

STATEMENT OF GEORGIA

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International Atomic Energy Agency

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Mr. President,

Let me join previous speakers and congratulate you on your election as a President of the 65<sup>th</sup> General Conference. I assure you and Secretariat of the Georgian delegation's full support in making this conference a success.

I appreciate that we are meeting today, notwithstanding the extraordinary circumstances. In this context, my gratitude goes to the President, Director General and his dedicated team, for organizing the event.

We are all well aware of the importance of the IAEA's activities in various fields and their valuable impact. In this regard, we commend the Director General and the Secretariat for their efforts to ensure the continuity of the IAEA's mission as well as for the assistance provided to Member States to respond to the pandemic.

Georgia attaches great importance to the IAEA's core responsibilities in the field of non-proliferation, nuclear energy, nuclear safety, nuclear security and technical cooperation. In this context, we support universal and effective implementation of the NPT and underline the importance of the Agency's safeguards system in the implementation of the Treaty. Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional Protocols constitute the current verification standard and we continue to call for their universalization without delay.

Today, since we all continue to tackle the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the TC programme has again proven to be an important tool in assisting Member States to strengthen their capacities and to control the spread of the virus. We highly appreciate the positive response of the IAEA to our request. Within the framework of the technical cooperation project, Georgia received standard sets of RT-PCR equipment and related materials. Assistance enhanced national capacities for the rapid detection of the COVID-19, which plays critical role in avoiding the 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. Clearly, two regions of Georgia, which are occupied by Russia remain a security challenge in many dimensions. In this context we had recorded attempts of smuggling nuclear and radioactive materials via Russian occupied regions. 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 Georgia's occupied territories, it has become virtually impossible to conduct any type of verification activities on the ground.

Distinguished Audience,

Georgia continues its irreversible development in the field of Nuclear and Radiation Safety and Security.

Independent regulatory body, established in the framework of implemented reforms and with the strong support of the Government of Georgia effectively conducts its responsibilities.

Let me also highlight activities carried out in the framework of IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme, such as providing cementing equipment that was installed in radioactive waste disposal facility of Georgia. National regulatory infrastructure is strengthened and supported through national and regional projects. Such projects remain one of the core tools for development and sustaining knowledge in the fields covered by the Agency.

We are pleased to announce that the Technical Cooperation with the IAEA was further strengthened by the Country Program Framework for 2020-2025. Next 5-years cycle of

technical cooperation covers: Nuclear and Radiation Safety and Security, Health and Nutrition, Food and Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Energy and Industry.

Technical, financial assistance and active contribution in developing national regulations and systems for nuclear and radiation safety and security that Georgia receives from US Nuclear Regulatory Commission are highly appreciated. Georgia-US successful partnership is further developing and strengthening. Within this partnership, it became possible to strengthen national regulatory framework towards nuclear or radiological 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 our partner's valuable support in the process of establishment of a radioactive waste management system.

In closing, Mr. President, I wish to assure you of Georgia's continued support for the Agency and its mandate.

I thank you.