Statement

by

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at the

High-level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security
Interactive Ministerial Session, “Strengthening Nuclear Safety and Nuclear Disaster Risk Preparedness”

New York, 22 September 2011
Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by associating ourselves with the statement made by Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

2. The NAM statement reflects the collective resolve of its 120 members in evolving a cooperative, inclusive and balanced framework for nuclear safety and nuclear security.

3. We also join other delegations in commending the Secretary General for his initiative to convene this timely and important High Level Meeting. We look forward to a constructive exchange of views on policy, implementation and international cooperation aspects of nuclear safety and nuclear security.

Chairperson,

4. Prior to the Fukushima accident in March, nuclear energy was widely seen and accepted as a viable, safe and sustainable alternative to the dwindling reserves of fossil fuels. Nuclear power also represented an effective tool to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change. The events at Fukushima nuclear plants however brought into focus justifiable public anxiety over nuclear safety measures and standards.

5. Such concerns are neither unjustified nor unprecedented. The Three Mile Island incident and the Chernobyl disaster had raised similar fears. Just as the international community responded to the challenges of nuclear safety then, we are confident that it can do again, individually and collectively. The convening of this High Level Meeting is a manifestation of the international community’s determination to promote nuclear energy in a safe and responsible manner.

Chairperson,

6. We compliment the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in taking the lead to convene a Ministerial Conference earlier this year to commence the process of learning lessons from the Fukushima accident.

7. The Action Plan prepared by the IAEA and its Member States provides an important foundation to strengthen the nuclear safety framework worldwide. We call upon the High Level Meeting to reaffirm its support for the leadership role of the IAEA in the lesson learning process and enabling its Member States to implement them nationally.

8. In evolving a strengthened nuclear safety regime, it would be essential to take into account the differentiated nature of countries’ needs and circumstances. The course correction proposals and modalities should be based on technical and objective assessments. Effective implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety would inter alia depend in large measure on the degree of international assistance and cooperation to the developing countries. We fully endorse the NAM views on this vital aspect.
9. On our part, we have already begun a comprehensive safety review of the existing power plants in areas such as site studies, safety systems, emergency power systems, off-site emergency preparedness etc. Such safety appraisal will also be applicable to our future nuclear power plants. We shall examine the outcome of this review and bring about necessary modifications, as necessary.

Chairperson,

10. Revival of economy and socio-economic development of our people is the foremost priority of the Government of Pakistan. Safe and sustainable nuclear energy is essential to advance our development agenda.

11. At present, the share of nuclear power in Pakistan’s electricity mix is rather modest. We wish to enhance the current level of 750 MWe nuclear power generation capacity to 8800 MWe by the year 2030. This is a challenging task but an equally important developmental imperative which we are determined to pursue.

12. Early this year, the unanimous approval by the IAEA Board of C-3 and C-4 Safeguards Agreement reflected international recognition of Pakistan’s expertise in the safe and secure operation of nuclear power plants. The conclusion of this Safeguards Agreement relating to the two power plants with 340 MWe each power generation capacity is an important milestone towards our energy security strategy.

13. Pakistan has more than three decades of experience in safe reactor operations. We also have a professional corps of experts as well as technical and engineering infrastructure to provide technical support to our power plants. We are ready to assist interested states in the experience and expertise that we have gained in the area of nuclear safety under the IAEA auspices.

Chairperson,

14. Nuclear Security has emerged as an important theme and area requiring adequate attention and response. Pakistan shares the concerns that non-state actors or terrorists may acquire and potentially use nuclear materials and cause serious economic, political and psychological consequences.

15. We have demonstrated through our political commitment and actions the importance that we attach to nuclear security. We have engaged constructively inter alia with the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) and the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) processes.

16. While we support international focus and efforts to advance the objectives of nuclear security, we share the IAEA view that “responsibility for nuclear security rests entirely with each State”.

17. At the international level, the IAEA has the leading and central role in evolving guidelines, recommendations, codes, and guidance documents in the area of nuclear
security. Given its mandate, technical competence and wide membership, IAEA is the unique platform for its Member States to consider proposals for reviewing and strengthening the international framework on nuclear security.

Chairperson,

18. In recent years, a number of initiatives and activities have sprung up globally to promote the nuclear security agenda, often with overlapping work. We fully share the IAEA concerns over the continuing duplication of nuclear security related activities. We wish to reaffirm that the IAEA has the unique role, authority, competency and legitimacy to lead and coordinate policy, operational activities and assistance provision in the field of nuclear security.

19. Similarly, it would be counterproductive, both financially and politically, to duplicate nuclear security related activities, particularly in the design and development of parallel guidelines, recommendations, standards and guidance documents in various areas related to nuclear security.

20. Given the distinct nature, character and implementation structures of the IAEA for nuclear safety and nuclear security, we would advise against pursuit of a single series of "standards" in the areas of nuclear safety and security. These two areas have divergent philosophies, causes, legal instruments and operational requirements, although the two may share a degree of common risks.

Chairperson,

21. Pakistan has taken several legislative, organizational and administrative steps to augment the safety and security of our nuclear installations, facilities, materials and the regulatory framework.

22. Our Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) has completed ten years of its professional work as an effective overseer. The Authority has augmented its regulatory infrastructure and expanded the scope of its regulatory processes. It has also achieved important milestones i.e. from regulatory oversight of nuclear materials and equipment to management of radioactive sources. In doing so, the PNRA has followed international standards and practices.

23. The professional approach with which the Authority has executed the Nuclear Security Action Plan (NSAP) in Pakistan has won it wide appreciation among its global peers. The PNRA is now implementing the second phase of the NSAP, in collaboration with the IAEA. In addition, we have participated for several years now in the IAEA’s Illicit Trafficking Database (ITDB).

24. In terms of emergency preparedness and response, we have built national capacities as a party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety as well as the Conventions on Notification of Nuclear Accident and on Assistance. We look forward to working with the IAEA and Member States to take forward the recommendations of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear
Safety including further enhancing of national capacities, expertise and hosting of workshops and seminars in Pakistan.

25. We have established an effective nuclear security training, response and education infrastructure in Pakistan. We are prepared to share these national capabilities at the regional level and assist other interested states in collaboration with the IAEA.

Chairperson,

26. I wish to take this opportunity to say a few words on the evolving international framework within the broader context of the debate on peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

27. The global non-proliferation architecture has witnessed major transformations in recent years. We have seen trends and policies that have dealt major blows to the non-proliferation regime. Policies and practices, based on commercial and political considerations, have eroded the sanctity of long-standing norms and legal instruments that underpin the non-proliferation regime.

28. Pakistan believes in an equitable, non-discriminatory and criteria-based approach to advance the universally shared goals of non-proliferation and promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We also hope that considerations of nuclear safety and nuclear security would facilitate, not hinder, the pursuit of peaceful uses of nuclear energy for advancing the development agenda and offsetting environmental degradation.

Thank you.