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STATEMENT

By

Mr. Gideon Frank

Director General

Israel Atomic Energy Commission

**To the 49th General Conference of the
International Atomic Energy Agency**



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Mr. President,

I would like to join the other distinguished delegates in congratulating you on your election as the President of the 49th session of the IAEA General Conference. I am certain that under your guidance this session will be brought to a successful and harmonious conclusion. I wish to assure you the cooperation of the delegation of Israel in that endeavor.

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to congratulate Dr. ElBaradei on his re-appointment as the Director General of the IAEA for a third term. I would like to convey our appreciation for Dr. ElBaradei's willingness to shoulder such a heavy burden for another term, and for his leadership in navigating the Agency during a period of such great challenges. We wish him every success in this demanding, and yet crucial, task and pledge our full cooperation in his undertaking

I also wish to congratulate Belize that has recently joined the IAEA and welcome it to the Agency.

Mr. President,

We live in a day and age in which possession of advanced nuclear technology is increasingly recognized to carry with it an especially heavy burden of

accountability to new internationally promulgated norms. These have been motivating action by all responsible states. .

Israel on its part has stepped up its efforts in recent years to bring our traditionally stringent nuclear non-proliferation policy, as well as standards of safety and security, into conformity with the evolving global arrangements, treaties and norms regulating this field. Moreover, we have also been striving to meet the growing national and international expectations of us, as of every democratic country, to meet the ever-growing exacting standards of good practices in the nuclear domain. Our efforts manifest themselves in several areas:

1. **Adhering to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)** norms and policies by putting in place new export control legislation and adopting the control lists of the NSG, and working towards its effective implementation, including through dialogues with other countries and the NSG;
2. **Supporting the non-proliferation of nuclear fuel cycle capabilities.** In this context, we welcome the recommendations of the expert group, convened by the Director General to explore multilateral approaches in this area. Israel stands ready to continue supporting the efforts to identify practical options for possible arrangements in this domain, while taking into account non-proliferation considerations;
3. **Welcoming the United Nations Security Council resolution 1540** aimed at preventing proliferation, especially to terrorists, and submitting a report on the steps Israel has taken in this area;
4. **Endorsing the new international instruments in the area of safety and security** of radioactive and nuclear materials, namely:

- The IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources
- The IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety of Research Reactors
- The new convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism
- The amended Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials (CPPNM).

In this context, Israel will add a modest contribution to the Agency's Nuclear Security Fund early next year.

5. **Launching an effort to upgrade the security of our international border crossings** against smuggling of nuclear and radioactive materials. This effort is facilitated to a great extent through a cooperation with the US Department of Energy;
6. **Endorsing the Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI)** promulgated by the US and the Russian Federation on the margins of the last IAEA GC. During the past year we have explored ways to participate in specific projects under this initiative, including by discussing the return of the spent fuel from the Soreq Research Reactor to the US;
7. **Supporting and actively working in the framework of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization.** Furthermore, we called upon other states not to carry out any nuclear test explosions, in line with the Treaty's basic obligations, pending its entry into force;

Mr. President,

Let me now turn to a few specific agenda items in this year's Conference that are of particular interest to us.

Israel has long supported strengthening the IAEA to allow it to focus on proliferation challenges. The establishment of the BOG Committee on Safeguards could provide a good example of such constructive activity. Unfortunately, there are opposite examples as well. This holds especially true for Agenda Item 22, the so-called "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities and Threat". Many alarming proliferation developments in the Middle East have occurred in recent years, some of them are reflected in the Director General's reports and BOG resolutions. None of these involve Israel, but all of them challenge our security. These developments demonstrate the alarming attitude of some regional states to their international commitments in the nuclear domain.

There is no basis for this agenda item, whose sponsors are motivated by extraneous considerations, which are also evident in their efforts to challenge Israel's credentials. Both actions are politically and cynically motivated and have little to do with the IAEA's objectives or mandate. They inevitably cast a serious doubt on the sincerity of its sponsors and their willingness to make any real progress towards cooperative security in the Middle East. I thus call upon all Member States to reject such proposal outright.

Agenda item no. 21 calls for the establishment of the Middle East as a NWFZ. Our position in this regard is well known. We support the principle of converting the Middle East into a zone free of all kinds of WMD as well as ballistic missiles, but we take issue with the modalities of last year's resolution as well as with its

portrayal as an end in itself, rather than as a desirable outcome of a fundamental regional political transformation of relations.

Mr. President,

In line with our vision we have been willing to join the consensus on the resolution despite its deficiencies, recognizing that there is no substitute to reconciliation, leading to direct negotiations and agreements freely arrived at among all States of the region.

Furthermore, as a gesture of good will Israel proposed to the DG, during his visit to Israel in July 2004, to convene a forum to learn from the experience of other regions in establishing a NWFZ. A framework for that forum was agreed upon by key Middle Eastern parties and contained in the Director General's report (GOV/2004/61-GC(48)/18). An agenda for the forum based on this framework was accepted by Israel. Lamentably, it was subsequently rejected by another state in the region.

Mr. President,

Israel, as in previous years, will not be in a position to support Agenda Item 21 on "Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East" if any action is taken on Agenda Item 22.

Let me now move beyond non-proliferation, to discuss another crucial role of the Agency, namely promoting the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy for the benefit of mankind. The Agency deserves much credit for its outstanding activities

in this domain, despite the fact that they attract little publicity. In this context I would like to express our appreciation for the Agency's assistance through the Technical Cooperation programme to a regional project, benefiting Jordanian and Palestinian partners as well as Israel. The Mediterranean fruit fly project has succeeded to create a good platform for productive and ongoing collaboration in the region that could serve as a model for additional projects, for example in the area of health and radiotherapy. Just recently, Israel has launched an effort to promote IAEA's assistance in training to the Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem, which treats mainly Palestinian patients from the West Bank.

Mr. President,

Israel works to promote peaceful applications of nuclear energy in the areas of health, agriculture and industry. In this context we have recently hosted an IAEA mission to discuss the Country Framework Programme. We are currently finalizing this document and hope to sign it soon. In addition, in recognition of the excellent work carried out by the Agency in this domain, and in spite of austere national budget, Israel has modestly increased its contribution to the IAEA's TC fund this year, and hopes to be able to sustain this trend in the future.

Mr. President,

We look forward to working together with the Director General and the Secretariat as well as with other distinguished delegates to this conference to promote, as in previous years, constructive resolutions in the Conference, which will strengthen the Agency and help it to fulfill its missions and face up to the acute challenges that lie ahead.

Thank you.