

STATEMENT OF GEORGIA

Delivered by H.E. Ketevan Tsikhelashvili

Head of the Delegation, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Georgia to the IAEA

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Mr. President,

Let me congratulate you on your election as President of the 64th General Conference.

Dear Colleagues,

At the beginning of this year, no one would expect we would meet in this format. A lot of things have changed and a lot of challenges emerged in the course of the COVID-19 crisis. I appreciate that we are meeting today and in this context, my gratitude goes to the President, Director General and his dedicated team, for organizing the event.

Georgia would like to commend Director General Grossi for leading the Secretariat's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We highly appreciate Agency's role in this crisis, which permitted continuity of the majority of its activities in the field of nuclear security.

Let me underline the importance of the IAEA safeguards system in the implementation of the NPT (Non-proliferation Treaty). Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional Protocols constitute the current verification standard and we continue to call for their universalization without delay.

Georgia appreciates the quick actions taken by Agency in providing support to many Member States in strengthening their capacities and responding to the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the rapid preparation of the “ZODIAC” project.

We highly appreciate the positive response of the IAEA to Georgia’s request. Within the framework of the technical cooperation project, we are receiving standard sets of RT-PCR equipment and related materials. This assistance will enhance capacities of the country for the rapid detection of the COVID-19, which is critical for preventing widespread outbreak of the virus. In this context, we appreciate the US and Norwegian generous extra-budgetary contribution that allowed IAEA to extend their assistance to Georgia along with other countries in need.

Mr. President,

Prevention and response to the nuclear and radioactive threats is one of the main elements of the state security. Continued Russian occupation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia can be considered as a security challenge in many dimensions. In this context, we had recorded attempts of smuggling nuclear and radioactive materials via Occupied regions for the past several years. As a result of effective measures carried out by Georgian law-enforcement agencies, these illegal activities were duly prevented.

However, in the absence of the international presence on these territories, it has become virtually impossible to conduct any type of verification activities on the ground.

Georgia continues efforts to strengthening Nuclear and Radiation Safety and Security framework. Regulatory system is being improved. The Independent regulatory body (Nuclear and Radiation Safety Agency, effectively conducts its responsibilities since 2016.

We are pleased to announce that the Technical Cooperation with the IAEA was amplified by signing bilaterally the Country Program Framework for 2020-2025. The next 5-year cycle of covers: Nuclear

and Radiation Safety and Security, Health and Nutrition, Food and Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Energy and Industry.

Let me note the technical and financial assistance that Georgia receives from the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission for developing national regulations and systems for nuclear and radiation safety and security. With our ever increasing and successful partnership, it became possible to strengthen national regulatory framework towards nuclear or radiological emergencies as well. The Government of Georgia adopted the decree on management system for such emergencies; Nuclear or Radiological Emergency Response Management Center has been established within the Regulatory Body that ensures coordinated and integrated implementation of emergency preparedness and response measures.

Moreover, we attach great importance to the role of the EU and the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority (SSM) in the field of advancing nuclear and radiation safety in Georgia. In this context, we highly appreciate the valuable support and active cooperation that Georgia receives for establishing radioactive waste management system.

In closing, I would like to reiterate our readiness for an open and constructive cooperation and thank all the participants of the conference for their most valuable contributions.

I thank you.