

Mr Chair, excellences, dear colleagues,

Thank you Belarus for your hospitality and for your well organized hosting of these meetings.

Norway would like to congratulate the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol with the many achievements since the previous Meeting of the Parties, and with the preparation of many important decisions, including on a very ambitious work plan, for the next period. We would also take this opportunity to thank the Secretariat for its efforts, and the Bureau, the Working Group and the Implementation Committee for the good work done.

As you may be aware, Norway has strongly supported the Convention since it was first proposed in Warsaw back in 1989, and entered into force at the first Meeting of the Parties, which Norway had the honour of hosting in Oslo in 1997. Norway also had the privilege of chairing the negotiations that resulted in the SEA Protocol. We have also been one of the main financial contributors to the work under the Convention.

These instruments are now at a stage where they every day must prove their value in real terms, also in the case of Norway. The importance of these instruments in avoiding or solving transboundary environmental issues between neighbouring states must not be underestimated.

We take note of the many issues relating to nuclear energy projects. Norway encourages Parties to be inclusive regarding notifications and have a good dialogue with neighbouring states. Parties must ensure that nuclear safety, security and regulatory control adhere to international standards.

Norway would like to continue its support of the Treaties. Norway has therefore decided to propose a candidate for membership in the Bureau for the next intersessional period.

To our understanding the Convention and Protocol play an essential part in improving international cooperation, and in integrating environmental concerns into development activities. This helps to facilitate environmentally sound and sustainable development. An effective application of the Convention and Protocol is likely to contribute to the achievement of relevant Sustainable Development Goals. Norway is satisfied with the Minsk declaration and we are of the opinion that this text is an important outcome from the Meetings.

To conclude, the Government of Norway will continue to give backing, both financially and politically, to the work under the Convention and Protocol. We look forward to successful and fruitful discussions and exchanges over the next intersessional period.

Thank you very much.