



Statement of H.E. Ambassador Mr. Thórdur Aegir Óskarsson, Special Envoy for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs Iceland, at the 65th Annual Regular Session of the General Conference IAEA, Vienna, 22 September 2021.

Mr. President,

Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you on your appointment as President of the 65th IAEA General Conference.

Iceland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and I wish to make few additional remarks in my national capacity.

Iceland salutes the IAEA and its dedicated and able staff under leadership of the Director General Grossi for outstanding work performed under extremely difficult circumstances stemming from the global pandemic and growing challenges related to nuclear security and nuclear non-proliferation.

We all agree to the importance of the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology with its benefits in various fields, including health, agriculture and water management.

However, arguably the most immediate challenge the IAEA is facing is the preservation of its critical role in contributing to international peace and security through its safeguard agreements. These agreements play key role in implementing the Non-Proliferation Treaty, a cornerstone of the global arms control regime.

The upcoming Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is due to take place in January next in the context of growing challenges to global non-proliferation and even more importantly the weakening of the prevailing international arms control architecture.

These developments in international security are unacceptable and must be reversed. The nuclear safeguards regime under the authority of the IAEA must be strengthening in the face of these increasing challenges, in particular the universalisation of the Additional Protocol. We urge all states to agree to and ratify the Additional Protocol.

Iceland strongly supports the JCPoA. The agreement's contribution to international security and non-proliferation is of paramount importance. Therefore timely and positive conclusion of the on-going negotiations on reviving the agreement with the US rejoining is urgently called for. Iceland calls on Iran to revert immediately to full compliance with its commitments under the JCPoA and fully cooperate with the IAEA on its safeguard commitments.

The continuing brinkmanship of DPRK with regard to nuclear weapons is a major threat to international peace and stability. It is essential that DPRK complies with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and returns to the NPT, the IAEA Safeguards and joins the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in order to bring about the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

As other international organizations that are integral part of the global community the IAEA must look to how it can apply its extensive know-how and expertise in nuclear technology when it comes to meeting the grave challenges of accelerating climate crisis and environmental concerns. There we need all hands on deck including the use nuclear technology.

Iceland looks forward to the implementation of the Agency's forward looking initiatives, in particular the Zodiac Initiative and the NUTEC Plastic, projects that will greatly contribute to efforts in tackling present challenges to the global community. Iceland welcomes The NUTEC Plastics project as a very important tool in fighting pervasive global plastic pollution, of which the maritime aspects is of special concern to fishing nations like Iceland.

We applaud and strongly support the Secretary General's efforts to increase gender equality within the organisation.

Iceland's conviction is that the International Atomic Energy Agency will continue and even increase its important contribution to the critical role of multilateralism in solving the though challenges of today. Iceland is determined to strengthen its support to the Agency.