

OPENING ADDRESS by the President of the Conference

By H.E. Ambassador Hamad Alkaabi, UAE Permanent Representative to the IAEA

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF RADIOACTIVE SOURCES:

MAINTAINING THE CONTINUOUS GLOBAL CONTROL OF SOURCES THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFE CYCLE

ABU DHABI - 27 OCTOBER 2013

Your Excellency's, Deputy Director General of the IAEA Dr. Flory, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of the UAE Government and the Board of Management of the Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation, I welcome you to the Conference on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates.

The UAE Government, through the Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation, is pleased to host this Conference. FANR was created in 2009 as a part of the UAE's commitment to assuring the highest standards of safety and security in the development of its nuclear programme. This commitment to highest international standards in safety and security also extends to regulation and oversight of the applications of radioactive sources, which is a task given to FANR under the UAE Nuclear Law.

I am especially honoured to be the President of this Conference. The last time such a comprehensive international conference on the safety and security of radioactive sources was convened was in 2005 in Bordeaux. So it is certainly timely to meet again and to review the progress and the further challenges that lie ahead in this area.

This is not to say that the subject has been neglected in the interim. Both the Nuclear Security Summits held in Washington in 2010 and in Seoul in 2012 discussed the need for States to secure radioactive sources. The more recent Ministerial Declaration adopted at the international conference on nuclear security held in Vienna in July 2013 encouraged states to maintain effective security of radioactive sources throughout their life cycle.

Discussions concerning radioactive sources at that conference also resulted in some conclusions and recommendations that will, no doubt, be further examined at this meeting. The IAEA has continued to promote and support the safety of radioactive sources through its ongoing development of safety standards and their promulgation through technical support activities.

In relation to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its associated Import/Export Guidance, which is now a decade old, we will hear from some of the originators of the Code on its past, present and possible future development. Also, hearing from countries about their successes and challenges in implementing the Code and Guidance should prove very valuable. Ways in which implementation of the Code has been supported by regional initiatives will be a topic of special interest.

The UAE has recently made officially its political commitment to follow the guidance in the Code of Conduct and the Import/Export Guidance. Nonetheless, the UAE has, as a matter of fact, followed the guidance of the

Code for some time. This is demonstrated through the description of our implementation of the Code described in our national report submitted to this Conference.

Whenever the topic of safety and security of radioactive sources is discussed, the issue of the long term management of and funding for disused sources arises. The absence of clear routes for the safe and secure handling of disused sources, including legacy sources, is a vulnerability of the existing international system. The long title of this Conference 'maintaining continuous global control of sources throughout their life cycle' reminds us that the life cycle of control needs to include the end-of-useful-life stage.

Here in the UAE, we believe that we have made progress in securing the radioactive sources used in our industries. You will hear about FANR's regulations both for the safety and security of radioactive sources. More importantly, you will hear about the practical arrangements we are implementing, working with licensees, to see that effective security plans and arrangements are put in place; both for sources at company headquarters and in the field; and also in transport.

FANR is completing the establishment of a national register of sources consistent with the guidance in the Code. We look forward to hearing of the experiences of others in establishing national registers and using them effectively.

The fact that the UAE has only built its industrial capacities in relatively recent times means that we are not faced with many significant legacy sources, such as large radium sources. But, like every other country, we are in the UAE putting much efforts in addressing the challenges related to dealing with disused and orphan sources. FANR has been given the mandate to develop a national orphan source strategy, which necessarily must also encompass disused sources. We will be looking towards some of the discussion in this Conference to assist us in finalising that strategy.

As President of the Conference, I look forward to hearing the discussion on these topics and to taking on the task of presenting President's findings for the Conference. I am sure that, in addition to reviewing the past work, we will want to point to directions for the future. The challenge of sustaining safety and security in the longer term, in countries both developed and developing will also be an important matter to address.

Finally, I look forward to hosting delegates at the Conference dinner on Wednesday, when discussions can be more informal. I also hope that many of you will have some extra time to take in the sights of Abu Dhabi and the UAE and experience the hospitality and culture of this country.