

Statement of the CZECH REPUBLIC

Delivered by H.E. Ms. Kateřina FIALKOVÁ, Ambassador to Japan

To the Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety

15 - 17 December 2012

Co-Presidents, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am addressing you on behalf of the President of the Czech State Office for Nuclear Safety. Dr. Drábová was looking forward to being here today, however, very serious family reasons prevented her from doing so.

First of all, I would like to thank Japan and the IAEA for co-organizing this important conference, and the people of Koriyama for their warm hospitality. Let me also assure you all of the Czech Republic's full support and cooperation in making it a success.

We are gathering here almost two years after the unprecedented natural disaster followed by the accident at the TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant (NPP) occurred. This Prefecture is still recovering from these events, and its full reconstruction is going to take some time. I would therefore like to offer my deepest respect to all those who have been involved in stabilization of the Fukushima Daiichi plant as well as in remediation efforts, and wish them a lot of energy for their future work.

Messrs. Co-Presidents,

the Fukushima Daiichi accident has reminded us that we should never relax in our efforts to further enhance safety of nuclear installations. The whole world has been trying to learn lessons from this event in order to prevent its recurrence in the future. To this end, any report from its investigation is very valuable.

As the first reaction to the accident, the Czech Republic performed a comprehensive risk and safety reassessment of both its NPPs Dukovany and Temelín under the EU "stress tests". This rigorous check has confirmed their adequate safety and time margins, and thereby also ability to withstand extreme external influences and even highly improbable accidents. The "stress tests" have not detected any major deficiencies but they have helped us identify opportunities for possible additional improvement of robustness and safety of Dukovany and Temelín NPPs. We are just about to finalize a National Action Plan containing a list of concrete measures to be implemented at both our power plants in the next four years. The Action Plan will be made available on the web of the Czech State Office for Nuclear Safety.

In this context, I would like to highlight that national regulators are the only fully competent authorities possessing all necessary information and deep knowledge of the facilities under review, able to make final judgement on their overall safety level. In general, safety evaluations and any follow-up actions, including presentation of their results, should be carried out by organizations that have the technical background and expertise needed. Otherwise one cannot exclude possible unfortunate misinterpretation or simplification of their findings, conclusions and related information.

The Czech Republic has also joined other relevant international initiatives aiming to strengthen the global regime of nuclear safety, radiation protection and emergency preparedness in the light of the Fukushima Daiichi accident. While some areas for possible improvements have been identified, it also turned out that the most important contribution to this effort is ensuring effective implementation of existing safety standards and legal instruments as well as the broadest possible use of IAEA's safety-related services. It is therefore essential that stakeholders responsible for the safety of nuclear installations in individual countries observe these principles.

Messrs. Co-Presidents,

My country has always honoured its international obligations and responsibilities associated with the uses of nuclear power. As a contracting party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and "Joint Convention", the Czech Republic is strongly committed to fulfilling their objectives, which is periodically confirmed at Review Meetings of both conventions.

Recognizing the benefits of independent peer reviews, we regularly invite relevant safety missions offered by the Agency. Just three weeks ago, we completed already the fifth OSART mission at Temelín NPP, bringing the number of international checks at the facility to 26. Our second NPP Dukovany also hosts international reviews as appropriate, having received its fifth OSART mission in June 2011. Earlier this year, even methodology for "New OSART" missions newly incorporating one module on severe accident management was successfully tested and fine-tuned at a pilot mission to Dukovany. It goes without saying that also WANO visits and checks our nuclear power plants. Let me just add that the periodic safety review (PSR) of both Czech NPPs is mandatory and required in ten-year intervals.

Another inseparable part of our endeavours is the continuous enhancement of the effectiveness of the regulatory authority. After two former Agency's IRRRT missions, we have requested also the IRRS mission which should be completed by this time next year.

Messrs. Co-Presidents,

With the view to maintaining and further enhancing nuclear safety worldwide, the Czech Republic has been assisting also other Member States in their national efforts, both by sharing necessary expertise and co-financing priority activities. Since 1998, we have provided almost 2.3 million USD to various countries in our region to help them improve safety of their nuclear installations and necessary regulatory infrastructure.

In conclusion, I would like to reassure you of our firm determination to continue to support the IAEA and other relevant international organizations in their important work.

Thank you for your attention.