

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Zhandos Nurmaganbetov, Vice-Minister of
Energy of the
Republic of Kazakhstan
at the 66th session of the General Conference
of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

*Distinguished Chair,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Allow me to welcome all the participants of 66th session of General Conference of International Atomic Energy Agency.

On behalf of Kazakhstan delegation, please accept our congratulations on your election as the Chairman of the 66th session of the General Conference. We are confident that under your leadership and with the support of all delegations, all the tasks assigned to the important forum, will be successfully accomplished.

Kazakhstan fully complies with its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and Safeguards Agreement. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards System is an important and effective tool to support the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Additional Protocol to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards Agreement dated 2007, gave a new impetus to the interaction between the Agency and the Republic of Kazakhstan in terms of uranium mining. Since 2009, additional access to uranium mines has been annually given to International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors. Upon the inspection results, declared data were confirmed.

In cooperation with the Agency and separate states, we successfully meet the challenges related to application of

comprehensive safeguards in Kazakhstan. Over the past several years, integrated safeguards have also been applied in Kazakhstan.

Distinguished Delegates,

Kazakhstan today is a party to all fundamental international treaties in nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of atomic energy, and fully complies with the provisions of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540.

Kazakhstan was the 26th state in the world to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2019 that is an important practical contribution of our country to the global efforts to build a nuclear weapon-free world.

Kazakhstan has made serious efforts to create Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, being the only covering Additional Protocol issues. We express the hope this experience will be beneficial for other regions of the world.

Kazakhstan has consistently been supporting the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the strengthening of its verification regime.

This year our country celebrates the 30th anniversary of the National Nuclear Center of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the organization operating five stations of International Monitoring System in Kazakhstan, and managing the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. The Director General of the NNC effectively chairs Working Group B of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO).

Also, this year our country celebrates the 65th anniversary of the establishment of the Institute of Nuclear Physics, where since 2016

the WWR-K research reactor is being commercially operated on low-enriched fuel.

Distinguished Delegates,

Since independence, the Republic of Kazakhstan has resolved a number of vital issues in nuclear industry that contributed to security strengthening in the young state.

As you know, with the closure of Semipalatinsk test site, Kazakhstan demonstrated to the whole world the power of transparency in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. This was the first legal prohibition of nuclear testing in human history. Since the day, pursuance of nuclear weapon-free world has become essential for Kazakhstan nation.

In 2021, comprehensive environmental survey was completed for the entire area of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. The survey results were highly valued by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts. We appreciate the detailed survey of nature, features and formation mechanisms of radiation situation. We obtained impartial evaluation of the radioactive contamination scale and degree. The information made it possible to develop a scientifically substantiated plan to rehabilitate the test site area, which is scheduled for the near future.

Distinguished Delegates,

Nowadays, Kazakhstan is rapidly developing radiation oncology and nuclear medicine. In the nearest future, we are going to introduce proton therapy, which is most preferable treatment method for pediatric oncological diseases.

Kazakhstan is an active participant in the global ZODIAC initiative, which helps to promote international efforts to prevent zoonotic disease.

No doubt, in the future, the initiative will serve for the Agency in application of gained experience and knowledge in the nuclear and radiation domain.

Dear Colleagues,

With regard to the goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 and predicted electric power shortage, Kazakhstan comprehensively considers development of safe and environmentally friendly nuclear energy in the country.

Kazakhstan considers time and operation proved reactors for the construction of the first Nuclear Power Plant.

At the same time, small modular reactor technology and its application for electric power generation remained the subject for discussion among nuclear representatives. In contrast to the technological breakthrough for the recent decade, the idea of using small modular reactors seems increasingly reasonable and economically feasible.

Therefore, I would like to note that Kazakhstan is also interested in the technology of small modular reactors and considers the technology as a **prospective area** for future development of nuclear power in the country.

Kazakhstan is on the edge of making decision to construct the first NPP. We expect to have INIR follow-up mission in near future, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) provides definite support. Kazakhstan expresses its appreciation for the technical assistance provided.

Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to highlight that starting from 2019, the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Low Enriched Uranium Bank (LEU Bank)** has been under operation in Kazakhstan. The bank plays an important role in implementing the provisions of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. This unique project is a contribution of Kazakhstan and a number of donor countries - the USA, EU, UAE, Kuwait and Norway, and “Nuclear Threat Initiative” Foundation to the peaceful use of nuclear power and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Taking into account the current tense international situation, the Bank becomes especially important. Such support from the Agency to nuclear power industry and NPP users would be an important assistance in the current complicated economic situation in the world and would contribute to the implementation of the mandates of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Distinguished delegates,

In the framework of non-proliferation support and ensuring nuclear security, Kazakhstan continues conversion of research reactors to low-enriched uranium (LEU) fuel and development of fuel disposition technology.

On May 5, 2022, physical start-up of the IVG.1M reactor with new low-enriched uranium (LEU) fuel was performed. Commissioning of the IVG.1M reactor (*upgraded research high-temperature reactor*) with low-enriched uranium (LEU) fuel is scheduled for 2023, following the experimental observation of necessary characteristics for the new core. The spent HEU-fuel is unloaded from the reactor and will be reprocessed in the future.

As of today, operations are completed for dilution of fresh unirradiated graphite highly enriched uranium (HEU) fuel from another Kazakhstani research reactor, the Impulse Graphite Reactor (IGR).

In order to dispose irradiated fuel of this reactor, Kazakhstan specialists have developed a dry mixing technology, which in the future will solve the problem of disposal of irradiated graphite fuel.

At the same time, I would like to note the important role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in promoting these unique technologies not only in Kazakhstan, but also in other countries involved in similar highly enriched uranium (HEU)-fuel minimization programs.

The above-mentioned is another important contribution to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Chair,

Let me once again draw your attention to the importance of the **sovereign equality of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) member States.**

Since joining the Agency in 1994, Kazakhstan is **currently the world leader in uranium mining since 2009**, producing about 46% of the world's uranium, and the world's leading exporter of natural uranium, a consistent supporter to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, being the country where unique International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Bank of Low Enriched Uranium (BLEU) is located, but, unfortunately, like other 30 so-called "homeless states" still deprived of the opportunity to be the member of any elective body and take part in Agency's decision making process, as a whole.

Kazakhstan submitted the draft resolution, which is aimed at resolving a long-standing issue of restoration of sovereign equality of all IAEA Member States. Our idea is to put the first brick to the wall by

adopting the necessary measures to assign the Member States not yet listed in regional areas into appropriate geographical areas. This will pave the way to facilitate initial steps who are willing to identify themselves with certain geographical area they wish to belong to. Kazakhstan has gone through its own designation process and according to its geographical location determined that it belongs to the Far East area.

My delegation believes that the amendment to the Article VI of the IAEA Statute is an important threshold in restoration of the sovereign equality of all IAEA members, which is yet to come into force. Kazakhstan ratified it and stands for its early entry into force. Therefore, this Resolution complements this amendment, giving an eligibility to Kazakhstan to be in the area of Far East.

In this regard, I call upon all IAEA member states to vote in favor of this resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to note that we all pursue one and the same objective – to make the world more sustainable and safer place. In this context, we appreciate and share the importance of the Agency's activity.

I would like to express our **strong determination and commitment to the Agency** in nuclear weapon non-proliferation strengthening, further development of nuclear power in peaceful purposes, and international security enhancement.

Thank you for attention.