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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE TO THE OPENING OF THE 65TH REGULAR SESSION
OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE IAEA
20 September 2021**

*To be Delivered by Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, Director-General of the UN Office at Vienna and
Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*

I am pleased to send greetings to all participants at this important General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We are now well into the second year of facing the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19. The IAEA has risen to the moment, proving yet again its indispensable value by utilizing nuclear and nuclear-driven techniques to provide critical support to Member States in tackling this devastating pandemic.

At the same time, the IAEA continues to serve as the bulwark against the proliferation of nuclear weapons – the only weapons with the potential to end humanity. The Agency helps to guard against the misuse of nuclear power and nuclear weapons through its indispensable safeguards agreements and additional protocols. I call on all States to ratify and fully implement them.

Despite numerous challenges, the Agency has striven to verify and monitor the implementation of the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. In addition, the Agency continues to monitor the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea using available sources despite the continued lack of access.

I also deeply value the IAEA's continued leadership in ensuring the safety and security of nuclear and radiation facilities, including through its support to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540.

Beyond these areas, the IAEA is making an increasingly diverse contribution to advancing global priorities.

In addition to its robust response to COVID-19, the IAEA has assisted more than 140 countries and territories, including many least developed countries, through its technical cooperation programme. Through its initiatives in areas such as health, nutrition, food, agriculture and climate change, the IAEA makes an important and concrete contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I look forward to strengthening the valuable cooperation between the IAEA and the United Nations, and in this spirit I wish you all success.