

Opening Statement and Acceptance Speech

by

H.E. Marta Žiaková

President of the 62nd Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference

17 September 2018

Excellencies,
Director-General Yukiya Amano,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to all of you, in particular the members of the Eastern European Group, for supporting my nomination and for electing me to this challenging position of the President of the 62nd Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference. I do feel truly privileged and humbled to have the opportunity to serve you throughout the next session and I can promise you that in doing so I will do my utmost to successfully fulfil this very important task while counting on all your support, wisdom and expertise in order to proceed with this joint task in a constructive, collaborative manner and in the spirit of Vienna.

I would also like to convey my appreciation to Her Excellency Ambassador Maria Zeneida Angara Collinson of Philippines for her sterling stewardship and able guidance of the previous session of the General Conference. I am only the fourth representative of the female gender and the first representative from the Eastern European Group and Slovakia to have been elected to this position.

Before proceeding, I would like to take this opportunity to convey a message of good health to the Director General along with my sincere wishes for his speedy recovery and early return to Vienna. I commend him, as well as the entire Secretariat for their dedication, tireless efforts, commitment and expertise, all of which as over the year translated into the Agency's many achievements and accomplishments.

Excellencies, dear Colleagues,

Over the course of this week, the General Conference will be considering issues of great complexity and importance which have a direct relevance to the Agency's role. In light of the international events and global challenges which we've been facing over the past years, it is of the utmost importance for us all to make every possible effort to conduct constructive deliberations to achieve continuing and tangible progress on the Agency's "Atoms for Peace and Development" mission, within its established mandate. Needless to say that the IAEA is a Member States driven organization and it is therefore our responsibility to fully define future aspirations and goals for the work of the Agency. The confidence we all place in the IAEA is undeniably a valuable investment in the international peace, security and development.

The inextricable link between nuclear energy and nuclear weapons is arguably the greatest danger of nuclear power. Hence the verification activities carried out by the IAEA deserve our full and unwavering support. Agency's nuclear safeguards represent a fundamental instrument for the security of all of us, which in turn allows to develop the benefits from peaceful applications of nuclear techniques.

When carefully and responsibly used, nuclear energy has proven itself to be a reliable source. Nuclear activities must always be conducted in a safe and secure manner. The Agency contributes to ensure that this objective is being met by implementing and continuously improving high nuclear safety and security standards, thus fulfilling the global interest in preventing the nuclear accidents. Nuclear safety is, and must be, one of the key preconditions for the use of nuclear energy. I commend the Agency's efforts aimed at globalizing nuclear safety by networking, integrating safety-related activities, assisting the Member States in the implementation of the Safety Standards, and promoting adherence to the relevant international conventions.

Excellencies,

The ongoing development and application of nuclear technology continues to open up new and promising opportunities for global sustainable development. By the provision of help and assistance from the Agency, many Member States were able to make a significant progress in achieving their socio-economic developmental priorities. As you know, the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology will take place in Vienna in November this year with an aim to address current and emerging development challenges and to seek to facilitate high-level dialogue on nuclear science, technology and applications for peaceful uses, and on their delivery, mainly through the IAEA TC programme.

Allow me to commend the work of the Technical Cooperation Department of the Agency. The IAEA TC programme is recognized as an important delivery mechanism through which the Agency fulfils its statutory functions to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It has progressively become more relevant in assisting Member States in use of nuclear science and technology to address key

development challenges in human health and nutrition, agriculture, nuclear safety and many other areas, as well as towards the attainment of the SDG's.

Excellencies,

Healthy financial situation of the Agency is also our common goal. It is our common responsibility to ensure that the Agency is provided with adequate financial means for implementing and delivering on its programmatic activities and related development initiatives. Further Strengthening and identification of savings and resource efficiencies are to be applied across all budget areas of the IAEA Programme and Budget 2018-2019.

We have a demanding agenda ahead of us. As I conclude, let me remind us all, that the success of this year's session lies in our hands. I would spare no effort in seeking consensual outcomes on all items of the agenda, notwithstanding different views and positions of Member States. Nevertheless, our emphasis should be placed on points held in common following a constructive and open approach. It should be our common goal to create a stronger IAEA to be able to meet all expectations.

I will do my utmost to represent you to the best of my abilities. I look forward to collaborating closely with all of you and wish us all a successful General Conference.

Thank you.