



# **STATEMENT**

**BY**

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Agency**

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**Check against delivery**

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

Let me begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Alessandro Cortese, Permanent Representative of Italy, on your election to preside over the 66<sup>th</sup> General Conference.

I can assure you, Mr. President, of the full cooperation of my delegation in carrying out your important mission. I have no doubt, that under your leadership, the discussions and outcomes of this forum, will be fruitful and meaningful.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Tonga, the newest members of the Agency. I would also wish to congratulate Director General Grossi, for his leadership and for convening the General Conference.

The State of Israel commends the Agency for continuing its core activities, and for promoting important initiatives such as Rays of Hope, NUTEC and ZODIAC, and for making every effort to address the urgent needs of Member States, bearing in mind the exceptional circumstances created by COVID-19 in the past few years.

This week, Israel and the Jewish people all over the world, celebrate the Jewish New Year. Shana Tova, happy New Year to all of us. Traditionally, this is a time of reflection on the year that is ending, and looking ahead, towards the year about to begin.

Mr. President,

The ongoing unrest in the Middle East is a threat to peace and security worldwide, and requires the attention of all Member States. One country is the leading factor in the instability of the region. It is now clear that Iran conducted a military nuclear program, gaining technology and knowledge, aimed to produce elements for a nuclear weapon device. These activities took place in many undeclared sites, using various nuclear materials.

In this regard, the Iranian nuclear weapon program has been under the investigation of the Agency for many years.

Iran, has continuously failed to provide credible explanations, or clarifications, regarding the nature of these past activities, and continues to deceive the Agency, and the international community concerning its clandestine nuclear activities.

The recent Board of Governors resolution, condemning Iran's lack of cooperation with the Agency, and long overdue open questions, reflects the growing international concerns regarding Iran's ill conduct.

Moreover, Iran continues to develop, test and deploy long range ballistic missiles, in direct violation of UN Security Council resolutions, and supports terrorist

organizations throughout the Middle East. Iran, obtaining nuclear weapons, is not an option that Israel, nor the world, can tolerate.

Mr. President,

Four out of five recognized cases of NPT violations, took place in the Middle East – Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria.

Syria is still in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations for over a decade. Syria built an undeclared, clandestine military nuclear reactor at Dair Alzour. Such concealment of illicit nuclear activities, is a severe violation of Syria's safeguards obligations. Syria's non-compliance and lack of cooperation is extremely dangerous. The international community should stand behind the IAEA with a goal towards receiving clear answers from Syria once and for all.

Mr. President,

Unfortunately, the Arab Group continues with its endless efforts, to abuse this professional forum for one reason only – to single out Israel. The agenda item entitled “Israeli Nuclear Capabilities”, placed on the agenda year after year, is politically driven and contradicts the IAEA Statute and mandate. We strongly

object to its inclusion on the agenda. This agenda item draws attention from the important issues concerning the General Conference, to yet another attempt to politicize this professional forum. Moreover, this useless political act is in contradiction to the overall positive spirit in our region. These acts, are bound to fail.

Mr. President,

Today, more than ever, nuclear security and safety, must be a top priority on a global level. This past March, the Agency hosted the first Conference of the Parties to the Amended CPPNM, a major pillar in the nuclear security regime, and in which Israel participated and is an active Member State. The discussion on nuclear security is especially important today, in light of recent events in the Ukraine. Threats to nuclear security and safety, have no boundaries.

We must not ignore the repeated and explicit threats to attack Israel's nuclear facilities by Iran and its proxies. Last year, Israel's nuclear research centers were once again directly targeted. These threats require Israel to take action, and continue to protect its nuclear facilities. Facilities which are upgraded and reinforced in line with IAEA Safety Standards, in order to deal with any attack.

Mr. President,

Israel attaches great importance to IAEA objectives and mission. Israel is an active Member State in a wide range of the Agency's activities in the fields of safety, security, emergency response, and technical cooperation. Israel has committed its best people to these activities, and at the same time, benefits from the Agency's knowledge and capabilities.

Mr. President,

We are hopeful that the new spirit in our region, as demonstrated in the "Abraham Accords", will mark a path forward for meaningful direct dialogue within our region, including in the nuclear fora. Israel's state of the art technology, provides us with significant levels of knowledge and capabilities, which we are ready to share with others, of course under the IAEA umbrella.

Mr. President,

I wish you, and all delegates, prosperity, success and peace in the coming year. I look forward to meaningful discussions in this Conference and to continuing Israel's fruitful relationship with the Agency, this year, and in the years to come.

I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address this distinguished forum.