

STATEMENT BY ESTONIA

60th General Conference of the IAEA

Mr Meelis Münt

Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of the Environment

Vienna, 27 September 2016

Mr President,

On behalf of the Estonian delegation, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of the 60th General Conference. I assure you of our full support and cooperation.

Estonia fully aligns itself with the EU statement delivered by the distinguished delegate of Slovakia. I would like to highlight some key points for Estonia.

Mr President,

We fully recognize the valuable role of the IAEA in the **non-proliferation** regime and in ensuring that nuclear material and technology are used only for peaceful purposes. The IAEA safeguards system is essential for the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). All NPT parties benefit from this safeguards system – it helps to create confidence that facilitates the fullest possible international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Estonia welcomes the implementation of the historical agreement reached between the EU3+3 and Iran on Iran's nuclear programme. We call on Iran to fully adhere to its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and cooperate with the Agency, who has a very special role in verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear related commitments. Hopefully, it will help to contribute to the gradual alleviation of tensions in the region. In order to ensure the necessary means for the IAEA to carry out its task, Estonia has contributed twice. We will also consider a further voluntary contribution in support of this long-term mission.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons still remains a very serious concern. We condemn in the strongest possible terms all nuclear tests conducted by the DPRK. It is of crucial importance that the DPRK complies with its international obligations. We expect a strong resolution of the General Conference to be adopted in this matter.

Mr President,

Nuclear Safety Standards of the IAEA are of great importance in ensuring **nuclear safety** worldwide. Estonia supports all measures that lead to a higher nuclear safety both nationally and internationally.

We recognize the work done by the Agency and its Member States in the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety which has significantly enhanced nuclear safety measures in several countries. We call on all IAEA Member States to ensure the highest levels of safety of nuclear facilities directly affecting their own country, as well as neighbouring countries. Transparency is needed before construction and also during the operation of nuclear facilities.

Estonia has no operating nuclear power reactors. However, we inherited a nuclear submarine training center from the Soviet Union that we are currently using as a radioactive waste storage facility. Long-term studies on safe decommissioning of the former nuclear site ended at the beginning of this year. As a result, on 28 April 2016, our Government adopted a decision to build a final depository for radioactive waste in Estonia by 2040 to ensure a long term safe storage of radioactive waste.

Estonia attaches great importance to the improvement of nuclear safety. Therefore, it is relevant to review and update regulatory framework on nuclear safety on a regular basis. On 1 November 2016, a new Radiation Act will enter into force in Estonia. In addition, we are preparing to transpose the EU Basic Safety Standards Directive and the Nuclear Safety Directive into the national law.

The IAEA's safety peer review missions have proven to be invaluable tools in supporting our national arrangements regarding nuclear and radiation safety. Recently, Estonia welcomed a team of international safety experts to carry out an Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission on behalf of the Agency. The mission was concluded successfully on 14 September, and now we look forward to receiving a final report of the review team.

I would like to thank the Member States who provided experts for the mission, as well as the staff of the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security for their assistance. We invite all IAEA Member States to take full advantage of such missions.

Mr President,

Estonia recognizes the IAEA's central role in strengthening the international **nuclear security** framework through promoting the implementation of relevant international legal instruments, enhancing international cooperation and assisting states in nuclear security capacity building. We are supporting these activities by providing relevant expertise in the field of cybersecurity and continuing with our annual contributions to the Nuclear Security Fund. We look forward to the IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security in December and its outcomes.

Estonia welcomes the entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM). There is no doubt that requirements to establish appropriate physical protection regimes for nuclear material and information sharing help to improve nuclear security globally.

Mr President,

Estonia highly values the **Technical Cooperation Programme** (TCP) of the IAEA and its role in enhancing a responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology and contributing to the socio-economic development all around the world. We appreciate the role of the TCP in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Estonia has benefitted from different projects funded by the Technical Cooperation Fund for more than 20 years now. Through the fruitful technical cooperation with the Agency, we have gained valuable knowledge that we are willing and ready to share with other IAEA Member States. Over the years, we have supported several IAEA workshops and training courses in Estonia. This year, we hosted an IAEA's Radon Workshop and a training course on Radiation Protection in Diagnostic Radiology in Tallinn.

Mr President,

In addition, I would like to assure you of our commitment during the Estonian forthcoming presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2017 to promote high standards related to the activities of the IAEA.

Finally, I want to express our appreciation of the work done by the Secretariat and the Director General. In this connection, I would like to use the opportunity to speak out our confidence in Mr Amano and our support to the Agency in its efforts.

Thank you, Mr President.