

National Statement of the Republic of Armenia
at the 66th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference
as delivered by Mr. Hakob Vardanyan, Deputy Minister for Territorial
Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia
Vienna, 27 September 2022

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the 66th session of the IAEA General Conference. We hope that the results of this session will further promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and the commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Esteemed Delegates,

The nuclear energy constitutes an important element for ensuring the stability and sustainability of the energy sector of Armenia. Therefore, the further development of the nuclear energy continues to be a high priority for the Government of Armenia. The Strategic Programme for the Development of the Energy Sector of Armenia for the period up to 2040 envisages the construction of a new power unit. And we are in the stage of development of preliminary feasibility study for that.

We also look forward to continuing our engagement, close collaboration and effective cooperation with the IAEA to fully benefit from the comprehensive scientific, regulatory, technical and technological assistance of the Agency in this regard.

Mr. President,

Enhancement of nuclear and radiation safety and development of safety culture remains an important priority for Armenia.

With this understanding, since 2016 Armenia has undertaken an overall modernization of the main safety systems of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant, **within the framework of the “ANPP Second Power Unit Operation Extension Program”** and in line with IAEA guidelines and recommendations. Among others, the block of power generation systems (turbines-generators-transformers) have been entirely renovated, and the safety systems have been replaced or upgraded, thus significantly increasing the reliability and safe operation of the plant. The results of the modernization were assessed by the Agency during the SALTO follow-up review mission to the Armenian NPP in October 2021, which identified significant improvements in relation to its 2018 recommendations.

Armenia attached high priority to the effective and efficient implementation of its obligations under the relevant conventions on nuclear and radioactive safety, and by the decision of the Government of Armenia a National Operator for the management of radioactive waste is to be established. We are currently working on its structure and terms of reference.

The safe management of Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel, as well as related **environmental issues occupy an important place in ANPP’s overall safety improvement programme.** Within the framework of Armenia’s **“Strategy for the Management of Radioactive Waste and Spent Nuclear Fuel”** a **“Program for Modernization of RW Management Systems”** was developed and launched as part of ANPP Operating Life Extension Programme. A dry storage facility for spent nuclear fuel, built with the support of international partners, will ensure the safe management and storage of spent nuclear fuel at least until 2050.

Armenia was keen to actively participate in the 7th Review meeting of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management in June-July, 2022. And we are glad that the Country Group report of the 7th Review meeting identified two areas of good performance for Armenia related to the development and approval of the mentioned Strategy and

Action Plan and also commended Armenia for clearly addressing the challenges identified during the 6th Review Meeting.

Mr. President,

Armenia highly values the central role of the IAEA in strengthening the nuclear security framework globally and its continued assistance to States to establish and maintain effective nuclear security regimes.

Under its obligations and in the spirit of transparency and constructive dialogue, Armenia regularly submits reports and declarations to the IAEA in accordance with the established procedure.

Since 2021, as part of preventing illegal trafficking of nuclear and radiation materials, Armenia has actively cooperated with EU Centers of Excellence on CBRN Risk Reduction.

Also, with the support of international partners, the modernization of the physical protection system of the station and the storage of spent nuclear fuel is currently being completed.

Those activities and commitments, as well as recent developments in the field of **nuclear security have informed and guided Armenia's active participation** in the 1st meeting of the State Parties to the A/CPNM this March. We are encouraged that through joint efforts we have managed to further our common understanding and efforts in this field. This has been testified by the ability of states parties to agree upon their shared priorities through the consensual Outcome document.

Esteemed Delegates,

Armenia attaches high priority to ensuring the security of nuclear installations devoted to peaceful purposes, during all times and in all circumstances. The delegation of Armenia has been expressly voicing its position in this regard since July 2020 and in this context we would like to recall the General Conference resolutions 444 and 533 prohibiting armed attack or threats of attack against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes.

Armenia is grateful to the Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi for his constant attention to and initiatives in regards of the security of nuclear installations and commends the DG and the IAEA team for their devotion to such mission. The Seven indispensable pillars of nuclear safety and security, presented by Director General have provided a solid basis for **addressing the issue from the perspective of the IAEA's** mandate.

Mr. President,

Human health remains a crucial domain of the Agency's contribution to the SDGs. **We highly value the Agency's continued support to integrating radiation medicine** into national cancer control programs and welcome the new flagship initiative of the Director General in this field called the Rays of Hope.

We look forward to further development of this initiative, which could help states to overcome the burden of cancer.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me express my deep gratitude to the IAEA Director General and the Secretariat for their excellent work and efforts for the benefit of Member States and assure that Armenia fully shares the universal recognition of the **Agency's key** role in enhancing the safe and secure application of nuclear energy and technology for the benefit of humanity.

Thank you, Mr. President