

Statement of the Head of Delegation of the Slovak Republic

Delivered by Ambassador Peter Mišík, Alternate Head of Delegation and
Permanent Representative of Slovakia

at the 62nd Session of the General Conference
of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

(Vienna, 17-21 September 2018)

Madam President, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Slovak Delegation, let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Madam President, on your election as the President of the 62nd session of the IAEA General Conference. Let me assure of Slovakia's full support in discharging your duties.

My delegation subscribes to the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. In addition, I would like to address some issues in my national capacity that are of particular importance to my country.

Madam President,

Nuclear energy and its peaceful uses remains a long-term priority of strategic importance for Slovakia. Our nuclear power programme and the

production of nuclear energy continues to have an important and stable position in the Slovak energy mix and it constitutes one of the main pillars of our national Energy Policy. Two new additional units are currently being constructed and will be soon commissioned at the Mochovce site. With the finalisation of these additional units, Slovak nuclear power programme will provide for sufficient energy generating capacity for the country in the years to come, thus significantly enhancing our national energy security and security of supply.

Moreover, in order to fight climate change, Slovakia is fully committed to the task of cutting greenhouse gas emissions, in line with the EU 2030 Climate and Energy Framework and the EU's commitment under the Paris Agreement. To this end, nuclear energy, as a clean source of energy, provides for a sustainable solution and is an indispensable tool for the attainment of the abovementioned targets in my country.

Today, there are 453 nuclear power reactors in operation in 30 countries, which provide for about 11% of the world's electricity and a third of all low carbon electricity. Slovakia welcomes the steady continuous growth in use of nuclear power, particularly in developing countries with increasing electricity demands.

As for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Slovakia commends the Agency's continuous efforts to identify linkages or inter-connections and to align, where appropriate, its statutory functions and main objectives with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). The provision of the IAEA assistance to the Member States in using nuclear technologies and applications represents a direct contribution to the attainment of 9 of the 17 SDG's.

Madam President,

The use of nuclear energy goes hand in hand with a robust and rigorous application of nuclear safety. Although nuclear safety is a responsibility of each State, we recognize the central role of the IAEA in promoting nuclear safety and coordinating international efforts, including through sharing experiences and best practices. Furthermore, Slovakia supports the Agency's efforts aimed at globalizing nuclear safety by networking, integrating safety-related activities, assisting Member States in the implementation of the IAEA Safety Standards, and promoting adherence to the relevant international nuclear safety-related conventions – in particular the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Management of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste.

At this year's 6th Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management Slovakia has actively participated in the reporting and peer review process. Apart from the identification of measures to improve safety and the overarching issues, Contracting Parties collectively reaffirmed the key importance of the Joint Convention in creating awareness about challenges related to spent fuel and radioactive waste management. Several good practices and areas of good performance were identified for Slovakia.

I am pleased to inform that national nuclear and radiation safety infrastructure was further strengthened in my country with the adoption of Act No. 87/2018 Coll. on Radiation Protection. By this the provisions of the Euratom BSS Directives were fully transposed into the Slovak legislation. In practical terms, this Act has further enhanced the regulations of activities in the field of protection of health of the population and the environment in all areas of ionizing

radiation use. The Act on Radiation Protection represents a new approach to regulating and monitoring the use of different types of ionizing radiation sources, as well as providing radiation protection services.

Madam President,

My delegation fully supports the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme, through which, in a non-discriminatory way and in accordance with the Agency's Statute, the provision of services and technical assistance to the Member States is conducted. In our view, the TC programme is central in supporting the use of nuclear science, applications and technology with an aim to promote tangible socioeconomic progress.

Slovakia strives from the benefits of the IAEA technical assistance and capacity building in the areas such as the development of new research infrastructures, nuclear power programme expansion, decommissioning of NPPs, and improvement of research and analytical capabilities. In this regard, the provision of know-how, experts, fellowships/trainings and instrumentation through the TCP is an invaluable contribution. A good example of this is the construction of a modern Centre for Nuclear and Accelerator Technologies (CENTA) at the Comenius University in Bratislava, co-financed by European Structural Funds. To briefly highlight some of the Centre's achievements and activities, thanks to the IAEA support in building of a PIXE/PIGE beam line at the CENTA tandem accelerator laboratory, the researchers from the Comenius University were recently able to study the impact of electromagnetic radiation, simulating mobile phones on rabbit brains, results of which could be of a significant importance for humans.

Needless to say, that a successful implementation of the TC Programme is fully dependent on the sufficient funding. In this respect, my delegation wishes to stress the importance for Member States to pay their contributions to the TCF on

time and in full, so that its resources would be sufficient, assured and predictable. We welcome the Rate of Attainment of 97,7% on payments to the TCF reached in 2017.

At last, Slovakia wishes to underline and reaffirm its support to the work and activities conducted by the Group of Friends for Women in Nuclear in achieving the goals of strengthening the position and increasing the number of qualified female experts in the field of nuclear energy, including at all levels within the IAEA Secretariat.

Madam President,

Slovakia supports recent political steps taken with the aim to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula and to engage in a substantial discussion on denuclearisation. We urge the DPRK to take concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation and refrain from testing nuclear weapons or any missiles. We also call upon the DPRK to recommit to the NPT and to comply with its Safeguards Agreement under the IAEA and all its international obligations. Slovakia supports the key role of the Agency in verifying the DPRK's nuclear programme and commends its continuous efforts to enhance its readiness to resume verification tasks in the DPRK.

Slovakia considers the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. Slovakia appreciates the IAEA's thorough and impartial work in carrying out its monitoring and verification mandate of Iran's nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. We stress the necessity to continue ensuring full and effective implementation throughout the entire lifetime of the deal by all concerned parties. We also call on Iran to cooperate fully and in

a timely manner with the IAEA. In this regard, the early ratification by Iran of the Additional Protocol is essential.

Madam President, let me assure you of Slovakia's continuous and full support to the Agency and its readiness to assist the IAEA in any way needed.

I thank you.