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## **SWITZERLAND**

**60th Session of the IAEA General Conference**

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**Address by**

**Mr Walter Steinmann**  
**Secretary of State and Governor for Switzerland**

**Vienna, 26 September 2016**

Mr President,

The Swiss delegation offers you its warmest congratulations on your election as President of the 60th Session of the General Conference of the IAEA, and wishes to assure you of its full support in the performance of the duties of the secretariat.

My delegation is especially pleased to welcome the Republic of Gambia and St Vincent and the Grenadines as new member states of the IAEA.

Mr President

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Agency was unfortunately marked by the 5th nuclear test carried out by the DPRK on 9 September. Switzerland strongly condemns this new test, which goes against the efforts of the international community on nuclear non-proliferation. Switzerland calls on the DPRK to comply with the resolutions of the Security Council such as those of the Agency, to join the NPT and put in place a safeguards agreement with the IAEA. This test demonstrates - if he still needed - the urgent need for early entry into force of a legally binding instrument - the CTBT - to ban nuclear testing once and for all. So we all remember the state listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty to sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

Mr President,

This year the 60th anniversary of the IAEA is also a critical step in nuclear security with the organization by the Agency, in December, its second conference on nuclear security. The resolution on Nuclear Security to be adopted this week and the Ministerial Declaration of December will both report to the international community how much we take for significant continued strengthening of nuclear safety, and this in the manner most comprehensive and most inclusive it is. Indeed, recent months have sadly shown that the threat of terrorism has increased considerably and that nuclear materials and facilities of any kind whatsoever, now part of potential targets. It is therefore urgent that all countries take into account a broader concept of nuclear security.

Mr President,

We have just experienced the decisive years in nuclear safety, including punctuated by the implementation of the 2011 Action Plan, the publication of the Report on Fukushima and the adoption of the Vienna Declaration in February 2015. It is therefore now essential that we bring the mass of this experience to translate it into practical work areas to further strengthen nuclear safety throughout the world. For this reason, Switzerland has supported the introduction last year of a language in resolution nuclear safety in order to give the Secretariat the mandate to develop a strategy for nuclear safety. Such a strategy is also a message of political, to convince the international community of our continued commitment to strengthen nuclear safety throughout the world. Switzerland would strongly that and in this effort, the Agency is seen as the driving force. Indeed, after the Fukushima accident, several states have taken steps to strengthen their nuclear safety at national or regional level. It is essential that the strategic vision of the Agency reflects these developments equivalently.

Mr President,

Switzerland supports the notion of evolution of the safeguards system and the implementation of the concept of the approach at the state, called "State-level concept." Face future challenges in verification - that still more facilities, equipment and information to check, all in a constant climate of reluctance to increase budgets - optimization of the safeguards system is indeed a key question for the agency. So it is for the IAEA to optimize its resources, to direct its resources to the folders and areas of greater sensitivity in terms of nuclear proliferation. The "state-level concept" must therefore mean the continuation of the status quo under another label, but bring real benefits to the Agency and Member States in a concrete way, substantial and measurable.

Mr President,

I would now like to say a few words regarding the use of nuclear energy in the light of Switzerland's proposed new energy policy, "Energy Strategy 2050".

The intention is to decommission the five existing nuclear power plants when they reach the end of their safe service life. They will not be replaced by new nuclear power plants, and no general limitation of service life has been specified. In this context, the operators of the Mühleberg nuclear power plant decided that this facility is to be decommissioned in December 2019 after a service life of 47 years. The main reasons for this decision were economic and political considerations, together with the high level of investment that would have been required in order to assure the safe operation of the facility over the long term.

This decision and various other fundamental changes that have been observed for a number of years, notably in the international energy environment, mean that Switzerland will have to gradually reshape its energy landscape in the period up to 2050. In view of this, the Swiss government drew up a new long-term policy called "Energy Strategy 2050", which Swiss voters will be asked to approve in a referendum to be held in 2017 or 2018.

However, in the coming years Switzerland will continue to have an interest in the further development of the safety and security of existing facilities, as well as in nuclear research and in maintaining its close cooperation with the IAEA.

Mr President,

I would now like to briefly outline the situation regarding the disposal of radioactive waste in Switzerland. In accordance with the Swiss Federal Nuclear Energy Act, the operators of nuclear facilities are obliged to bear the costs for the disposal of their radioactive waste and for the decommissioning of their nuclear power plants. For these purposes, two separate funds were set up.

In the light of recent developments, however, it has become apparent that the financing requirements for these two funds will be higher than originally assumed. The main reason for this is that the technical costs are higher than expected. In view of this situation, our government decided to increase the annual financial contributions to be paid in by the operators by 30 percent as of 2015.

Mr President,

With respect to the end storage of radioactive waste, the search for suitable sites for a deep geological repository within the scope of a three-stage programme was initiated in 2008. After selecting two potentially suitable sites for end storage, we are now in stage two of the process. The proposals are currently being examined by the relevant federal authorities and various expert groups, and have also been submitted to the site cantons and regions for comment. In specially set up regional conferences, the involved cantons have an opportunity to evaluate aspects such as the comprehensibility of the proposals and the progress of the site selection procedure to date. During this stage, Switzerland will also be holding talks with Germany and Austria.

Mr President,

For Switzerland, and in my capacity as Governor and for my delegation, it is again an honour to actively participate on the Board of Governors and to support the IAEA with resulting benefits for both sides.

To conclude, Mr President, on behalf of my delegation I wish to express my sincerest thanks to the employees of the secretariat and of the Director General, Mr Amano, for the high quality of the work they have carried out throughout the past year.

Mr President, thank you very much for your kind attention.