

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

Israel deeply appreciates the IAEA's immense efforts to convene this unique General Conference, despite the unprecedented circumstances caused by COVID-19.

Israel commends the Agency for its leadership, for continuing its core activities throughout this difficult period and for making every effort to address the urgent needs of all Member States.

I am certain that the important ZODIAC initiative, launched by Director General Grossi, will demonstrate the IAEA's critical role in confronting today's challenges.

Israeli scientists have taken part in the Agency's COVID-19-related activities, sharing our knowledge and best practices, and participating in joint R&D projects.

As always, Israel remains fully committed to all its obligations and adheres to the most stringent nuclear safety and security guidelines.

Despite hurdles raised by the pandemic, the Agency conducted the annual safeguards inspection in Israel successfully and without delay.

While Israel collaborates with the Agency on its crucial professional work, other Member States are regrettably trying to politicize the General Conference by again placing the so-called "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities" as an item on the agenda and continuing their efforts to distract the Agency from its important mission.

Mr. President,

One state in particular has been actively undermining the Agency's work for far too long: Iran.

For decades, the IAEA has allocated tremendous resources and efforts to safeguard Iran's nuclear program.

Iran, on the other hand, has invested tremendous efforts to prevent the IAEA from doing so.

As is clear from the IAEA's many reports, Iran continues with its longstanding concealment efforts.

These include massive sanitization campaigns of Iran's undeclared nuclear activities at secret sites, using diverted nuclear materials, as part of its military nuclear program.

For these reasons and others, Iran is clearly noncompliant with its safeguards obligations.

While we discuss Iran's non-compliance, its nuclear program and enrichment capabilities continue to expand. Instead, we should discuss how to dismantle these capabilities, which Iran does not need for a peaceful nuclear energy program.

Distinguished Delegates,

The international community must choose: stand with the IAEA, or stand with countries like Iran and Syria that seek to weaken the IAEA and prevent it from fulfilling its important mandate.

Standing with the IAEA requires holding Iran accountable for failing to meet its international obligations.

We must all support the Agency's efforts if we are to ensure that Iran never attains a nuclear weapon.

Mr. President,

We look forward to meaningful discussions in this forum, and to continue our fruitful relationship with the Agency.

Thank you, Mr. President.