Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, on Agenda Item 14: “Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)” in the Plenary of the 59th UNGA, on 01 November 2004

Mr. President,

Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to a dear friend, Dr. M. El Baradei, Director General of the IAEA for presenting the Agency's Annual Report. The International Atomic Energy Agency continues to perform a commendable role, under the dynamic stewardship of Dr. Baradei, contributing to peace and security and socio-economic development, in an increasingly complex and challenging international environment. We assure Dr. Baradei and his team of our full support.

Mr. President,

2. We agree with the Agency's assessment that global socio-economic development needs will require large increase in the supply of energy in the coming decades. The role of nuclear energy will therefore be crucial in supplying part of this requirement especially in view of its environment-friendliness and sustainability, which is needed for development, especially in the developing countries.

3. The Agency has projected a 20% increase in global nuclear generation until 2020. We note with interest that most of this increase would be required by Asia since out of 31 reactors currently under construction worldwide, 20 are located in Asia. 19 of the 28 reactors to be connected to the grids are in the Far East and South Asia. The pace of the construction of these reactors could be further increased if states are not subjected to undue restrictions. With innovative technologies, “safe” nuclear power plants are a reality and could be constructed in energy-deficient developing countries. In this regard, the IAEA's role in the transfer of safe technology to developing countries has assumed added significance. We hope that the Agency would formulate a comprehensive policy towards this end.

Mr. President,

4. The Government of Pakistan attaches highest importance to the Technical Cooperation Programme of the Agency as it offers unique opportunities to the developing countries for prosperity and economic growth with the availability of easy and affordable sources of energy. In view of Pakistan's limited fossil fuel resources and the need to balance between the risks of industrial pollution and our economic growth, we consider nuclear power generation as an indispensable element of our national energy strategy. For over 30 years, Pakistan has enjoyed an excellent operational and safety record of its two nuclear power plants, KANUPP and CHASNUPP. The existence of a reliable infrastructure relevant to the nuclear power plants has enabled us to commence work on another nuclear power station – CHASNUPP II.

5. Pakistan's future nuclear power generation activities are not confined to the installation of more power plants only, but extend to the utilization of some of these facilities for powering desalination plants. As a result of collaborative efforts with the IAEA, a desalination unit at KANUPP is in service since 2000 which produces about 450 cubic meters of fresh water per day by desalinating seawater.

Mr. President,

6. The Agency has also played a commendable role in the health sector – especially in the treatment of cancer and tuberculosis. In the agriculture sector too, innovative technologies have helped in the protection of crops and enhancing agricultural productivity. A sustained effort would
be required to allocate more resources to the IAEA to carry out further research work in health and agriculture sectors which could immensely reduce hunger, disease and poverty in the world.

7. Pakistan is also applying nuclear sciences for the development of health, agriculture, and reclamation of wasteland. We appreciate the growing cooperation between Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and the IAEA in this field. Pakistan has established its 13th nuclear medical center this year. We are working on setting up 5 more such centers including the country’s first PET diagnostic facility in Pakistan. In agriculture, our centers continue to evolve new crop varieties. We have established 5 demonstration farms to utilize salinity-affected lands. Pakistan is also interested in playing a substantive role in the international effort to promoting the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycle (INPRO) so that Pakistan could benefit from the safe, cost effective and proliferation resistant nuclear power plants in future.

Mr. President,

8. We are highly sensitive to the safety and security of our nuclear installations, particularly as we are extending our nuclear power generation for economic development. Pakistan has successfully established a strong safety culture in its nuclear activities. We are diligently adhering to the principles of Nuclear Safety Convention, which Pakistan had signed at the time of its inception. We have further strengthened security measures around our nuclear installations to avoid any possibility of sabotage or illicit acquisition or trafficking of nuclear material. We will continue our active participation in the Agency’s initiative to strengthen the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM). We are desirous of an early conclusion of the deliberations on this Convention with the hope that this important Convention will establish more comprehensive obligations globally regarding physical protection of nuclear materials as well as nuclear facilities. We have, however, made it clear that any provisions in the new Convention which can be construed as legitimizing attacks on nuclear facilities are against international law and morality. This issue requires a satisfactory solution.

9. As part of our efforts to augment the safety and security of nuclear installations and to prevent WMD proliferation, we have undertaken additional measures. These include:

- Effective steps, in cooperation with the international community, to eliminate an underground proliferation network which had its tentacles in two dozen countries. We have cooperated closely with the IAEA in this endeavour. We urge other concerned countries to do likewise.

- Wide ranging measures to ensure foolproof security for its nuclear and strategic assets. Four years ago, we established a Nuclear Command and Control Authority which is responsible for Pakistan’s strategic assets. These assets are vital for our strategic deterrence posture. There is no question of their falling into the wrong hands.

- The creation of a Nuclear Regulatory Authority in 2001 for the safe operation of civilian nuclear plants.

- Pakistan has elaborated legislation to implement its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention since 2000.

- Last month, Pakistan’s Parliament promulgated a comprehensive Export Control Act to deal with nuclear and biological weapons, material, goods, technologies, equipment and their means of delivery. Salient elements of our new law include: prohibition of diversion of controlled goods and technologies, including re-export, transshipment and transit; licensing and record keeping; export control lists and penal provisions of up to 14 years
imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 5 million. We are confident that there will be no proliferation of WMD from Pakistan.

Mr. President,

10. The safety and verification aspects of the IAEA mandate remain important pillars of the Agency’s mandate. The Agency has initiated action with regard to the safety of nuclear materials. There is need to focus attention on securing “orphan” sources of such materials which pose an immediate danger of falling into the wrong hands. The Agency’s report highlights this aspect and we fully agree with the remedial measures suggested in this regard.

11. As regards the strengthening of the Agency’s safeguards system, Pakistan believes that the maintenance of a proper balance between the promotional aspects and safety or security related concerns in all of the Agency’s functions is essential. Pakistan believes that States must fully comply with their respective safeguards obligations. At the same time, the Agency’s safeguards should not be used to serve partisan political objectives. Its verification regime could remain credible only if it is applied on a non-discriminatory basis, as stipulated in the Agency’s Statutes. Cooperation and greater understanding is required among all the Member States of the Agency to advance the Agency’s mandate on the basis of impartiality, equity and professionalism.

Mr. President,

12. The Agency’s role should be consistent with its Statutes. Proposals for reform should be within the scope of its Statute. The IAEA is not an investigative agency. It cannot be asked to perform tasks, which are beyond the scope of its Statute or not approved by its Membership. Any reform in the Agency should be non-discriminatory, inclusive and take into account the differentiated nature of obligations of member states. Finally, such reforms should not undermine the balance between the promotional role of the Agency and safety or security related concerns involved in the IAEA’s functions.

Mr. President,

13. We all have great expectations with the IAEA in the promotion of socio-economic development of its Member States. The Agency’s technical cooperation requires a reassessment of its current framework whereby it can render assistance to the Member States on non-discriminatory and equitable basis. Apart from ensuring “balance” between the promotional aspects and verification, safety and security related functions of the Agency, the following measures could help in enhancing its contribution to socio-economic development:-

One: Preservation of its technical nature and preventing the politicization of its agenda;

Two: A greater emphasis on the technical cooperation activities of the Agency and its contribution to the development and practical application of atomic energy for peaceful uses and technology transfers to developing countries.

Three: Allocation of larger and more assured resources for technical cooperation activities, technology transfer and training facilities for the developing countries.

Four: Greater involvement of the developing countries in the design and implementation of Technical Cooperation projects and increased outsourcing to developing Member States for its Technical Cooperation Programme.
I thank you, Mr. President.