

**Statement by Lina Sabaitienė, Vice-minister of Energy
of the Republic of Lithuania, at the 62nd Session of the
General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

[Madame President / mister Vicepresident], Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate [you Madame President / Mrs. Marta Žiaková], on [the / her] election as the President of the 62nd General Conference. Lithuania would also like to thank the International Atomic Energy Agency Director General and the Secretariat for their professional and impartial work.

Lithuania fully associates itself with the statement made by Austria on behalf of the European Union. In my national capacity, I would like to add the following.

[Madame President./ mister Vicepresident],

International Atomic Energy Agency peer review missions are excellent tools for strengthening nuclear safety during the whole NPP life cycle. The growing demand for the Agency's specialized missions proves confidence in the Agency expertise. We encourage all the countries that have functioning NPPs or are in the process of becoming nuclear power producers to take advantage of these services and exploit them in full extent. The newcomer countries should be especially keen to benefit from the full scope of the Agency services in order to implement the international safety standards properly and follow the best practice. In this regard, the follow-up missions are of crucial importance as they help to ensure that recommended safety improvements are implemented. Beneficiaries of the Agency technical assistance should consider safety requirements and recommendations mandatory and use the follow-up missions to ensure strict adherence to the Agency safety standards.

Implementation of the Agency safety standards should be transparent, comprehensive and responsible starting from the very first stage – selection of proper site. However, we observe some newcomer countries demonstrating a declarative and selective approach towards nuclear safety and interpreting the mission findings for misleading public communication. The site selection procedure for a new NPP shall not

be accomplished in a hurry, inaccuracy and without comprehensive assessment of all possible threats. The selective approach towards safety may put into danger citizens of a respective country as well as neighbouring countries, as consequences of nuclear accidents respect no borders. Therefore, I urge all the member states and the newcomers, first of all, to make full use of the Agency review services and to be focused on safety rather than on the project implementation schedule.

Nuclear energy development has future only if developed with the utmost international responsibility. Clear illustration of irresponsible practices was observed in late September and October of 2017 when elevated levels of Ruthenium 106 in the atmosphere were detected by a number of European countries. The source of the incident still unknown and this uncertainty undermines trust among national authorities, the public and the international community in the context of use of nuclear energy. Therefore, I urge all the member states to take steps to identify the source of the release and to further develop international instruments and practice to avoid similar events in the future.

[Madame President./ mister Vicepresident],

Lithuania stands strongly committed to and supports further strengthening the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is an essential foundation for nuclear disarmament and the basis for development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology. Mutually reinforcing pillars of this agreement are essential in strengthening the Treaty's regime. We encourage DPRK and Iran to return to full and undisputable compliance with the NPT and other relevant agreements in a complete, and verifiable manner.

In addition to nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Lithuania vigorously supports the objective of increasing nuclear security, since new and remaining challenges, such as notion of nuclear terrorism and misuse of nuclear and radioactive material are of immense concern to the international community. This intricate global setting calls for a new, robust and clear security paradigm in managing international cooperation in this area.

To demonstrate our strong commitment to global nuclear security and its enhancement, Lithuania hosted the Agency's International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) mission in Lithuania in October 2017 for the 3rd time. It was a full scope mission, which recognised that Lithuania has established and maintains a robust and comprehensive physical security regime. In this regard we also call all member states to make full use of the Agency's Nuclear Security Advisory services.

Lithuania's Nuclear Security Centre of Excellence has proven very beneficial. Now our country is keen to continuously employ and expand potential of the Center as a full-scale regional capacity-building and training institution in prevention, detection, response, and investigation of nuclear and radiological smuggling. On October 9-11, 2018, our Centre will host a Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) workshop Sentinell II on Developing National Nuclear Security Exercise Programmes.

[Madame President./ mister Vicepresident],

The role of the Agency technical cooperation is being widely recognized and valued. Proper funding of technical cooperation activities is of great importance and we fulfil our commitments to the Technical Cooperation Fund. Lithuania highly values the technical cooperation programme of the Agency, and we are grateful to the Agency for provided possibilities to Lithuanian institutions to strengthen the competence in various areas as well as to share our experience with other countries.

Finally, [Madame President./ mister Vicepresident],

Each country has the right to develop nuclear power but at the same time has the responsibility to do so in a transparent, safe and secure manner. The world should learn from all the lessons of devastating accidents. The role of the Agency in ensuring nuclear safety worldwide should be strengthened, alongside Agency's standards and use of the Agency services should be of a more binding character.

I thank you, [Madame President./ mister Vicepresident]