

SWEDEN

Statement

by

H.E. Ms. Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

International Atomic Energy Agency

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Thank you, Mr President,

Let me begin by aligning myself with the statement made by Slovenia on behalf of the European Union. I will now make some points in my national capacity.

Mr President,

Sweden is a strong believer in a rules-based international order, of which the International Atomic Energy Agency forms a crucial part. Through its unique expertise the Agency contributes to global peace, security, development and to nuclear and radiation safety. Despite the global pandemic, the Agency has continued almost all of its work. The flexibility and creativity shown by the Agency and its staff is impressive.

Mr. President,

The international community is faced with many challenges. Despite progress, including the Agency's assistance for the rapid detection and management of COVID-19, the global pandemic is far from over. Likewise, the climate crisis must be tackled in a resolute manner. In addition, challenges to the global non-proliferation regime remain.

We must never forget that nuclear weapons pose an enormous threat to humanity. It is therefore essential that the NPT Review Conference will be able to take place soon and for its outcome to be constructive.

Mr President,

The IAEA's safeguards system, including the Additional Protocol, is crucial to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We call upon Iran to abide by its safeguards obligations and co-operate fully and timely with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues. We also urge Iran to return to the Additional Protocol.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action remains an essential part of the global non-proliferation architecture and we welcome the efforts made by all parties involved in the proximity talks, facilitated by European Union External Action Services, to preserve the agreement. Sweden is highly concerned about steps taken by Iran in contravention of the agreement and we call upon Iran to return to full implementation of its commitments.

Mr. President,

The indications of renewed activity at a nuclear reactor in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea which may earlier have produced plutonium for nuclear weapons, give cause for concern. We urge the DPRK to fulfil its international commitments and undertake a complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament of its nuclear weapons and missile programme in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Mr President,

Sweden supports the Agency's work on technology, safety and security which is, in many cases, closely connected to the 2030 Agenda. The Director General's deep commitment to tackling global issues such as zoonotic diseases and pollution is encouraging. We welcome the Agency's contribution to helping Member States monitor and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to new climate realities. This year, Sweden will again make extrabudgetary contributions to support the Agency's work to counter the spread of marine plastics as well as to promote the early diagnosis and effective treatment of cervical cancer in low- and middle-income countries. We reiterate the importance of gender mainstreaming in all programmes and activities.

Mr President,

Ten years have passed since the accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant. Together with other efforts, such as EU stress tests, the Agency's report on and analysis of the accident has led to extensive modifications and safety enhancements. Last year, a multi-year programme of safety improvements at Sweden's nuclear power plants was finalised, with robust independent core cooling systems taken into service at all reactors.

In conclusion, Mr President,

Sweden's current term on the Board of Governors is coming to an end. During our second year we had the honour of serving as Chair. In this role, we assisted in the process to appoint the Director General and in the uninterrupted functioning of the Board during the height of the pandemic. I am proud of the way our Governor and her team worked tirelessly with all members of the Board, dealing with complex challenges, always aiming for the highest levels of transparency, inclusiveness and trust.

I thank you.