

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

FUKUSHIMA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR SAFETY KORIYAMA CITY, JAPAN, 15-17 DECEMBER 2012

Statement by Mr. Benhardt Kukuri

Charge d' Affaires of the Republic of Namibia to Japan,

Co- Chairpersons, thank you for organizing this very important meeting and for the warm hospitality provided to my delegation since our arrival here.

Mr. Chairman,

Namibia has set its long-term strategies for development in its Vision 2030 with the National Developmental Plans serving as vehicle to bring about meaningful results to our ideals. While we have made steady progress, we are also mindful of the enormous challenges that we still face. However with the collaboration from all partners, including the support from the IAEA we are confident that these challenges can be overcome. The IAEA contributes to some of our priority goals such as productive utilization of our natural resources; environmental sustainability; development of productive and competitive human resources and institutions; improving quality of life; and promoting peace and security.

Namibia again wishes to express its sincere sympathy to the people of Japan and also at the same time commend the country and the IAEA for the resolute manner in which the Fukushima accident has been managed. Having expressed our desire to pursue a nuclear energy program we are also mindful of the risks associated with the use of nuclear energy and in particular our responsibility, for the establishment of a rigorous national regulatory framework to ensure high levels of safety and security at nuclear installations. It is also desirable that technology providers collaborate closely with the IAEA to ensure that the available technology

offers high standards of performance and safety. In addition, the Fukushima Daiichi accident have taught us that it is imperative that we adopt further programs to adequately take care of nuclear safety worldwide. We took note of the important reviews already done by the IAEA on effective nuclear regulatory systems and the Reactor and fuel spent fuel safety in the light of the accident.

The importance of this meeting is however for us to cast our eyes to the future, with a vision to pre-empt problems that occurred in the past. Logically, when we gather in this way it is to seek opportunities for cooperation; to strengthen existing relations and to find common ground on contentious issues for the common good of all our people. I'm sure we will also be successful in this.

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear energy has a vital and meaningful role to play in the social and economic development of our countries. Namibia still regards nuclear energy as an important source in its energy mix. We therefore still aspire to develop a nuclear energy programme to meet our national needs for energy security. In this regard we re-affirm our belief that each State has the sovereign right to and should be provided with access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. We are also conscious that we are a major player in the uranium production industry and are obligated to ensure that our people equally benefit from this resource. We therefore seek to create the necessary environment and framework to encourage value addition or full participation in the nuclear fuel cycle. We are convinced that this will ensure that we meet our energy demands, stimulate industrial development, and create much-needed jobs and skills.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding nuclear non-proliferation, Namibia has demonstrated its unwavering commitment with the recent ratification of the Treaty of Pelindaba and the Additional Protocol to the IAEA Safeguards Agreement, which both came into force in February this year.

We do however remain concerned that the same commitment is not universally demonstrated. We acknowledge that safeguarding of nuclear material for peaceful purpose is at the core of the IAEA work and we commend the Secretariat for its contributions and efforts to promote the acceptance of, and adherence to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We would like to affirm our belief that in as much as application of safeguards has been accorded importance, the same priority should be accorded to disarmament as an important measure towards the creation of a world free of nuclear weapons. Therefore we call for the universal application of the safeguards regime and at the same time meaningful action to ensure nuclear disarmament.

I am also pleased to inform you that Namibia has finalized the *Regulations for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and the Safety of Radiation Sources*. This paves the way for the full operationalization of the Atomic Energy and Radiation Protection Act, which provides the regulatory framework for radioactive and nuclear material. We are also pleased that the current legislation and regulations have been modeled to conform closely to the standards and recommendations of the Agency. We are committed to undertake a regular self-assessment of the regulatory infrastructure to ensure that we maintain the highest levels of regulatory practices. Namibia is a strong proponent of regional networks and therefore encourages the strengthening of partnerships at bilateral level and within the regional framework. For this reason we support the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa and we hope to reinforce this approach at the sub-regional level. The IAEA is called upon to stimulate and promote this cooperative mechanism to enhance inter-collaboration among member states.

Mr. Chairman,

Human resources are vital to the successful development of our priority initiatives. In this regard we welcome and commend the support of the IAEA to build teaching and research capabilities at institutions of higher learning in Namibia. The IAEA has been instrumental in supporting the development of expertise in specialized areas of nuclear technology

support and we hope that this support shall continue from strength to strength.

In conclusion, Mr. President, The challenges we face are not insurmountable as was proved by Japan, and we are confident that with a multilateral approach in which all parties enjoy equal status and mutual benefit we can secure a good future for our people around the world. Once again Namibia conveys to the government and people of Japan our heartfelt condolences and sympathy.

I thank you.