

Thailand

**Statement by H.E. Mrs. Nongnuth Phetcharatana
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand
to the International Atomic Energy Agency
Head of the Thai Delegation
at the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety
20-24 June 2011, Vienna**

Mr. President,
Mr. Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, Thailand would like to associate itself with the statement made by H.E. Mr. A Kohilan Pillay, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, on behalf of ASEAN.

We wish to express our gratitude towards Mr. Yukiya Amano, the IAEA Director-General, for initiating this important Conference, which will create the necessary political impetus for advancing the issue of nuclear safety. We also wish to congratulate Ambassador Antonio Guerreiro, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the IAEA, on his appointment as President of the Conference. We are confident that his able leadership and vast experience in the work of the IAEA will steer this Conference to a successful outcome.

Mr. President,

Thailand would like to express our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Japan for the calamity they encountered three months ago, including the unprecedented accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. This has posed an on-going challenge due to its long-term impact. We appreciate the Japanese Government's enduring efforts in mitigating the impact and hope that our contributions, including *inter alia* medical teams and electricity generators, could play a part in the efforts to overcome the adverse consequences.

In this regard, we welcome the report on the Fukushima accident submitted by the Japanese Government to this Conference, which provides a comprehensive account of the accident and its circumstances. We also wish to thank the Japanese Government for its transparent information sharing with the international community through regular briefings and updates throughout the crisis. Information and assessment on the accident by the Japanese authorities on

the ground has been useful for all of us to better evaluate possible short- and long- term effects of the accident on our people and the environment.

Mr. President,

The Fukushima accident and its possible long-term impacts have proved that the safety issue in peaceful uses of nuclear energy is no less important than security and safeguards, and therefore should be duly and adequately attended to. Given the trans-boundary effects of a nuclear accident, nuclear safety requires international and regional coordination and cooperation, as well as robust national implementation of safety measures in accordance with the IAEA. To achieve this end, three key elements need to be effectively addressed.

First, strengthening the role of the IAEA. Since the IAEA is recognized as the world's nuclear regulatory organization, its central role in strengthening the global nuclear safety framework, as well as emergency preparedness and response, needs to be enhanced in order to ensure the highest level of nuclear safety standard worldwide. We welcome the five-point proposals made by the Director General in his opening statement to strengthen the role of the IAEA in this regard, including the IAEA systematic and regular peer reviews on nuclear power plants. We believe that such concrete measures will greatly contribute to the enhancement of the post-Fukushima global nuclear safety regime.

In this regard, Thailand also wishes to stress the importance of the enhancement of coordination between the IAEA and related organizations, including the WHO, WMO, FAO, ICAO and CTBTO PrepCom, in order to fully utilize the various areas of expertise and resources of different organizations in the event of nuclear accidents. This is to build an international network on nuclear emergency preparedness and responses for possible future nuclear emergencies, with regard to possible direct effects on the wider public, especially on the issues of food safety and long-term human health assessment, which shall remain the top priorities for all countries in any nuclear crisis management

Second, transparent information sharing. Lessons learnt from the Fukushima accident illustrated the importance of transparent information sharing -- both between States and the IAEA, and among States -- in emergency response and confidence building.

For the purpose of timely and effective emergency response and impact mitigation, a transparent, prompt and systematic information sharing

mechanism between the IAEA and Member States in the framework of the Emergency Notification Assistance Convention (ENAC) needs to be strengthened. From the beginning of the Fukushima crisis, Thailand utilized the information received through the ENAC mechanism to update our people on the developments of the nuclear accident, so that they would have a correct understanding of what happened. Such information also helped in matching our assistance to the needs of the country faced with a nuclear accident.

Meanwhile, transparent information sharing among States, especially those within the region, on safety measures of nuclear power programmes contributes to building confidence in their safety standards and helps ensure that the nuclear safety requirements of the IAEA are met. Although nuclear safety is a national responsibility, such information sharing among countries, both interested and not interested in nuclear power plants, will also promote the acceptance of nuclear power programmes at national, regional and international levels. Moreover, such mechanism provides a necessary basis for the establishment of regional emergency response arrangements, as proposed by the Director General.

Third, effective capacity building. A strengthened global nuclear safety framework would only be meaningful if it is accompanied by technical expertise of nuclear power plant operators and regulators. Effective capacity building programmes on nuclear safety measures, emergency response and preparedness, as well as legislative drafting, are therefore required for a number of countries planning on nuclear power plant development to enable them to match with the international standards. In this regard, Thailand would like to thank the IAEA for its collaboration under the Technical Cooperation Programme on “Upgrading/Establishing the Infrastructure Required for the Introduction of Nuclear Power”, which has been very helpful in our preparatory work on the nuclear power plant development plan.

Mr. President,

It is clear that in the wake of the Fukushima accident, safety measures of nuclear power plants worldwide should be reviewed. On our part, in order to ensure that Thailand achieves the highest level of the IAEA nuclear safety standards, the Royal Thai Government has decided to postpone the decision on whether or not to embark on a nuclear power development project from this year to 2014. The three-year postponement is intended for further study and research, particularly in the area of nuclear safety, national legislative drafting process, and awareness raising campaign to promote public acceptance of nuclear power plants.

Mr. President,

Thailand appreciates the efforts of all ASEAN countries at the Special ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting and the 18th ASEAN Summit to promote cooperation among ASEAN countries in this area. An agreement has been reached among us to develop a coordinated ASEAN approach in order to promote transparency and trust within the region, in cooperation with the IAEA and other relevant partners, with an aim towards the improvement of global nuclear safety.

To pave the way toward these goals, Thailand is pleased to announce that we will host two conferences this year with an aim to promote networking on nuclear related issues within the region. First, the Nuclear Society of Thailand will organize a meeting among nuclear societies from ASEAN countries in the second half of this year, in order to allow discussions amongst nuclear energy experts on the future nuclear power generation in the region. Ideas and comments from the civil society will help the government sector to better understand the concerns of the general public.

Second, the Office of Atoms for Peace of Thailand will host the "International Conference on Safety, Security and Safeguards in Nuclear Energy" between 1-2 September 2011, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the purpose to enhance networking among nuclear regulatory bodies in South East Asia, as well as our partners and the IAEA.

Thailand believes discussions among both nuclear regulatory bodies and the civil society on nuclear related issues will contribute to effective planning on a nuclear power development programme and thus help restore public confidence in peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. President,

Thailand is fully committed to strengthening the regional and global nuclear safety framework. We are ready to engage in discussions and cooperation at both regional and international levels for the purpose of enhancing transparent information sharing and effective capacity building measures in order to strengthen such framework in an effective and achievable manner.

Thank you, Mr. President.
