

**Portugal's Statement**  
**66<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the IAEA**  
**September 2022**

Mr. President, Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

Let me also start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election and express our gratitude to the Director General Rafael Grossi and the Secretariat for their excellent work and achievements over the past year.

This year we meet in unprecedented circumstances, facing challenges that, at least some of them, were unimaginable just a few months ago. War in Ukraine and the serious threats of nuclear disaster it raises, as well as the unacceptable threats of using nuclear weapons in this conflict are among them.

In this context, I would like to reiterate Portugal's grave concern with the safety, security, and safeguards implications of the situation in Ukraine and with the Russian Federation's persistent actions endangering nuclear facilities in Ukraine, namely in the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant, which presents risks that are not confined only to the region but that may have repercussions worldwide.

Mr. President,

Having all this in mind, Portugal expresses its full support for the efforts of the IAEA Director General Grossi to ensure the nuclear safety, security, and safeguards in Ukraine under extremely challenging circumstances. In the same spirit we also highly value the continued physical presence of Agency technical experts at the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant, fully supporting his proposal to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the plant, according to modalities to be urgently agreed. Like many other countries, Portugal calls on the Russian Federation to make all efforts needed to ensure that this objective is achieved in the shortest time possible.

Mr. President,

Turning to Iran, Portugal has serious concerns regarding Iran's continued actions inconsistent with the JCPOA, and their severe proliferation implications, all the more so since some of those actions do not have any plausible civilian justification.

We urge Iran to return to the full JCPOA implementation, including all transparency measures, as we call its authorities to engage in a full cooperation with the IAEA without any further delay or conditionality to resolve all pending safeguards issues, in line with its legal obligations under NPT Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

Mr. President,

In this not so brilliant scenario I am happy to share with this Conference some positive developments involving my country:

(i) Last March Portugal conducted its first Integrated Regulatory Review Service Mission, an IRRS Mission, aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the national nuclear and radiation safety regulatory infrastructure, based on IAEA safety standards and international good practices.

After meeting with representatives of the two institutions that form the independent National Regulatory Authority in Portugal, the IAEA experts acknowledged my country's serious commitment to nuclear and radiation safety, not only by improving our regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety, namely by establishing a new independent regulatory authority, but also that by requesting, for the first time, an international peer review of its regulatory oversight for nuclear and radiological facilities and activities.

The team made recommendations for further enhancements of the regulatory system that are now being seriously considered.

Mr President,

(ii) The services provided by the IAEA constitute a fundamental part of the peer review process that enhances nuclear and radiation safety in all Member States. Over the past years, my country has consistently demonstrated its will and ability to contribute effectively to this process by providing experts to integrate IAEA review teams, specifically in the IRRS, EPREV and ARTEMIS missions. We are

committed to continuing this process and to gather strength from the sharing of regulatory experiences.

In the strong pursuit of the enhancement of radiation protection and nuclear safety in Portugal, we have also requested an Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation, an ARTEMIS Mission, which will take place next May.

Mr. President,

(iii) I am also happy to inform the Conference that Portugal is now a full member of the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Bodies, an organisation which celebrated its 25th anniversary in July and which is consistently promoting safety in all practices that use radioactive materials in the region of Ibero-America.

These are good news for the AIEA, for they enhance even further the close cooperation that already exists between the FORO and the Agency, in order to proceed with its technical program in priority areas of mutual interest, like nuclear safety and security.

For Portugal, joining Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Spain, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay is an important step in line with the objectives that it has set in this important matter.

Mr. President,

As highlighted by Director General Grossi, the Agency's current role as nuclear watchdog, critical as it may be in the present circumstances, must not overshadow its contribution to the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals, namely through a recognised leading role in scientific research that provide solutions and support for its Member States in many relevant areas.

We fully agree with this assessment and, therefore, I welcome this opportunity to commend the work being developed by the AIEA at the Seibersdorf Laboratories, especially on the context of the ReNuAL Project. My country truly recognises the strategic value of the project, to which it has continuously contributed for, also through the cooperation of several Portuguese institutions with the Seibersdorf Labs, from which great benefits have emerged.

Mr. President,

Taking into account this positive experience, I can also confirm you our continued support to the *Maria-Sklodowska Curie Fellowship*, acknowledging its importance in fostering the training and integration of young women on the nuclear science area. This project demonstrates that in every area is possible to develop crucial projects to enhance education and advanced training e and promote gender equality.

Another project to which Portugal attaches great importance and is monitoring very closely is the NUTEC Plastics, following the Lisbon United Nations Oceans Conference and the very relevant contribution made by the delegation from the IAEA, headed by Director General Grossi, for creating general awareness for

solutions for this specific form of pollution developed in the framework of this project.

Finally, Mr. President,

I would like to commend the Agency's choice of Project Rays of Hope for the Scientific Forum, reiterating Portugal's full commitment in contributing to the shared European goal of achieving, by 2030, the long-term survival of three out of every four cancer patients.

Hence, Portugal reaffirms its commitment to promote the applications of nuclear science and technology, with particular focus on radiation oncology and health.

Thank you very much for your attention and I wish a productive session of work on the next days.