



**Statement by Mr Christopher Cutajar, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for
Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Malta**

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Mr President,

I convey my congratulations to you, Chair, on your election as President, and I assure you of my delegation's full support.

Malta fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would, however, like to add a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

Mr President,

We convene at a very challenging time for diplomacy and international relations – from the Russian war in Ukraine and the threat of nuclear catastrophe; the failure of the international community to come to an understanding at the NPT Review Conference, to the DPRK's ballistic missile tests, and the lack of agreement by JCPOA partners.

To echo the words of the UN Secretary General last week, “our world is in big trouble, and the divides are growing deeper”. Whilst we face the biggest challenges of our age, multilateralism remains the only answer.

Mr President,



The unprovoked and unjustified Russian war of aggression on Ukraine has not only brought war back to Europe while grossly violating international law and the principles of the UN Charter, as well as severely undermining global security and stability.

Russia's war has also brought the looming threat of a nuclear incident that could have devastating effects on millions of people. It has also resulted in senseless threats and blackmail on the use of weapons of mass destruction. These threats must stop. Russia bears full responsibility. This illegal war of aggression must end before it's too late.

Malta believes that the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya in Ukraine, and the setting up of a continued presence at the nuclear power plant, reconfirms the Agency's central role in nuclear safety and security worldwide.

The military activity and shelling close to Zaporizhzhya and the South Ukraine Nuclear Power Plants continue to highlight the severe risks to nuclear safety and security as a result of the Russian war in Ukraine. This could result in a major nuclear incident, seriously impacting the lives and livelihoods of large populations.

We therefore welcome the initiative of the IAEA Director General in setting up a protection zone around the ZNPP, and trust in the Agency's continuous monitoring of the situation, while encouraging the use of all available IAEA instruments to ensure the safety and security of all facilities in the region.

At the same time, we seriously believe that the only lasting solution is for the Russian Federation to stop its illegal war of aggression in Ukraine, withdraw its troops, and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence within its internationally recognised borders.



Another area under threat, Mr President, is the non-proliferation regime - an invaluable instrument contributing to international peace and security. For the second time in a row, the international community has missed the opportunity to reach consensus on an outcome document at the NPT Review Conference in August. This was not only a failure of diplomacy. This was also a serious failure to register any progress in global nuclear disarmament and on the threat posed by nuclear weapons on humanity.

This, coupled with the recent alarming rhetoric on the use of nuclear weapons, is why Malta believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is an essential element of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The TPNW strengthens the IAEA safeguards system based on the NPT and helps us move towards our shared goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. These weapons are no guarantee of security. We have to eliminate them before they eliminate humanity.

Mr President,

The current stalemate towards a renewed Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is not tenable. Iran's continuous actions when it comes to its nuclear programme, including the severe proliferation implications that are inconsistent with the JCPOA, are worrying. We, therefore, join other Member States in calling on Iran to immediately implement its JCPOA commitments and cooperate fully with the IAEA. Malta supports the efforts being made by the Joint Commission, and the JCPOA Coordinator, in working towards full JCPOA implementation by all relevant stakeholders.

Related to this are the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile activities, which we fully condemned. The DPRK should seek to comply with its international



obligations and engage with relevant partners to achieve the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

Mr President,

The silver lining at the end of this very bleak picture of the international situation, is that this Agency exists and continues to carry out exceptional work in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and safeguards.

Allow me therefore, Mr President, to commend the IAEA, under the able leadership of Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi, and the Secretariat, for their valuable and tireless work to address all the challenges we currently face, including in avoiding another nuclear catastrophe in Europe.

Mr President,

The Agency's work does not stop at safeguards. The IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme has assisted countries globally to improve technical knowledge, which results in an improved quality of life for the thousands of people.

Malta takes this opportunity to thank the IAEA and the Department of Technical Cooperation, for its provision of assistance and expertise year after year, on projects related to cultural heritage conservation, water treatment, radiation therapy techniques for medical purposes, and cancer treatment. The TCP truly continues to be one of the Agency's most direct ways of assisting Member States in addressing key development goals.

Another more recent IAEA initiative, which we are very proud to support, is the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme. As the initiator of the International Day of Girls in Science, Malta has a particular interest in seeing the advancement of girls in STEM, and in achieving gender parity within the



ranks of the Agency. We are therefore proud to be funding a scholarship for a female student from the Mediterranean region as part of this Fellowship. Through this experience, many more women can play a key role in the application of nuclear technology towards peaceful purposes.

Mr President,

It is our understanding that any multilateral efforts that do not uphold the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States would falter. Allow me to reiterate calls made by other Member States in ensuring that this principle is respected, especially when it comes to the issue of the so-called 'homeless' states, as well as similar issues within the different regional groups.

Furthermore, Malta would like to recall Article VI of the Statute, which calls for the enlargement of the Board of Governors in order to reflect the ever-growing, distinctive membership of the Agency. Malta urges Member States that have yet to accept this amendment, to consider doing so.

Let me conclude Mr President, by saying that the next two years hold great significance for my country. Malta will be taking its seat as a Non-Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council, standing ready to work with other member states, to make sure that the divides quoted by the UN Secretary General are eliminated.

The IAEA and its Member States have a central role to play in this, and I assure you, Mr President, that Malta will continue to provide its full support to Director General Grossi and the Agency's work.

Thank you.