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High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security

Statement by
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Mr Secretary General,

Ladies and Gentlemen

We commend the initiative of convening this timely High Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security on the margins of the U.N. 66th General Assembly, following several very important relevant events that recently took place in other fora.

As a non-nuclear country, Greece considers that nuclear safety, security and non proliferation must be the topics of close cooperation between all safety stakeholders: operators and non operators, regulatory authorities and relevant international entities. We furthermore believe that when opting to use nuclear power, all International Conventions and Treaties adopted within the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as other fora should be strictly applied.

In view of the tragic consequences of the Fukushima accident, it is essential that the international community is united in strengthening the nuclear safety standards. The lessons learned from the accident indicate that liability, safety and security issues must be reexamined urgently, especially with reference to areas of increased seismic activity or prone to regular tectonic plate movements.

We are here today to declare our interest and support the international efforts to reinforce nuclear safety and security worldwide and we stand ready to discuss all the necessary measures to be taken towards this direction.

In order to ensure that all safety issues are fully reconsidered, it was suggested that there will be, next year, a review of the effectiveness of the Convention of Nuclear Safety and its associated review mechanisms, both of which form an important part of the global nuclear safety framework. Recent events advocate that amendments to the Convention should begin at the earliest possible moment. My country, as a participant to all International Conventions and Agreements to Nuclear Safety and Security supports this position. Furthermore an amended Convention might appropriately incorporate, among other things, stronger requirements related to the concept of effective regulatory independence.
Nuclear accidents demonstrate the unpredictability even of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, indicating that safeguarding nuclear installations does not necessarily guarantee nuclear safety. Nuclear disaster risk preparedness must be directed to cover this sector more comprehensively.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has a pivotal role to play in the elaboration of rules regarding nuclear safety. It is also the appropriate focal point, when the necessity arises, to take future actions and to assess lessons learned.

We commend the Director of the IAEA for the elaboration and the adoption by the Agency of the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety prepared on the request of the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety (Vienna 20-24 June 2011).

On the other hand we must not forget that there are synergies between nuclear security and safety. We should not ignore the fact that most of the rules for nuclear security were drafted during the Cold War. While they might have been updated, they still need to be supplemented with new initiatives. Combating nuclear terrorism is a key issue in various fora aiming at the prevention of WMD proliferation that must have our continuous attention.

Our meeting today and the ones to follow, cannot be conducted like business as usual. Obtaining commitments to advance significantly our agenda is the first important step that must be followed vigorously with rapid implementation.

We welcome every measure towards the strengthening of the existing nuclear safeguards in an effort to prevent also nuclear proliferation. We stress the need for accompanying and concluding a plan to minimize every form of industrial-scale nuclear power production and congratulate those countries which have announced such plans.

The valuable benefits of renewable, alternative energy and new technologies is the key in strengthening our society and building a safer world and a better environment for the generations to come.

Thank you.