Statement by the Czech Republic

Third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference

Cluster III

New York, 29 April – 10 May 2019
Mr. Chairman,

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. Due to the utmost importance of peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the Czech Republic, I’d like to add a few remarks in the national capacity. The Article IV of the NPT guarantees the right of all member states to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, to make full use of these benefits, States have to commit to the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and safeguards. Furthermore, States shall fully comply with the NPT non-proliferation obligations. For the Czech Republic, this has always been a priority.

To illustrate our commitment, I’d like to inform you, Mr. Chairman, about participation of the Czech Republic in various activities since the last Preparatory Committee meeting. We contributed almost 300,000 EUR to the Fund of Technical Cooperation Programme which is dedicated to helping Member States with sustainable development of nuclear technology and its applications. Additionally we have also made an extra-budgetary contribution of almost 80,000 EUR through the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative for the Armenian project on Upgrading National Nuclear Regulatory Infrastructure.

In cooperation with the IAEA, the Czech Republic has organized 51 fellowship programmes for foreign experts, from which 11 were long-term internships and 40 were short-term academic visits focusing on nuclear medicine, safety and security of nuclear facilities, radiation protection and radioactive waste management.

Last but not least, under the Technical Cooperation Programme, the Czech Republic administers a national project called Strengthening Human Resources Capacity, Nuclear Knowledge and Expertise in Relevant Fields of the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy. This particular project is just one example of projects and cooperation dedicated to sharing of practices, experience and capacity building that the Czech Republic engages in.

Mr. Chairman,

I’d like to especially highlight the importance of guidance provided by the IAEA in many fields relating to peaceful use of nuclear energy. In this regard, I am also proud to inform you that last year the Czech Republic celebrated 15 years of participation in the Member States Support Programme to the IAEA Safeguards and we are looking forward to continue supporting the Agency’s verification capabilities in the upcoming years.

The portfolio of the Czech Republic Support Programme tasks has three priorities. Our first priority are tasks focusing on training activities, the second priority are tasks dedicated to provision of expert and analytical services to the IAEA and under the third priority fall tasks providing to the IAEA access to several Czech nuclear facilities for testing of new verification technologies, equipment and methods.

I am also pleased to inform you that the Czech Republic brought up its input to several important events dedicated to peaceful use of nuclear energy and non-proliferation. In June last year, the Czech Republic actively participated in the 3rd International Symposium on Highly Enriched Uranium Minimization in Oslo. In November 2018, the Czech experts contributed to the Symposium on International Safeguards: Building Future Safeguards Capabilities in Vienna, where the Czech Republic, among others, presented a proprietary software for nuclear materials accountancy and control.
In our country, nuclear energy remains well received by the public and supported by the Government. The Czech Republic is currently evaluating options for the construction of additional nuclear units for our current Nuclear Power Plants. For the responsible management of all phases of our nuclear fuel cycle it is also necessary to construct a deep geological repository for spent fuel. I am pleased to say that we are finalizing a schedule for building such repository. Currently, there are several international projects aimed at studying impacts of a deep geological repositories on the environment. The Czech Republic benefits greatly from the know-how and experience shared within these projects and we are proud to bring about results from our own underground geological research facility.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that the 2019 Preparatory Committee meeting is the last opportunity to achieve progress in many open areas before the NPT Review Conference in 2020. Therefore we should maximise our efforts and make sure that we can provide the forthcoming NPT Review Conference with substantive outcomes that States can build on the next year.

Thank you for your attention.