

Statement of the Head of Delegation of the Slovak Republic

Ms. Marta Žiaková

Chairperson of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic

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Madam President, Excellences, 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 63rd Session of the IAEA General Conference.

[Before I continue with my statement, I would like to, pay tribute to the late Director General, His Excellency Yukiya Amano and express my sincerest condolences to Mr. Amano's family as well as to the IAEA. It was with deepest sadness that I learned in July about the tragic news of his passing away. Ambassador Amano's work and many accomplishments during his tenure as a Director General represent a valuable contribution to the global development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. He leaves behind a strong legacy of service to the international community and to his country that will continue to resonate for years to come.]

Madam President,

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by Finland on behalf of the European Union. Allow me to make few additional remarks in my national capacity on issues that my country deems particularly important.

Nuclear Power

Madam President,

Slovakia strongly supports peaceful nuclear cooperation, including the use of nuclear energy and of nuclear technologies and applications as one of the key enablers in the delivery of socio-economic growth, both on national as well as international level.

Nuclear power represents one of the main pillars in my country's energy portfolio and continues to have an important and stable position in the national energy mix. As for the Slovak nuclear power programme I am pleased to inform you that the ongoing construction of additional units 3 & 4 at the Mochovce site is well in its final stages; with unit 3 foreseen to be commissioned in first half of 2020 and unit 4 to follow in the coming year. At all stages of construction, my government has continuously reiterated its commitment to conduct an open and transparent information-sharing process on the new builds with all relevant stakeholders, including the public as well as our neighbours. Hosting several WANO safety and technical support missions and a scheduled IAEA Pre-Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) Mission to take place at the end of this year are a tangible proof of this commitment.

Nuclear Energy

Madam President,

Climate change is becoming one of the most pressing issues of our time that threatens the lives and livelihoods of billions of people. Responding to it and combating it requires comprehensive clean energy strategies and a sustainable

solution. Being one of the most significant means of limiting the increase of greenhouse gas concentrations while enabling access to abundant and reliable source of electricity, Slovakia is fully committed to the task of cutting the emissions, in line with the EU 2030 Climate and Energy Framework as well as the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, my country supports the Agency's activities aimed to contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in line with its "Atoms for Peace and Development" mandate.

Nuclear Safety & Security

Madam President,

Needless to say that the peaceful applications of nuclear energy must always be accompanied by a robust and rigorous application of nuclear safety and security. The IAEA's role in this regard is indispensable and key in promoting highest safety standards and safety & security culture on a global scale. Slovakia continues to work to constantly improve and strengthen its robust domestic framework for nuclear safety and 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, the Joint Convention on the Management of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste, and the Convention on the Physical Protection on Nuclear Material.

The newest example of strengthening the national legal infrastructure is the adoption of a new law on the National Nuclear Fund that introduces enhanced methodology, procedural and financial procedures in the national

decommissioning & spent fuel and waste management infrastructure of nuclear facilities and long-term storage of spent nuclear fuel etc.

Technical Cooperation

Madam President,

Technical Cooperation Programme is an essential part of the Agency's mandate. The IAEA's role under this portfolio is to transfer nuclear technologies and help Member States in promoting tangible socioeconomic progress and addressing their key development priorities. Such assistance should, however, be needs based and developed in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner.

Slovakia has been benefitting from the TC in many areas. We attach a great importance to this mechanism, as I am sure is the case for many countries of similar size with a rather extensive portfolio of peaceful nuclear activities.

A good example of usage of nuclear non-energy techniques is the Slovak Medical University approach to the sediments of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB), which are toxic and potentially carcinogenic compounds located in the part of Eastern Slovakia. There is a new technology developed to treat these sediments with the help of electronic beam treatment. This technology helped to clean the samples of these sediments to 20% of PCB concentration. The process of radiation degradation of PCB is without hazardous emission and applicable for environment concerned. The new procedure is a promising good start to clean that part of the Slovak Republic of the mentioned environmental burden.

Non-proliferation

Madam President,

Slovakia is a steadfast and firm supporter of global disarmament and non-proliferation, with the NPT as its cornerstone. The Agency's role in the implementation of safeguards and its independent verification is a fundamental part of this regime. We express continued support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which remains a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. Furthermore, in light of the recent tensions, its preservation continues to be essential for the regional stability and security. We are deeply concerned about recent decisions of Iran on exceeding some of the JCPOA limits. We urge Iran to reverse this step and to refrain from further measures that undermine the nuclear deal.

To conclude, Madam President,

Slovakia is a committed supporter of the IAEA. We attach great importance to an efficient and effective way of managing the Agency's activities. This shall also include further actions to improve gender balance at the Secretariat, including at the highest level. In this regard, we welcome the efforts made by DG Amano to increase women's representation and his aim to achieve gender parity among DDGs by 2021.

Thank you, Madam President.