Statement by

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As Lead Discussant on

"Strengthening Nuclear Safety and Nuclear Disaster Risk Preparedness"

at the Parallel Interactive Ministerial Session
on Strengthening Nuclear Safety and Security

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Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to participate in this important meeting. And I thank UN Secretary General, H.E. Ban Ki-moon for convening this ministerial session.

The recent global debate on nuclear safety has become more crucial and more urgent than ever.

The tragic accident at Fukushima has brought to the fore the risks of operating nuclear power plants. At the same time, it illustrates well what can be achieved through an effective response.

Mr. Chairman,

It is absolutely clear that all of us have the right to the use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

At the same time we must work in concert to ensure that nuclear safety is not compromised.

We must continue to vigorously uphold the principle of “safety first” in our nuclear activities.

A principle we have embraced since more than 45 years ago.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me share some thoughts on how we can all collaborate to ensure nuclear safety and disaster risk preparedness.

First, we must reinvigorate international instruments for nuclear emergency preparedness and response.

The Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident (CENNA), the Convention on Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency” (CANARE) and the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) are the primary instruments of nuclear safety.

But these instruments were adopted 25 years ago, following the Chernobyl accident. The realities of the world of today have changed.

These treaties must therefore be adjusted to the new realities.
We need instruments that can deal with nuclear accidents and also lead stakeholders in addressing their radiological impact.

Second, we must strengthen the synergy between relevant international organs.

The IAEA, which has the central role in ensuring nuclear safety, should have the authority and the capacity to deal with all kinds of nuclear accidents.

The strengthening of the role of the IAEA is absolute in this regard.

Moreover, we must consider establishing a global nuclear safety network. A network that includes the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Meteorological Organization, to name a few.

Networking and synergy among them is key.

The One UN Model on disaster risk preparedness and humanitarian response to nuclear disaster is a viable option.

It can lead to better coordination and response when a nuclear accident occurs.

That global network for nuclear safety should also enlist new actors who can help address the humanitarian, environmental, social, economic and health consequences of nuclear accidents.

Third, we should bolster our capacity to address nuclear accidents and carry out emergency response at national and regional levels.

Countries engaged in nuclear activities have the primary responsibility for the safety of their nuclear facilities and emergency preparedness.

The capacity of these countries should be enhanced—through training and emergency response exercises.

Moreover, regional organizations should be enlisted to work in synergy with the UN and the IAEA. Thus, the capacity of relevant regional organisations should be enhanced.
In our region, following the nuclear plant accident in Japan, a special ASEAN-Japan ministerial meeting was convened in April 2011.

The meeting resolved to strengthen cooperation through sharing of experiences and lessons learned, ensuring prompt and smooth communication in times of disaster, and training.

We aim to fully implement the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and operationalise the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre).

**Fourth, we must ensure effective public information in the event of a nuclear accident.**

In such an event, the relevant agencies must provide clear, accurate and timely information. Information must also be available online.

People must neither be driven to panic nor lulled into complacency. They must have the information that will enable them to make prudent decisions.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Ensuring nuclear safety cannot be a one-time effort.

We must keep on incorporating new lessons, experiences and innovations into our mechanisms for nuclear safety.

Our people have the highest expectations of the capability of the UN and the IAEA to respond to nuclear accidents.

We all have a responsibility to meet these expectations.

We must therefore carry out a global rethink on ensuring nuclear safety and nuclear disaster risk preparedness.

Thank you.