



SLOVAKIA

**National statement on the occasion of the 65th
Session of the IAEA General Conference**

Delivered by the Head of Delegation
Dr. Marta ŽIAKOVÁ

Vienna, 20 September 2021

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr. President,

1. On behalf of my delegation, let me join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as the President of the 65th General Conference.
2. Slovakia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by Slovenia on behalf of the European Union. Allow me to make additional remarks in a national capacity.

Covid-19 pandemic & ZODIAC

3. The IAEA's efforts aimed to ensure smooth and uninterrupted implementation of its mandatory tasks during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic represent a great example of Agency's professionalism. We highly appreciate the leadership of the Director General and the commitment of Secretariat in discharging their duties and continuing providing comprehensive assistance to Member States, upon request.
4. The experience of an unprecedented global pandemic has shown the need for a more integrated approach when tackling the threat it poses to human health and well-being. We therefore welcome the Director's general ZODIAC initiative to enhance the use of nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques with an objective to strengthen Member States capabilities in combatting zoonotic diseases. A coordinated multilateral approach in this area is essential. Through our experts at the Veterinary Institute in Zvolen – designated as a ZODIAC national laboratory, Slovakia intends to actively participate and contribute to its successful implementation.

Nuclear Power, Energy & Climate Change

Mr. President,

5. Nuclear power is one of the key pillars of the Slovak energy policy and an important tool in climate change mitigation as well as in meeting the EU's agreed target to reduce the CO₂ emissions by (at least) 55% by 2030 and

achieve climate neutrality by 2050. As a reliable, large-scale and low-carbon technology, it continues to serve as a stable source to meet my country's ever-increasing energy demands. We share the DG's views that nuclear energy should have a seat at the table as it has a role to play in the transition to a clean energy future.

6. Concerning our nuclear power programme, I am pleased to announce that process of commissioning of the 3rd unit of the Mochovce nuclear power plants is nearing its completion with operating license being issued by the Slovak Nuclear Regulatory Authority earlier in May. Once the decision takes legal effect, we expect the unit become operational thereafter.

Nuclear Safety & Security

Mr. President,

7. High level and continuous improvement of nuclear safety and security remain at the core of our values. Promotion of an effective safety culture and timely & consistent implementation of nuclear safety and radiation protection standards is and must be a prerequisite for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Agency's role in this regard is indispensable, in particular by establishing and developing Safety standards and Nuclear Security Series and provision of assistance to Member States through its peer review and advisory services. Slovakia continues to actively engage with the Secretariat on these matters, including through the participation of our experts in the Agency's work and by regularly requesting its peer review missions. In coming months, we will host both the IRRS and the ARTEMIS mission in a back-to-back format; and the first ever ORPAS mission is scheduled to take place virtually in November. I am also pleased to inform you that the Pre-OSART Follow-up mission at the 3rd unit of the Mochovce nuclear power plant had successfully concluded less than 2 weeks ago. The Agency's peer review team had assessed a significant progress by the licensee in implementing actions to address the findings of the 2019 Pre-OSART peer review, most of which had been completed. We highly appreciate the IAEA's

ability and professionalism in organizing this mission in a physical format, despite the persistent pandemic.

8. The Covid-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the need to ensure safe and secure operation of nuclear installations in a time of global health crisis of an unprecedented scale and impact. Slovakia has swiftly reflected on these developments amending its legislation by including nuclear power plants in the critical infrastructure. This has allowed for an early vaccination of the NPP's staff, thus significantly reducing the risks of infections and ensuring business continuity.

Non-proliferation

9. Slovakia is fully committed to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, with the NPT as a cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and its vital importance for the further development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We reiterate our unwavering support for the IAEA's safeguards and the Agency's irreplaceable role in carrying out independent and impartial verification of nuclear material and activities.

Nuclear Applications & Technical Cooperation

10. Slovakia is a staunch supporter of the benefits of nuclear energy to the socio-economic development of Member States and the international community as well as their contribution to the SDGs. The Agency's Technical Cooperation is an essential part of its mandate. Slovakia is among the countries that benefit from the TC assistance and attaches great importance to this mechanism, in particular in capacity building and knowledge management. We reiterate our call to the Agency for a transparent, non-discriminatory and needs-based development of the programme.
11. The recent IAEA NUTEC Plastics initiative aimed to address the challenges of plastic pollution is an excellent opportunity for all countries seeking

effective and sustainable plastic waste solutions. We welcome the Agency for putting forward this important matter and Slovakia will continue to pay particular interest to this subject.

12. We also wish to add our support to the modernization of nuclear laboratories in Seibersdorf and the launch of the finalization phase under the ReNuAI 2 project.

To conclude,

13. Slovakia renews its call for an efficient and effective way of managing the Agency's activities and a good cross-departmental cooperation crucial to the successful delivery of its mandate. We also welcome the systematic implementation of gender aspects, the efforts to increase the representation of women in higher professional categories *and* the DG's commitment to achieve gender parity by 2025 as an important aspect of the Agency's management.

14. Slovakia looks forward to a successful General Conference and reaffirms its full support to the IAEA.

I thank you.