STATEMENT
BY
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at the
High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security

New York, 22 September 2011
Mr. Chairman,

At the very outset, allow me to thank Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for organizing a high-level meeting on nuclear safety and security at the 66th session of the General Assembly. The initiative to launch a United Nations system-wide study on the implications of the Fukushima accident is a step in the right direction. The issues of nuclear safety and security are paramount for the international community, regions, states and their populations.

Accidents can happen anywhere at any time. Preparedness is therefore vital. This year, as we commemorated the 25th anniversary of the tragic accident in Chernobyl, we witnessed a nuclear disaster unfold in Fukushima after an earthquake and the ensuing tsunami of unprecedented severity. Allow me to extend the expression of deepest sympathy to the people of Japan who suffered and fought to mitigate the consequences of this tragic event.

If the past is ignored, the civil nuclear energy renaissance, leading to an extensive civilian use of nuclear energy, will increase the possibility of accidents. Appropriate measures must be introduced in order to increase safety and prevent history from repeating. The international community should consider appropriate and comprehensive management of nuclear energy and address the importance of the 3S' – safeguards, security and safety.

These are crucial and vital for the successful work of the IAEA, which should remain the core and fundamental international organization addressing, shaping, implementing and monitoring safeguards, security and safety.

The IAEA should be encouraged to review and strengthen, as appropriate, its safety standards in all key areas. This year, the IAEA organized the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety, which stressed that safety standards represent the common reference for nuclear safety. However, not all Member States apply them, and those States that do apply them may not always implement them fully. Universal adherence to these standards is vital. The IAEA should also play a leading role in the development of safety review standards and assist in carrying out peer reviews of national safety reviews. This goes also for receiving and disseminating information. The legal instruments for the international emergency preparedness and response framework, namely the Early Notification and Assistance Conventions, were adopted 25 years ago. Now we must consider possible ways of enhancing these instruments. The strengthening of the global nuclear safety framework is essential to ensure the highest level of nuclear safety in every state using nuclear energy.

Proposals have been put forward to amend the Convention on Nuclear Safety. It is important that the Convention continues to reflect the demands of our time and requirements as regards regulatory independence.
In the future, the nuclear industry and governmental institutions will need to enhance collaboration and assume a greater role in nuclear safety management.

Mr. Chairman,

Slovenia has always attached great importance to improving and strengthening the emergency preparedness and response worldwide. We were among the first EU countries to meet the WENRA (West European Nuclear Regulator's Association) action plan, completing the harmonization process in the area of nuclear safety requirements.

Following the Fukushima accident, the European Council immediately initiated the preparation of specifications for stress tests, which are mandatory for all EU NPPs.

After the adoption of the specifications by ENSREG and the European Commission, the SNSA immediately issued the decision for the Krško NPP to execute the stress analysis in accordance with the adopted specifications. Even before the stress tests, the Slovenian authorities started preparing a program of improvements.

The IAEA technical co-operation provides essential support to Member States in every region. In the past year, Slovenia hosted nine IAEA regional workshops, training courses, meetings, and seminars. In addition, Slovenian organizations and institutions organized trainings for IAEA fellows from different developing countries. Despite financial restrictions we will endeavor to pledge our share to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Fund, as we did in previous years.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.