Speech of

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Foreign Minister
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on
Nuclear Safety and Security (NSS)

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Mr. President,

Allow me to begin by extending to you my heartiest congratulations on your election as the President of this meeting. I also thank His Excellency Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his kind initiative to hold this vital discussion today on nuclear safety and security.

Mr. President,

Nuclear energy today is considered as the world's principal source of pollution-free energy. "Nuclear energy has a future in the low-carbon world" was one of the main messages of the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held at the IAEA Headquarters in Austria this June. This is a fuel source with holds tremendous potential, particularly with a rapidly growing world population eventually facing a global energy crisis of fossil fuels. Nuclear energy can create electric power with economic and ecological advantages. Civil nuclear applications can greatly help in agricultural production by developing plant varieties able to cope with different weather situations and by fighting deadly diseases like cancer. While development of new technologies like electric cars can put further strain on our fossil fuel supplies, the abundance of Uranium and Thorium in the nature can guarantee nuclear power for many centuries for mankind. Efficiency wise, other sources of renewable energy like wind and solar power may not be viable enough compared to nuclear power. Very few countries are blessed with hydro-power. In short, nuclear energy is a definite choice for future generations.

Mr. President,

While it is beyond doubt that the future lies in a smooth supply of clean energy such as nuclear energy, it also imperative that we ensure a proper safety and security regime for nuclear energy. Major nuclear accidents over the years, of which the tragic accident of Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant is vivid in our minds, have raised our concerns. Lessons derived from these accidents tell us that international harmonization is essential to strengthen nuclear power plant safety and security. We must continuously make efforts to achieve a safe, secured and effective plant design and other support activities like nuclear fuel cycle, radioactive and spent fuel management and storage facilities. At every stage of the nuclear power programme, the aspects of nuclear safety and security must be considered without compromising on the grounds of cost or any other consideration. Establishment of systems to cope with the coincidence of a nuclear accident and a massive natural disaster and improvement of communication mechanisms with relevant organizations must be in place. Safety standards as formulated by IAEA should be strictly adhered to and these should be continuously reviewed, strengthened and implemented through cooperation at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. I also call upon IAEA to provide constant guidance and expertise to the Member States.

All States, regulatory authorities, operators and suppliers should ensure continuous technical and scientific support, training and recent updates to the human resources or personnel associated with the operation of the nuclear plant. The recent Fukushima accident undoubtedly reiterates, once again, the need for a strengthened system of national, regional and international emergency preparedness and response as well as for strengthened cooperation among national regulatory authorities and among relevant international organizations. This exchange of information may be given an institutional structure under IAEA.
We have several international legal frameworks regarding safety and security of civil use of nuclear energy. However, if it is felt necessary, we may further strengthen the existing legal frameworks with the recommendation of IAEA.

We may also consider extending the present capacity of the Integrated Incident and Emergency Centre (IEC) under IAEA to cater to the needs of the developing countries and especially the LDCs to deal with any crisis and post-crisis rehabilitation efforts. We hope that the IAEA will generate a Nuclear Security Fund on a voluntary contribution to support its Member States in any nuclear crisis situation.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh has firm confidence in the IAEA and its guidelines and other safety measures. We have full support and strong commitment in implementation of nuclear conventions, cooperation on safety standards and harmonization of safety approaches under the leadership of the IAEA. To strengthen international co-operation in the Nuclear Safety and Security regime, we have signed all relevant international treaties, agreements and protocols such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety, Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Amendment thereto. The country has endorsed international instruments in the nuclear non-proliferation and verification regime such as, NPT, Safeguards Agreements, Additional Protocol and CTBT. We are also fully committed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Bangladesh believes that the full implementation of international conventions on nuclear safety and security, the commitment to promote nuclear safety standards and security guidelines as well as the increased use of integrated review services are important prerequisites for the world’s community to establish a global nuclear safety and security partnership. We call upon all states to join, as appropriate, and implement the respective international instruments.

Mr. President,

Since independence, Bangladesh has made significant progress towards achievements in the Socio-economic sectors. However, we are still short of realizing the true growth potential due to inadequate infrastructure and lack of energy sources. Our government under “Vision 2021” has pledged to achieve a “Digital Bangladesh” transforming the country into a knowledge-based and technology driven digitized middle income country by 2021. Like many others, Bangladesh considers nuclear power as the most efficient clean energy. To meet the rising demand for power for materializing “Vision 2021” and to ensure energy security, our government has embarked on building the country’s first nuclear power plant at Roop Pur in the north-west of the country. While building this and other reactors in future, our focus will be to equip these reactors with advanced inherent safety features, complimented with the latest safety codes and capable of tolerating any severe man-made or natural events such as earthquakes, tsunami and floods.

Mr. President,

We look towards a future when the use of nuclear energy is safe, peaceful and accessible by all nations. A future where we have new frameworks for cooperation and harmonization through which the world can accelerate nuclear energy assistance while preserving the Earth's environment. For, surely, Humanity should be the ultimate beneficiary of nuclear power – a divine blessing of nature.

I thank you all.