for atomic crisis management, for operators and government authorities, would lead to the development of the necessary specific skills. France intends to continue promoting this initiative.

I would like to draw the attention of all States to the importance of universalizing a civil nuclear liability regime. It is essential to guarantee the fair compensation of nuclear victims through mechanisms allowing to deal with the consequences of nuclear disasters beyond countries’ borders.

It is for this reason that France, in close consultation with its partners, wishes to continue working towards the universalization of a regime that would be based on the Vienna and Paris Conventions.

I would like to conclude with the need to remain mobilized in the long term so that these actions are implemented effectively and to quickly achieve some convincing initial results.

Thank you for your attention.