

65<sup>th</sup> Annual Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference  
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MONTENEGRO STATEMENT

By

Ms. Vesna Bratić, PhD, Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the very outset, allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your appointment as the Chairperson of the 65<sup>th</sup> General Conference of IAEA, as we are certain that we will come to a successful conclusion of the event under your guidance. I assure you of the full support of our delegation along the way.

Montenegro fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the EU. I would like, however, to address you in my national capacity and highlight some issues of particular importance to my country.

Mr. President,

The IAEA has made an immeasurable contribution to global peace, security and overall development over the years. The Agency's work towards promotion of peaceful use of nuclear science and technology and assistance offered to member states, as well as towards strengthening of the nuclear safety and security regime, has been of the utmost significance.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, unequivocally demonstrated the importance of the Agency's mandate, which mobilized all of its resources in the service of protecting the health of people worldwide, reacting promptly by sending valuable assistance to Member States, including Montenegro, which had a critical contribution in our ability to put the first wave of COVID pandemics under control. We believe that our global readiness to respond to this and all future zoonotic diseases will be further strengthened as a result of the ZODIAC project, that we approved last year, and which Montenegro strongly supports. In this regard, we commend the leadership and the efforts of Director General H.E. Rafael Mariano Grossi, as well as the Secretariat of the IAEA for their dedicated work and engagement during these unprecedented times.

In spite of being a non-nuclear state, we are a vigorous supporter of peaceful use of nuclear energy, as well as nuclear safety and security, and have been able to benefit substantively from the fruitful cooperation with the IAEA, through comprehensive and wide-ranging technical assistance programmes. I would like to remind that the development of the new Country Programme Framework for Cooperation between

Montenegro and the IAEA, for the period 2021-2027, is underway, with the defined priorities being compatible to the ones within the EU accession negotiation framework, especially in the field of science and research.

In this context, allow me to highlight the importance of one specific regional project, namely the establishment of the International Institute for Sustainable Technologies in South East Europe, which aims to demonstrate how science concretely contributes to both development and peace, and for which we hope we can count on further support by the IAEA. While the Initiative is making significant progress both on the political and the scientific front, we would highly appreciate receiving additional support of the IAEA for the Training program for scientists, engineers and technicians, similar to those provided to the SESAME Project, which would be of inestimable importance.

Finally, when it comes to the bilateral technical cooperation between our country and the IAEA, let me emphasize that Montenegro, being an ecological state by our Constitution, fully supports the activities of the IAEA that contribute to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and is proud to be a member of the Friends of ReNuAL project. The IAEA has, thus far, extended valuable technical and expert assistance to Montenegro in the area of environmental protection and sustainable development, which greatly contributed towards our effort to achieve a dynamic and inclusive development, based on the principle of sustainability. In this context, we highly support also the NUTEC project, launched by DG Grossi, and we remain committed to actively contribute to its implementation.

Mr. President,

Montenegro reiterates our firm support to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as the global cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, as we remain a strong advocate of its universalization and the role of IAEA and its safeguards system. We are also unwaveringly committed to the successful outcome of the Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with a view to strengthening and affirming the NPT as a key multilateral instrument for preserving international peace, security and stability.

Montenegro is a state party to all major IAEA conventions and other relevant international instruments, striving to meet the highest international standards of nuclear safety and security. Additionally, we have also invested significant efforts when it comes to the protection against harmful effects of ionizing radiation and radioactive waste management. We are constantly working on upgrading our capacities in this domain, determined to prevent any illegal use or mismanagement of radioactive materials and related knowledge and technologies.

Finally, allow me remind that Montenegro is a state party to the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, and that we have ratified the Joint

protocol related to the implementation of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Paris Convention on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy, reaffirming our commitment to the establishing of the global nuclear liability regime.

Mr. President,

Let me close by reiterating our resolute dedication to actively contribute to the Agency's work, as well as to the implementation of the outcome results of this Conference.

I thank you.