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**Statement by**

**Mr Benoît Revaz**

**State Secretary and Director of the Swiss Federal Office of Energy**

**Vienna, 18 September 2019**

Madam President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Switzerland. Liechtenstein aligns itself with this statement.

We congratulate you on your election as President of the General Conference and assure you of our full support. We also wish to thank the Acting Director General, Cornel Feruta, and the Secretariat for the high quality of their work.

It is with deep sorrow that Switzerland learned of the death of late IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano. We wish to pay tribute to his accomplishments during his ten years at the helm of the IAEA. He defended the independence and impartiality of the organisation in the performance of its non-proliferation mandate. In the wake of the Fukushima-Daiichi accident, he worked actively to enhance nuclear safety at the global level. With the international nuclear security conferences, he strengthened the central role of the IAEA in this area.

The modified motto “Atoms for Peace and Development” underscores the significant contribution of the IAEA to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. I also wish to highlight his initiative to modernise the laboratories in Seibersdorf with the ReNuAL and ReNuAL+ projects. Switzerland expressly welcomes the decision of the General Conference to designate the Flexible Modular Laboratory as “The Yukiya Amano Laboratories”.

Madam President,

Switzerland welcomes the ongoing activities of the IAEA in the framework of the monitoring and verification of the JCPOA. We consider this agreement a key element of the international non-proliferation regime. We reiterate that the JCPOA has established the strictest verification regime that has ever been applied to a civil nuclear programme. Switzerland regrets the withdrawal from the agreement and the re-imposition of sanctions by the United States of America. We are concerned by the steps taken by Iran, as confirmed by the IAEA, which have led to a reduced implementation of its commitments. We call on Iran to return to the full respect of its obligations under the JCPOA. Switzerland strongly welcomes the dialogue and diplomatic initiatives aimed at preserving this important agreement.

Switzerland is also closely monitoring the most recent developments on the Korean Peninsula. We welcome the series of talks and high-level meetings aimed at bringing about the full denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. In Switzerland's view, such an undertaking can only succeed if the various available multilateral mechanisms are used. Switzerland therefore hopes that the IAEA will play an active role and that the expertise of the Organisation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will be utilised in this context.

Madam President,

In the past few years, Switzerland has been committed to promoting the worldwide implementation of the principles of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety as well as to ensuring that these principles are duly taken into account in the relevant resolutions and documents of the IAEA. Switzerland will continue to call, at the global level, for a technical exchange and the implementation of reasonably practicable safety improvements for existing nuclear facilities.

The continuous improvement of nuclear safety is a process that has to be carried out at the national as well as the international level. At the international level, a culture needs to be fostered that advocates a high level of nuclear safety. We encourage the IAEA to continue its engagement at the technical, regulatory and political levels.

Switzerland also welcomes the efforts of the IAEA aimed at the further development of nuclear security and its international coordinating role in this area. We will remain engaged in favour of strengthening the role of the IAEA in this important area.

The International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS) will be held in February next year. Switzerland will participate actively in the negotiations in order to reach a forward-looking ministerial declaration that would lead to further strengthening the international nuclear security architecture. Furthermore, Switzerland welcomes the preparatory process for the 2021 Conference, which is being convened following the entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM). We have announced our interest in co-chairing this important Conference with Nigeria. Furthermore, we support the efforts of the Agency in promoting the universalisation of this Convention and its Amendment.

Madam President,

The State Level Concept (SLC) was developed a few years ago. Switzerland welcomes this concept which aims at more efficient and tailor-made verification activities of the Agency, by adapting the verification measures to the specific circumstances of each country within certain limits and focusing more on critical aspects. From Switzerland's point of view, it is still too early to determine whether these objectives have been achieved.

Switzerland will also remain committed to advocating for the optimisation of the safeguards system, so that the limited resources can be primarily deployed where they can yield the best outcome.

Madam President,

We welcome the 2018 Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology and support a follow-up conference in 2023. Nuclear science and technologies can make a significant contribution towards sustainable development and notably the Sustainable Development Goals. I have already mentioned the modernisation of the laboratories in Seibersdorf. The inauguration of the linear accelerator (LINAC) for the IAEA's medical dosimetry laboratory last June was a major milestone. Switzerland made a significant financial contribution to this project.

Switzerland also advocates the relaunch of the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT). PACT can make a valuable contribution towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in the area of health, in particular in addressing and treating cancer in states with low and medium income. Switzerland has a strong interest in ensuring that the potential of PACT is fully exploited in cooperation with external partners and that the necessary financial resources are utilised efficiently. In order for the programme to be fully effective, a good integration and acceptability of PACT within the Agency are essential.

A few months ago, the Federal Institute of Technology of Lausanne was designated as a Collaborating Centre in the area of nuclear research in Switzerland by the Department of Nuclear Energy. Switzerland, which now hosts two of the 37 IAEA

Collaborating Centres, is proud of this designation and remains committed to making its nuclear expertise available to the IAEA and its Member States.

Thank you for your attention.