



STATEMENT

By

Mr. Gideon Frank

Director General

Israel Atomic Energy Commission

**To the 50th General Conference of the
International Atomic Energy Agency**

STATEMENT

By

Mr. Gideon Frank

Director General, Israel Atomic Energy Commission

Mr. President,

I would like to join the other distinguished delegates in congratulating you on your election as the President of this 50th Jubilee session of the IAEA General Conference. I am confident that your leadership will steer this session to a successful and harmonious conclusion. I wish to assure you the full cooperation of the delegation of Israel in this endeavor.

On behalf of my delegation, I also wish to reiterate our congratulations to the Agency and to the DG Dr. Mohammed ElBaradei for receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. This is an unparalleled honor, a timely recognition of the importance of the Agency's mission and the role of the DG in promoting global nuclear cooperation, stability and non-proliferation.

I also wish to congratulate the Republic of Malawi, the Republic of Montenegro, the Republic of Mozambique and the Republic of Palau and welcome them to the Agency.

Mr. President,

We are going through challenging times, presently facing a combination of growing concerns over nuclear proliferation, rising energy demand, possible climatic change and the incipient renaissance of nuclear power. We must succeed in making nuclear power safe, reliable, and proliferation resistant, in order to meet the global demand for a non-polluting energy source. These critical challenges further underscore the "incalculable importance" of the Agency's role, as noted by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee.

Mr. President,

The world has changed dramatically since the first General Conference of the Agency. As we gather here on the occasion of its 50th anniversary and examine its track record since those days, we note with satisfaction that the Agency has indeed accomplished a great deal. Among its many achievements is its emergence as the focal point for international cooperation in nuclear energy. Yet the challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime we face today are as grave as ever. And these promise to make the task of the Agency in the coming decades no less challenging, and its success in meeting them just as critical.

The Agency, as the sole legitimate international nuclear fact-finder, has a unique and indispensable role to encourage compliance with nuclear non-proliferation obligations. This role is enhanced by its capacity to deter violations, based on its capabilities to detect non-compliance, report it in full and in a timely manner, and facilitate efforts to resolve such concerns.

Lamentably, we live in a day and age in which certain states, some in our region, have abused their international treaty obligations. And some instances of non-compliance have not as yet been confronted with proper enforcement of corrective measures.

Mr. President,

At the end of the day, the Agency cannot do more than the collective resolve of its member states to take non-proliferation and nuclear security most seriously. We live in times in which possession of advanced nuclear technology is increasingly recognized to carry with it an especially heavy burden of responsibility as well as accountability to internationally promulgated norms.

We in Israel recognize the special responsibility this state of affairs confers on us. Moreover, our Jewish heritage and democratic values have predisposed all Israeli governments to tread in this domain with special caution, continuously

exercising maximum self restraint even in the face of grave challenges or seemingly attractive opportunities.

Unfortunately, for reason completely unrelated to us, our region has seen in recent years the ascendancy of highly destructive forces, which also engage in terror and nuclear proliferation. These forces cloud the future of our already troubled region, while threatening to spread instability even further.

This state of affairs has led us to the regrettable conclusion that region-wide progress, for which we continue to aspire by moving towards stability, reconciliation, and eventually disarmament, remains distant.

We have thus searched for measures to improve our national and regional security in additional areas; we do so through a combination of unilateral measures aimed at diminishing the friction with our neighbors and a concerted effort to bring ourselves formally closer, wherever possible, to international norms on nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation. We have also stepped up our efforts to help shape and promote new norms in these domains, hoping that these will, in turn, also favorably impact on our region. I wish to use this occasion to highlight some of our recent undertakings in these areas:

- An intense inter-agency effort over several years has brought Israel into both formal and practical adherence with the Nuclear Suppliers Groups (NSG) Guidelines, in addition to the preexisting adherence with the Australia Group and MTCR Guidelines. This effort has recently been recognized by the NSG Assembly during the last plenary meeting in Brazilia. Israel presently continues to work diligently toward expanding its export control system to include the Wassenaar Arrangement. It is simultaneously reaching out to additional government agencies as well as to the industry to assure effective implementing of the expanded export control legislation;

- Israel has complemented its export control effort with support and active participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative;
- Our efforts in the domain of nuclear security have further expanded to endorse and actively support the Global Threat Reduction Initiative;
- In this vein Israel has also submitted a report on its implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. Furthermore, we have welcomed UNSC 1673 resolution to extend the mandate of the 1540 Committee in promoting the full implementation of the resolution;
- Israel has also endorsed and launched the ratification process of the upgraded CPPNM as well as the Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. In addition, we have supported all along and are implementing the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of radioactive sources as well as the Agency's Code of Conduct on the Safety of Research Reactors;
- We are also stepping up the security of our international border crossings against illicit trafficking of nuclear and radiological materials. This undertaking greatly benefits from an excellent cooperation with the US Department of Energy;
- Our broader effort includes, also in the context of the Agency's Safety Standards Committee, developing further the national and global standards for stringent nuclear security measures. One of the areas recognized as warranting a high priority efforts has been the transport, storage and waste management of radioactive sources;
- Even more broadly, Israel not only remains formally committed to the CTBT, but also actively supports and participates in the work of the CTBTO. We look forward to finalizing the organization's preparations and having it fully ready for EIF. We also sincerely hope that enough support can be marshaled to draw on some non-proliferation and other benefits its existence offers, even in the current transient state. In this context we reiterate our call to all states parties to the CTBT to commit,

pending its Entry Into Force not to conduct nuclear test explosions, in line with the Treaty's basic obligations;

