

Statement by H.E. Marta ŽIAKOVÁ
Temporary President of the 62nd IAEA General Conference
16 September 2019

Excellencies,
Acting Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We gather here today under very specific circumstances as the past year was an extremely intensive one for the IAEA. In July we've received a very saddening news of passing of His Excellency, Director General Yukiya Amano.

Mr. Amano was a great leader, dedicated servant and a staunch advocate of the Agency's mandate of "Atoms for Peace and Development" who has made an immeasurable contribution to the global socioeconomic advancement for the benefit of the entire international community. His professional legacy will forever remain with us as well as with the IAEA. I would like to convey my sincere sympathies to Japan and its people as I join the many messages of condolence that his sad passing has elicited all over the world.

Distinguished delegated, dear colleagues,

The Agency has yet another successful year under its belt as it managed to navigate through many challenging tasks. Since the last General Conference many important conferences, meetings, workshops, seminars and other events were held under the auspices of the IAEA. These meetings have presented a valuable input and new perspectives on ways and means of enhancing and further improving the delivery of Agency's statutory tasks and programmatic priorities.

In the last November the first Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology was held in Vienna which provided an opportunity for a high-level discussion on nuclear science, technology and applications and their role in addressing current and emerging development challenges. A strong political commitment of Member States has been reflected in the Ministerial Declaration and the conference also highlighted the impact of the TC programme in this regard. The inauguration of new laboratories in Seibersdorf and their further modernization under the ReNuAI project represent a critical investment in the Agency's ability to deliver high quality technical assistance to Member States, thus contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and furthering of the 2030 Agenda.

Distinguished colleagues,

We live in the world of ever-changing environment, complex and highly challenging issues and threats endangering all life on Earth. Climate change certainly is one of these issues, if not one of the most important one that the world faces today. The recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on Global Warming of 1,5 °C indicates the potential role of nuclear power as an existing and proven solution to the challenges of sustainable energy transition. Securing access to affordable and reliable energy is essential for all, eradicating poverty, promoting energy independence and socioeconomic growth. The IAEA has an important role in improving the understanding of the potential contribution of nuclear power by providing interested Member States with guidance in deploying safe, secure and safeguarded nuclear technology. The organization of the International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power in October of this year will provide a platform to discuss objectively all aspects of the role of nuclear power in combating climate change.

The use of nuclear energy must always be accompanied by a vigorous application of the highest possible standards of nuclear safety and security. The IAEA's efforts in ensuring high levels of safety and encouraging continuous improvement have contributed significantly towards stronger global nuclear safety framework. The Agency also has a central role in strengthening the nuclear security framework globally and in leading the coordination of international activities in this field. With the 3rd International Conference on Nuclear Security and the 8th CNS Review Meeting both scheduled to take place in the first half of the next year, Member States and the international community will have yet another opportunity to review the current status of security and safety respectively and to highlight areas that may need more focused attention in the coming years. Safe and secure use of nuclear energy must be an ongoing process serving the ultimate common aim of protecting people and the environment.

Distinguished delegates,

The verification activities conducted by the IAEA deserve our full support as the safeguarding of peaceful uses of nuclear energy is a cornerstone of international peace and security. Despite the well-known complexities, Agency has clearly demonstrated its professionalism and impartiality in the way it verifies and monitors Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. Furthermore, I commend the IAEA's proactive approach and readiness to resume its verification activities in DPRK once a political agreement is reached.

Dear colleagues,

It was my great honour to serve you as the President of the 62nd session of the IAEA General Conference. I express hope that the spirit of Vienna that guided

our discussions and negotiations last year will prevail during the current session. General Conference provides us with a valuable opportunity to share our views, expectations and ambitions. It is an important platform for Member States to agree in a consensual manner on guidelines and directions for the Agency for the coming year.

A particular thank you goes to my group, the Eastern European Group for supporting my candidacy and entrusting me with this important task. I would also like to express my appreciation to the last year's Vice-Presidents – Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Iran, Italy, Nigeria, Philippines and Romania - for their close cooperation, leadership and valuable assistance they provided. I commend Mexico for the efficient conduct of business and a successful chairmanship of the Committee of the Whole. My sincere gratitude goes to Ms. Aruni Wijewardane and her committed team as well as to the highly dedicated and professional Secretariat. A sincere thank you belongs also to the late Director General Amano and all Deputy Directors General for their leadership, tireless efforts and dedication in upholding the ideas of the Agency.

In concluding, I am very pleased to see such high-level participation, including many Ministers, Vice-Ministers and other senior officials from Member States. This is a proven testimony of the IAEA standing as the foremost fora in the international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. I welcome you all, wish you success and many enriching discussions and I look forward to joining everyone towards yet another fruitful session of the General Conference.

Thank you.