



STATEMENT

By

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Mr. President, Distinguished delegates

Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, upon your election to preside over the 56th General Conference of the IAEA. I can assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation in carrying out your important assignment. I congratulate the new members of the Agency.

I also wish to extend to all delegates my good wishes on the occasion of the Jewish New Year, which delayed the participation of Israel delegation in our deliberations until today.

Mr. President

Since the last General Conference, the geopolitical realities in the Middle East has been changing. Unfortunately, the region is dominated by adverse developments especially in two states: Iran and Syria. The two are known for their clandestine pursuit of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The reports of the Director General of the IAEA on Iran, and subsequent resolutions of the Board of Governors, leave no doubt as to the intended goal of Iran's persistent efforts, in every aspect of its nuclear program, that has long shed any pretention of a civilian program.

From sizeable enrichment of uranium activities, to the construction of a heavy water research reactor for military production of plutonium, supplemented by design and testing of components of nuclear weapons, and activities to integrate a specific payload to be mounted in a Shihab - 3 missile.

In his report of 30 August 2012, the Director General emphasizes again the total lack of cooperation on the part of Iran. Iran continues to create a hollow impression that it is just about to provide answers and to engage in sincerity with the IAEA, though in the words of the Director General, "No concrete results have been achieved".

The resolution of the BOG adopted last week, expresses serious concern regarding the continued enrichment and heavy water related activities in Iran.

Iran's nuclear activities are conducted in violation of all relevant U.N. Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors resolutions, and are carried out with impunity, as measures of the international community have no effect on Iran's nuclear program. Consequently, Iran is utterly indifferent to decisions and wishes of the international community. It may be looking even to a pretext to withdraw from the NPT, which has long been misused to mask Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons, while ostensibly pretending to uphold its principles.

Mr. President

Iranian leaders miss no opportunity to issue severe threats against the state of Israel and its very existence. It is the elementary duty and obligation of the international community to denounce these threats. I find it appropriate to quote the Secretary General of the United Nations in his recent visit to the NAM summit in Tehran, who stated: "I strongly reject any threat by any UN member state to destroy another, or outrageous comments to deny historical facts as the Holocaust. Claiming another UN member state does not have the right to exist, or describe it in racist terms, is not only utterly wrong, but undermines the very principles we have all promised to uphold".

Mr. President

Israel does not remain indifferent in view of such direct and blunt threats. Israel is competent to deter its enemies and to defend itself.

Mr. President

Iran doesn't hesitate to promote instability all over the Middle East region. Its finger prints are manifested in Syria, where the Syrian regime fights for his survival at a cost of tens of thousands lives of innocent Syrian civilians. Let me remind all

that the Syrian regime, is under the continued investigation of the IAEA for its clandestine pursuit of nuclear weapons. The investigation is much hampered by Syria's non-cooperative attitude and practices. When it comes to the chemical weapons domain, Syria has neither signed nor acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The fate of Syria's large chemical stockpiles has become a matter of grave concern of the international community. This in view of a possible use of chemical agents against the revolting Syrian people, and also in view of the intimate relations between Bashar Al - Asad's regime and the Hezbollah terror organization.

In its report to the UN Committee on implementing the UN Security Council resolution 1540, in late 2005, Syria stated that it "neither possesses nor intends to acquire weapons of mass destruction". Contrary to previous Syrian official statements and declarations to the U.N, a senior Syrian official admitted last July the possession of chemical and biological weapons by Syria. All are invited to judge the merit of the Syrian pledges in the domain of WMD, against the grave reality.

Mr. President

The case of Syria is not distinctive in the over-all Middle East landscape.

The Middle East has long been characterized, among others, by the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction by despotic regimes, in violation of every legally binding international commitments and obligations. The concept of a region free of WMD that has never been put to test even in the most peaceful regions of the world, is certainly much less applicable to the current volatile and hostile Middle East region. Any attempt to reach this goal requires a significant transformation of regional trends and the creation of some elementary pre-conditions.

Therefore, no diplomatic and political campaign in the international institutions, for whatever motivations or purposes, could compensate for the acute deficit created for decades by non-compliance, proliferation, violence and terrorism practiced by those regimes.

Any initiative to promote the 2012 conference on the Middle East under the banner of the NPT review conference, or the General Conference of the IAEA in complete disregard to the present regional somber realities, is futile.

Mr. President

The State of Israel is not a remote and indifferent observer of the Middle East somber realities, it is directly concerned by it. Therefore, it does not enjoy the luxury to test concepts born elsewhere that are strange to the region and its political culture and might put Israel's national security at great risk.

Mr. President

As to prove my case, the Arab states, regardless of severe domestic and intra-Arab developments, have requested already last June, to include in the General Conference's agenda, the same ill - motivated item titled "Israeli nuclear capabilities". The majority of the General Conference rejected the resolution under this agenda item in 2010. The determination of the General Conference not to be endlessly taken hostage by this political and divisive anti - Israeli initiative, probably convinced the sponsors not to table a draft resolution last year. Yet, the Arab states and their supporters try once again, this year, to impose on the General Conference their own agenda. Needless to say that the product of a repeated anti-Israeli initiative could neither be trust among Middle East regional parties, nor promotion of genuine arms control measures.

I call on all delegates, to express their disapproval of this damaging Arab political move, which has nothing to do with the proper mission and mandate of the IAEA.

