

Brief introductory remarks by Amb. J. Enkhsaikhan, Temporary President  
at the opening of the 55<sup>th</sup> General Conference

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It is a great honor for me to open this 55<sup>th</sup> General Conference, which has a rich and promising agenda. The past session has adopted many important and forward-looking decisions that promote the goals of ensuring freedom from fear and freedom from want not only for the member states of the Agency but well beyond. These decisions were a product of careful, constructive discussions and close consultations among delegates, regional and other groups, with expert input by the Secretariat. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their collaboration and cooperation. I have no doubt that the same spirit will also prevail at this conference and enable it to be very productive.

Since the last conference we have all witnessed events that will have a great impact on the Agency, its members and the international community in general. First and foremost, the Fukushima nuclear accident has demonstrated how devastating can mother nature's powers be and how climate change is affecting us all. There is no guarantee that such multiple mega disasters would not be repeated. The nuclear accident was a wake-up call with respect to safety and security of nuclear power plants, including emergency cooling systems and spent fuel pools. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Agency and its Director General for having taken the necessary measures to assist the Government of Japan and to keep the Agency's membership aware of the evolving situation at and around the Fukushima Daichi NPP.

Despite this accident, the projection of future use of nuclear power is high. Due to increasing global demand for energy for development and the needs for addressing the challenges of the climate change for the environment, the interest in pursuing nuclear energy is high, especially among the nuclear newcomers. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Security held in June and the Action Plan, approved last week by the Board of Governors which is being presented to this Conference for endorsement, envisage important concrete practical measures. There is no doubt that strict implementation of the Action Plan would contribute greatly to strengthening safety at nuclear facilities and in the world in general.

The Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications shows that much is being done to address such issues as fighting cancer, supporting the African Union's Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication campaign (AU-PATTEC), making greater use of isotope hydrology, developing innovative nuclear technology, small and medium-sized reactors as well as human resource training and capacity building. As the report to this Conference points out, to be more effective, there is a need to further contribute to the Technical Cooperation Fund and other sources so as to advance the goals, programs and concrete cooperation projects. In this respect contributions made through the Peaceful Uses Initiative is most welcome and would surely benefit many member states.

The third major area of activity of the Agency - safeguards and verification - is also witnessing some encouraging signs. The IAEA is not only a technical agency that is called upon to play an increasing role in promoting freedom from fear or want, or just a watch-dog. It is also called upon to play an important role in promoting the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as reflected in the decisions and resolutions of two main UN bodies, of this Agency or those of the NPT review conferences. Mindful of the role that the Agency can play in promoting nuclear non-proliferation, I think that this General Conference can take decisions that could promote favorable political conditions for convening in 2012 of an international conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The understanding reached by the Director General with the states concerned to convene in November a forum on Experience of Possible Relevance to the Creation of a NWFZ in the Middle East is to be welcomed and supported. Besides the background documentation to be prepared for the 2012 conference, this could be yet another contribution to the successful convening of that conference.

On this positive note I wish this conference a productive work and a successful outcome.