

## **STATEMENT BY ESTONIA**

### **63rd Annual Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference**

**Mr Meelis Münt**

**Vice-Minister of the Ministry of the Environment**

**Vienna, 17 September 2019**

**Madam President,**

At the outset, on behalf of the Estonian delegation, I would like to convey our deepest condolences upon the passing of late Director General, Mr Yukiya Amano.

I would also like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of the 63rd General Conference. I assure you our full support and cooperation.

Estonia fully aligns itself with the EU statement delivered yesterday by the Vice Minister of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland. I would like to highlight some key points for Estonia.

Estonia adheres to the valuable role of the Agency in the non-proliferation regime and in ensuring that nuclear material and technology are used only for peaceful purposes. This can only be achieved by implementing the highest standards in safeguards, nuclear and radiation safety and security. We support universal and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) which is the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and remains the foundation for further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We underline the importance of the IAEA safeguards system in the implementation of the NPT. As we approach the NPT Review Conference next year, we have to do our utmost to uphold and further reinforce its role as a key multilateral instrument of international security.

Estonia strongly supports the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the Agency's long term mission of verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear related commitments. We express our deep concern, after statements by Iran and confirmations by the IAEA, that Iran has exceeded the JCPOA stockpile limit of enriched uranium and is enriching uranium above the level inconsistent with the JCPOA. We are also concerned about the verification in the Acting Director General's latest report of 8 September regarding Iran's centrifuges-related research and development activities. We urge Iran to reverse these steps and return the full compliance of the JCPOA.

DPRK's missiles and nuclear weapons' programme continues to constitute a threat to global peace and security. We call on the DPRK to take concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. Until the DPRK has not taken these actions, all countries should maintain the existing sanctions.

**Madam President,**

Although Estonia is a non-nuclear power country, we benefit from the diversity of nuclear science and technology in medicine, industry and education to improve the quality of life and contribute to the socio-economic development. Therefore, we welcome the decision of the Agency to devote this year's Scientific Forum to Cancer Control. The Agency has supported us through Technical Cooperation Programme for more than 25 years now in establishing our cancer diagnosis and treatment facilities and nuclear medicine centers, with competent, well trained staff and the necessary equipment. Through the cooperation with the Agency, we have gained valuable knowledge and expertise that we are now sharing with other Member States.

Currently, our main challenge is to build a radioactive waste disposal facility into Estonia by 2040 to ensure long term safe storage of such waste. For this purpose, we have already started the site selection and strategic environmental impact assessment procedures.

**Madam President,**

The Government of Estonia is committed to fight against global climate change and it will be one of our priorities as the non-permanent member of UN Security Council in 2020-2021. We acknowledge the continued increased role of nuclear power in ensuring energy security, and using nuclear science and technologies for socio-economic and environmental benefits. We look forward to the International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power to be held in Vienna in October this year.

**Madam President,**

Nuclear Safety Standards of the Agency 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 Agency's safety peer review missions have proven to be invaluable tools in supporting our national arrangements regarding nuclear and radiation safety. In March and April this year, Estonia hosted Integrated Regulatory Review Service follow-up mission and ARTEMIS mission on radioactive waste management, which gave us reassurance that we are on the right track with our regulatory system improvements.

**Madam President,**

To conclude, Estonia recognizes the Agency'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. Thank you, Madam President.