

STATEMENT BY ESTONIA

66th Annual Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference

Mr. Madis Kallas

Minister of Environment

Vienna, 26 September 2022

Mister President,

I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of the General Conference. You have our full support and cooperation.

Estonia fully aligns itself with the EU statement delivered by the Czech Republic. I would like to highlight some key points in our national capacity.

Estonia condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's war against Ukraine. We are extremely concerned about the threats that the Russian military invasion poses to the safety, security and safeguards. Nuclear facilities in Ukraine remain at the highest risk. We strongly support the recent resolution adopted in the Board of Governors on the situation in Ukraine. Estonia welcomes the Director General's call for the establishment of a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant. We call upon the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw its military and other personnel from Zaporizhzhya. Russia's occupation of Europe's largest nuclear power plant must stop now! We thank the Director General and the Agency for closely monitoring the situation and keeping the international community informed.

Mister President,

As already highlighted, the Conference takes place in a complex international security environment. Hence, the role of the Agency in ensuring that nuclear material and technology are used only for peaceful purposes, is vital. The NPT (Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons) is and remains the foundation of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and we support its universal and effective implementation. We deeply regret that the 10th Review Conference of the NPT could not achieve consensus on a final outcome document because of opposition by the Russian Federation.

Estonia continues to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the Agency's long-term mission of verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear related commitments. Timely and full cooperation with the Agency remains crucial.

Mister President,

The Government of Estonia is committed to fight against global climate change and we must consider all options for sustainable energy production in the future.

In spring 2021, Estonian Government established a Nuclear Energy Working Group to analyze the potential of using Small Modular Reactors in Estonia beyond 2030. In order to make an informed and transparent decision, Estonia is working in close cooperation with the Agency, relevant stakeholders and international partners. We have asked the Agency to conduct INIR mission in Estonia in the second half of 2023. After the mission, the Working Group submits its final report to the Government.

Estonia already benefits from the diversity of nuclear science and technology in medicine, industry and education. Estonia values highly the cooperation and support that the Agency has provided through its expert missions and Technical Cooperation Programme. This March, Estonia was the first country to host the Agency's pilot Advisory Mission on Radiation Protection and Safety in Medical Exposure.

Today, we are thankful and proud to sign the new Country Programme Framework agreement with the Agency. Our priority areas in cooperating with the Agency are ensuring long-term management of radioactive waste by establishing a disposal facility in Estonia by 2040, as well as nuclear medicine and cancer treatment. In addition, we need assistance from the Agency in increasing our knowledge on safe use of nuclear power.

We welcome and support the Agency's initiatives ZODIAC and NUTEC Plastics and look forward to the implementation of these Programmes for the benefit of the Member States.

Mister President, Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to express our gratitude for the work done by the Director General and the Secretariat, and call upon all countries to support the Agency in its efforts.

To conclude, I would once more like to emphasize that any failure to face up to Russia's aggression would mean legitimizing illegal aggression against another sovereign state and accepting a grave violation of international law, the UN Charter and the Statute of the Agency. Irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and -threats must be addressed by acting together. The international community must hold Russia accountable. Now is the time to show that multilateralism works and to demonstrate solidarity with Ukraine.

Thank you, Mister President.