

**65<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the IAEA**

**Statement**

**The Republic of Latvia**

**Mr. Edvīns Balševics, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia,**

**Vienna, Austria, 20 - 24 September 2021**

Mr. President,

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Latvia fully aligns with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to use this opportunity to add some remarks in a national capacity.

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as President of this Conference and by commending the Director General and the staff of the Agency for being an example of professionalism in these unusual and trying circumstances.

The IAEA is a core component of the global non-proliferation regime through its safeguards under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The important work done by the Agency to prevent various proliferation crises is particularly relevant in relation to the upcoming NPT Review Conference.

Subsequently, we remain confident of the utility and benefits that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) provides. Despite the efforts of the E3 and

the EU, Iran has continued to reduce its commitment to the JCPOA. Latvia decisively condemns Iran's actions, which are detrimental to international non-proliferation efforts, including the prohibiting of full verification and reporting activities carried out by the IAEA. We call for immediate resumption of these activities and for the talks in Vienna to continue. Latvia also calls on the DPRK<sup>1</sup> to move toward a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation. The continuation of its nuclear programme and its nuclear arsenal build-up are clear violations of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. We appreciate the readiness of the Agency to verify DPRK's nuclear programme.

Furthermore, Latvia highly values the Agency's role in strengthening global nuclear safety and security. We must continue these efforts in order to prevent nuclear terrorism and facilitate peaceful uses of nuclear technology. In this regard, we support the universalisation of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and of the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. We also look forward to the postponed Review Meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

In supporting nuclear safety, Latvia continues to emphasize the need to strengthen the safety of nuclear power plants, to carry out appropriate international safety assessments of these facilities and to ensure a timely implementation of recommendations, as well as to ensure an efficient flow of information within cross-border cooperation, thus ensuring transparency.

Globally, it is also important to ensure long-term plans for the management of radioactive waste from nuclear installations, including for disposal. We believe that the Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste Information System established by the IAEA

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<sup>1</sup> Democratic People's Republic of Korea

in 2020 will help tracing of radioactive waste management at the international level, whilst ensuring a common approach to the processing of waste information.

On technical cooperation, Latvia thanks the IAEA Technical Cooperation Department for its invaluable support to Member States, particularly its guidance on adjusting regulatory frameworks to ensure high standards of safety, security and safeguards.

For the next planning cycle 2022-2023, Latvia has submitted three national projects where our focus will be on improving the capacity of the regulatory framework for radiological emergencies and radioactive waste management, continuing the improvement of the radiation safety of patients and workers in Latvia by strengthening calibration services and improving the quality of radiotherapy.

Latvia commends the IAEA and all donor countries for their steadfast support to Member States ranging from additional equipment for COVID-19 analyses to the launch of new initiatives towards the early detection and prevention of future zoonotic outbreaks. We await the implementation of the ZODIAC initiative to reinforce our capabilities against such diseases by using nuclear and nuclear derived techniques. Latvia also welcomes IAEA efforts to deal with plastic pollution through recycling using radiation technology, as well as marine monitoring using isotopic tracing techniques.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my admiration and gratitude for the IAEA's ability to adapt to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and for continuing to assist Member States in training and knowledge transfer activities using virtual formats.