Mr. President

In spite of the Middle East turmoil and uncertainties, Israel has fully cooperated with the initiative of the IAEA Director General to convene last November a forum, to learn from the experience of other regions in the area of confidence building measures, relevant to the establishment of Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. Israel is also appreciative of valuable contributions to the discussion by experts from other regions. Israel emphasized once again its approach, that all issues should be dealt within the regional context. Obvious lessons that one learns from the experience of other regions, where Nuclear Weapon Free Zone have been established, are manifold. **First**, such a process can only be launched when peaceful relations exist for a reasonable period of time in the region, and the neighboring states have established sufficient confidence among themselves. **Second**, its creation emanates from within the region. **Third**, it cannot be imposed from outside. Regrettably, the realities in the Middle East are far from being conducive. It is suffice to remind all, that some of our neighbors in the region, have not even come to the point of admitting Israel to the

Middle East and South Asia (MESA) regional group of the IAEA, where Israel naturally belongs.

Mr. President

In last March, Israel actively participated in the second Nuclear Security Summit hosted by the Republic of Korea. The Summit has underlined, once again, the close association between the threat of nuclear proliferation, and the threat of nuclear terrorism. Israel has also lent its support to a welcome initiative by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in connection with the Seoul Summit, that is aiming at establishing a working group on counter nuclear smuggling.

With regards to Jordan civilian nuclear program I wish to emphasize that Israel supports the use of nuclear power by its neighbors, to meet their energy and water needs.

Israel believes in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the Middle East, as long as states fully honor their international nonproliferation obligations. As for the selection of Jordan's nuclear power site, Israel also provided comprehensive geological data to the Kingdom upon its request.

Mr. President

At the regional level, the urgent situation in Syria, as was the case with Libya not a long time ago, is a fresh reminder of the need to work together to secure nuclear materials and to prevent illicit nuclear trafficking. In this context, allow me to remind that the nuclear fuel destined to the nuclear reactor built by DPRK at Dair Alzur site, has not been declared by Syria and its where-about in Syria has remained an enigma.

As part of its contributions and efforts to strengthen nuclear security at the national, regional, and global level, Israel has recently ratified the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection on Nuclear Materials. Israel also commends the IAEA for establishing the Nuclear Security Guidelines Committee, and nominated its representative as a member to this Committee.

Israel strongly supports the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards capabilities, and is pleased to announce its modest contribution to the IAEA project of enhancing the Capabilities of the Safeguards Analytical Services.

Mr. President

Israel recognizes the importance of the Agency's Technical Cooperation program in promoting safety, security, and welfare,

as well as in promoting regional cooperation. Among other projects, Israel has also launched a project for Improving Quality Assurance in Nuclear Medicine, under which IAEA audit missions will be carried out in all relevant medical centers in Israel.

In spite of the unwelcoming circumstances in the Middle East, and as a confidence building measure, Israel seeks to share with all states in the region, its experience in the application of radiotherapy for cancer treatment. Israel intends to host a workshop in the framework of the IAEA Technical Cooperation on Quality Assurance in Radiotherapy for the Asia and the Pacific Region. Israel would welcome all states of the Region in this workshop, as well as their applications for Scientific Visits and Fellowships in this domain.

Israel supports and cooperates with the IAEA assistance to the Palestinian Authority in pertaining areas, and ready to expand it in the field of health, environment and safety under the framework of the IAEA Technical Cooperation.

Mr. President

The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident and its consequences, remain vivid in our minds. Israel commends the Director General and the Board of Governors of the IAEA for proposing, adopting and implementing the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety.

In this regard, the Government of Israel welcomes the decision by the Government of Japan, to convene in coming December a ministerial conference on nuclear safety, to share with the international community the lessons learned from the Fukushima nuclear accident.

At the national level, among other measures to improving nuclear safety, the Head of Israel Nuclear Licensing and Safety office, has formally requested the IAEA, to conduct an Integrated Safety Assessment of the Israel Research Reactor 1 (IRR-1) at the Soreq Nuclear Research Center.

The IAEC is confident, that this safety mission will benefit all concerned in Israel, including the general public. It will also manifest the operation of Israel's nuclear centers according to high safety standards, which are compatible with IAEA standards.

Mr. President

This has been a challenging year to the Agency, which is facing multiple tasks in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation, safety and security.

In this regard, I would like to extend Israel's appreciation to the Director General of the Agency, for his vision and the manner he has been leading and conducting his difficult mission.

To a large extent, the IAEA relies on the guidance and support lent to it by its member states, and on their willingness to work jointly towards common goals. None is required to relinquish particular national interests, but all are required to look beyond those interests, and to align them, with the broad mission and mandate of this Agency.

As representatives of our respective governments, who are primarily concerned with the fulfillment of their national interests, we should not lose sight of values and norms. That have largely enabled the functioning of international institutions like the IAEA, since the end of the Second World War.

Regrettably, Mr. President, there is a growing sense that the normative international system, based on a shared values, is increasingly under heavy pressure of a small minority. This minority is at odds with the norms and the principles, that guided the founders of the UN system at its cradle.

Mr. President

The ten days that follow the Jewish New Year are devoted to a soul – search and repentance, with a view of better human behavior. In this spirit I find it appropriate, to call upon us all, to support the IAEA in fulfilling its mission, as entrusted to it by its Statute. We should reject constant efforts by few, to exploit the democratic nature of those institutions, or worse, to

undermine our institutions altogether, and by that, to inflict damage on each and every one of us.

I Thank You Mr. President