

## **STATEMENT BY ESTONIA**

### **62nd General Conference of the IAEA**

**Mr Meelis Münt**

**Secretary General of the Ministry of the Environment**

**Vienna, 18 September 2018**

**Madam 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 62nd General Conference. I assure you our full support and cooperation.

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

**Madam President,**

Estonia fully recognizes 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. We support universal implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons which is the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and stress the essence of the IAEA safeguards system in this process.

Estonia continues to support the implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the IAEA's long term mission of verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear related commitments. Estonia has also made voluntary contributions for assisting IAEA's verification activities in Iran.

DPRK's missiles and nuclear weapons constitute a threat to global peace and security. The inter-Korean high-level talks and the Summit in Singapore between the US and the DPRK were positive steps that can contribute to easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. We hope that the DPRK will engage in the follow-up negotiations and takes concrete steps to

begin on a credible path towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation and maintain its declared suspension of testing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

**Madam President,**

Estonia welcomes the decision of the Director General to devote this year's Scientific Forum to Climate issues. Although Estonian National Energy Development Plan until 2030 does not foresee using nuclear energy, we acknowledge the fact that some countries have decided to use nuclear energy to prevent or reduce greenhouse gases emissions in order to mitigate climate change. However, we would like to stress that all new nuclear power plants should be designed, sited, constructed and operated according to International Safety Standards and relevant Conventions. In addition, it is necessary to address undertaken actions in a transparent manner and establish reliable communication between interested parties and neighbouring countries.

**Madam President,**

Nuclear Safety Standards of the IAEA are of great importance in ensuring **nuclear safety** worldwide. Estonia attaches great importance to the improvement of nuclear safety and updates its regulatory framework on regular basis. In this process, the IAEA's safety peer review missions have proven to be invaluable tools in supporting our national arrangements regarding nuclear and radiation safety. Estonia hosted IAEA's Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission in 2016 and currently we are preparing for the IRRS follow-up mission and ARTEMIS mission which are taking place in March and April next year.

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 an interim storage facility for radioactive waste. In 2016, our Government adopted a decision to build a radioactive waste repository into Estonia by 2040 to ensure a long term safe storage of radioactive waste. For this purpose, we are starting to launch site selection and strategic environmental impact assessment procedures in the first months of 2019.

**Madam 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. In the process of digitalisation, it is essential not to underestimate the

need to improve cybersecurity of nuclear facilities and national databases because cyberattacks on nuclear power plants or facilities with high activity sources pose serious threat with potentially catastrophic consequences. Estonia has unique expertise in the development and management of cyber systems and we are willing to share our knowledge with the IAEA.

**Madam 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 Sustainable Development Goals.

Estonia has benefitted from different projects funded by the Technical Cooperation Fund for more than 25 years now. Through the fruitful technical cooperation with the Agency, we have gained valuable knowledge that we are sharing with other IAEA Member States. We have trained IAEA fellows and organized scientific visits and workshops to share our experience and continue to offer our expertise.

**Madam President,**

Finally, I want to express our appreciation of the work done by the Director General and the Secretariat, and we call upon all countries to support the Agency in these efforts.

Thank you, Madam President.