- Finally, doing our very best to develop and implement nuclear security and non-proliferation measures wherever we can, does not blind us to their limitations. The somber reality is that these, in and of themselves, do not address all the acute non-proliferation challenges that the international community currently faces. Notwithstanding our limited size and resources, our vested interests in the success of the non-proliferation regime has propelled us to:
 - Search for ways to support the development by others of safe, reliable, and proliferation resistant nuclear power technology;
 - Work to enhance the efficiency of safeguards measures and technology;
 - Promote new international norms governing dissemination of new fuel-cycle facilities.

On the latter, as I am sure the Special Event in this GC will demonstrate the challenge in front of us is to devise and win support for new norms that assure access to market based, reliable, safe and secure energy supply without causing new proliferation concerns. In this context it is worth noting the importance of nuclear fuel lease/take-back arrangements accompanied by credible supply assurances. Such arrangements do not create excessive dependence on the supplier beyond the pre-existing dependence on the reactor vendor for maintenance and technical support. Such arrangements, together with international spent fuel storage options, should be studied with the highest priority.

Mr. President,

Against this background, one should hardly be surprised that we view with special concern the alarming nuclear and missile proliferation developments in and around the Middle East. Some of these have been reflected in recent

Director General's reports, as well as in Board of Government resolutions. These ominous developments, were they allowed to grow further, would gravely undermine regional and eventually global stability and pose an existential challenge to Israel. This is all the more so, because they are accompanied by sustained efforts by certain leaders in the region to deny the very legitimacy of our sovereign existence and by calls for our destruction. Naturally, we cannot and will not remain indifferent to such developments, but we still pin our hopes on the international community to address them. We clearly hope that all concerned parties, will work together with the IAEA, under the appropriate guidance of the UNSC, to condemn such reckless behavior and redouble the efforts to diffuse these threats.

We ought to view with some alarm any attempt to divert attention from these stark realities. A case in point is the frivolous effort by some states to press once again for Agenda Item 21, the so-called "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities and Threat". I call upon all Member States to reject outright this unwarranted initiative, recognizing that it is solely motivated by extraneous considerations. These have little to do with the IAEA's objectives or mandate.

Another specific agenda item of particular interest to us is Agenda item no. 20, which calls for the establishment of the Middle East as a NWFZ. We hardly need to be reminded of this noble vision. After all, Israel's has been advocating global and complete disarmament long before this agenda item has ever been introduced in the IAEA GC. Naturally, to this day we remain committed to a vision of the Middle East developing into a zone free of Chemical, Biological and Nuclear weapons as well as ballistic missiles. Yet we are also realistic enough to know that in the Middle East, as had been the case in virtually every other region, such a noble cause cannot be advanced out of context. A NWFZ can only emerge as an outgrowth of a fundamental transformation of the regional political-strategic climate through a gradual process of building mutual trust and reconciliation, followed by more modest arms control

measures. Lamentably such a transformation has thus far eluded the Middle East.

Mr. President,

As in previous years, Israel will only be in a position to support Agenda Item 20 on "Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East" if its contents is mutually agreed upon and so long as the Agenda Item 21 will not be acted upon. We will be willing to do so, despite our grave reservations about these resolution's modalities, because establishing a NWFZ is consistent with our own vision.

Mr. President,

On a more cheerful note, let me express Israel's appreciation for the Agency's invaluable assistance provided to member states through its Technical Cooperation program. In recent years we have worked hand in hand with the Agency to extend the benefits of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in the areas of health, agriculture, environment and industry, both to new constituencies among our own citizens as well as to our neighbors starting with Palestinians. Recognizing the benefits of such undertakings, and taking into account our advance capabilities in several pertinent areas, we reiterate our offer to share these benefits with other states and peoples within and outside our region. May a joint effort to combat enemies no other than Tephritid fruit flies be one of the first areas in which we embark on together in the context of enhanced regional technical cooperation in the Asia Pacific region.

One additional promising project in this domain is the construction in Jordan of a synchrotron for regional use so called SESAME. This project is carried out under the auspices of UNESCO and with the support of the EU. Israel as a member of this initiative reiterates its support for the expected Memorandum Understanding between SESAME and the IAEA.

We truly believe that the integration of East and West Asia creates a genuine chance for a new era of collaboration in a wide range of areas. Such collaboration will hopefully not be confined to the tangible benefits in the areas immediately concerned, but hopefully also allow for the cooperative spirit to spill over to other areas, helping transform the political climate in the Middle East and enhance new East-West and North-South agenda.

In this light, I take special pleasure in informing the GC that we have yesterday signed a Country Program Framework agreement with the technical cooperation department of the Agency. This milestone agreement reflects nationwide developments pertaining to a wide range of domains in the peaceful application of nuclear energy. This agreement is a tribute to the excellent work of the Agency's TC staff. It also confirms that the IAEC remains committed to working with the Agency to jointly spread the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy not only to other sectors and agencies in Israel, but also, hopefully, to our regional neighbors.

Mr. President,

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

Thank you.