

Minister of Climate and the Environment, Mr Kai Mykkänen, Finland

National Statement by Finland, November 26, 2024 at the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme

Ministers, Ambassadors, Director General, ladies and gentlemen

- This meeting is timely and much needed. It is a great pleasure and an honour to chair this important Ministerial Conference.
- This conference marks a great opportunity to discuss nuclear science, technologies and applications in the global context. There is still a lot of work to be done in making the most out of various nuclear applications. We need to utilize nuclear solutions for the benefit for all people around the globe.
- Nuclear technologies and applications can save lives, prevent food and water crises and mitigate climate change. All these are extremely essential objectives when developing and deploying various kinds of nuclear technologies and applications.
- This conference has attracted a very distinguished and high-level attendance from all parts of the world. This shows the importance of the theme and huge demand for nuclear applications to be deployed in our countries.

Director General Grossi,

- Let me express my full support to the IAEA's work. I commend the Director General Grossi and the IAEA Secretariat for their independent and professional work.
- There are so many ways how The IAEA supports nuclear science, technologies and applications. One of the main mechanisms to support these solutions in the Member States is the IAEA's technical cooperation (TC) programme.
- The objective of the TC programme is to promote tangible socio-economic impact in areas where the peaceful application of nuclear technology holds a comparative advantage, including in human health, food and agriculture, water and the environment, industrial applications and energy. This is a programme that the Finnish Government strongly supports.
- I want to express support to the IAEA's work concerning the nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine. Safety and security of peaceful nuclear facilities should be guaranteed even in the event of an armed conflict.

Dear colleagues,

- Climate change poses a significant global challenge, and nuclear energy plays a crucial role in addressing it. Finland is dedicated to achieving its climate neutrality objective. Currently, 95% of Finland's electricity generation is free from CO2 emissions, with almost half coming from nuclear energy and the remainder from renewable sources.
- In Finland, we have over 45 years tradition in the successful use of nuclear power. With Olkiluoto 3, Europe's largest power plant, we have been able to secure affordable electricity to our citizens. In the future we might use nuclear energy for district heating and hydrogen production among others. We are also approaching the start of deep geological disposal of spent nuclear fuel, as the first country in the world.

- Nuclear energy is key in building clean, secure and affordable energy systems globally. Nuclear energy could play much more significant role in the future.
- At COP28, over 20 countries including for example Finland and Ghana, launched Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy Capacity by 2050. At COP29, many more countries joined the declaration. The Declaration recognizes the key role of nuclear energy in achieving global net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Nuclear energy could offer a clean energy option for existing nuclear countries and many new countries with nuclear energy programmes starting in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- As we are implementing our current clean energy solutions swiftly, we are also making the most out of other types of nuclear applications.
- I would like to highlight especially the health related applications, such as X-ray, nuclear medicine examinations and radiotherapy. All these methods are absolutely corner stones of our health care. These technologies are saving lives every day.
- It is crucial that the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Member States continue the efforts in ensuring that these technologies become available globally everywhere. We should not lose any lives because of lack of availability of health treatments.
- Nuclear science can also enhance food security in many different ways, for example, with the development of high-yield and disease-resistant crop varieties, or with the application of the Sterile Insect Technique to control agricultural pests.
- Nuclear techniques, such as isotope hydrology, can be employed to manage water resources more effectively. Some of these techniques help to understand groundwater systems and , water quality.

Dear colleagues,

- These kind of examples are showcasing the vast opportunities nuclear science, technologies and applications can provide to us all. We should accelerate our efforts in developing those.
- Finland calls for deeper international collaboration to ensure availability of nuclear applications for all and enabling development of new kinds of nuclear solutions.
- Thank you all.