Statement by
The Islamic Republic of Iran on Nuclear Safety
Main Committee III of the 2010 NPT Review Conference
New York, 13 May 2010

Mr. Chairman,

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the issue of nuclear safety. Indeed, we have been an active member during negotiations leading to two main instruments namely “Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident” and “Convention on Assistance in Case of Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency” which both are related to Chernobyl accident. Iran has ratified both Conventions.

However, we are of the firm belief that nuclear safety and security should be distinguished while discussing on the responsibility of IAEA. The nuclear security remains a national responsibility of each State to take necessary measures and arrangements to protect its nuclear material and facilities.

Over the last few years, nuclear security have received higher attention and resources compared to nuclear safety which constitutes an important responsibility of the IAEA as stipulated in Statute of the Agency. Therefore, while noting the current activities of the IAEA with regard to nuclear security,
we would like to emphasize that nuclear security is not a statutory function of the Agency.

In our view, nuclear safety should constitute one of the essential elements of any national nuclear programme. It should be borne in mind that the Agency plays a key role in this field, as stipulated in Article III of the Statute of IAEA.

The Islamic of Republic of Iran believes that as the introduction of nuclear technologies and its application increasingly expand, vigilance and concrete actions to enhance nuclear safety including the development of inherently safe technologies should be pursued vigorously.

The Islamic Republic of Iran shares the view that the primary responsibility for the safety and security of nuclear and other radioactive materials rests with the member States. We reiterate that nuclear safety and security considerations should not unduly hamper the development and utilization of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

An adequate nuclear safety infrastructure is essential for any nuclear power programme. The assistance in capacity building that IAEA provides in this regard is of utmost importance, especially for developing countries. Iran would like to stress the central role of the IAEA, owing to its mandatory functions and long experience. It is a matter of concern that in several occasions developing countries have been deprived from participation in international workshops and seminars related to nuclear safety due to unjustified political motivations. We found it unproductive. Therefore, we are of the view that the Agency should serve as a forum to allow full participation of its members in its activities.

Iran also commends IAEA for providing member States the platform to share safety experiences. These activities of IAEA should be continued and strengthened in this regard.
On the transfer denials of radioactive sources under the pretext of nuclear security, we express our concern that despite the international efforts, the systematic denials and delays in transfer of nuclear material, equipment and technology affect all peaceful nuclear programmes of developing countries. That's why we expect this committee should address transfer denials in a way that states parties' access to nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purpose, as enshrined in the statute of the Agency and article IV of the Treaty, is ensured without any discrimination.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me touch upon the issue of safety of radioactive waste management and disposal. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that confidence in the safety of radioactive waste management and disposal arrangements are among the important factors contributing to the public acceptance of nuclear energy.

To establish a balance between security concerns and the socio-economic requirements for development, especially for developing countries, Article IV of the Treaty guarantees “the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty” and provides for an undertaking by all parties to the Treaty “to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy”. This Article also plays a crucial role as the main incentive set forth to encourage non-nuclear-weapon States to join the Treaty and thereby foster the non-proliferation regime.