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66th Session of the IAEA General Conference

26 to 30 September 2022

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Benno Laggner

Governor and Resident Representative of Switzerland to the IAEA

Vienna, 28 September 2022

Mr. President,

Let me first congratulate you on your election as President of the General Conference. We assure you of our full support. We thank Director General Rafael Grossi for his leadership. We also thank the entire Secretariat for the consistently high quality of the work done and for ensuring the operational activities of the Agency during these very challenging times.

Mr. President,

Switzerland strongly condemns Russia's ongoing military aggression against Ukraine as well as the attack on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. All parties to the conflict must respect the special protection afforded to nuclear power plants. We call for the withdrawal of the Russian armed forces from the power plant. This situation is a serious threat to the safety and security of Ukrainian nuclear facilities. It could lead to a nuclear accident or incident with potential release of radioactivity, the consequences of which would not make halt at Ukraine's internationally recognized borders and could last for generations.

Switzerland commends the Director General and the Agency for their tireless efforts, which made it finally possible to conduct an IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya. We strongly support the "Seven Pillars of Nuclear Safety and Security", as identified by the Director General. They must be observed under all circumstances, including during armed conflicts, in order to ensure the safe and secured operation of nuclear installations at all times. Switzerland supports the Director General's proposal to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the NNP in Zaporizhzhya. We also welcome the continued IAEA presence at the plant.

Mr. President,

Switzerland reaffirms its strong support for the JCPOA. The preservation of this agreement remains crucial for the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and international security and is in our collective interest. We urge the concerned parties to rapidly conclude the negotiations after months of intensive diplomacy and to resolve the last outstanding issues without further delay. Furthermore, we remain seriously concerned about Iran's decision to suspend the provisional application of its Additional

Protocol and to cease implementing other JCPOA-related transparency measures. This has a serious impact on the Agency's ability to verify that Iran's activities are exclusively of civilian nature and challenges the Agency's ability to maintain continuity of knowledge.

Switzerland is also deeply concerned about the lack of cooperation by Iran with regard to the open safeguards issues. After more than two years, it is time to provide the Agency with credible and satisfactory answers. We urge Iran to immediately cooperate constructively with the IAEA to resolve all outstanding issues. We call on Iran to answer all of the Agency's outstanding questions and provide without further delay all information and documentation deemed necessary by the Secretariat.

Mr. President,

Switzerland remains deeply concerned about the continuation of the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions. We urge the DPRK to take concrete steps towards abandoning its nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and related programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to cease all related activities. We call on the DPRK to return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards at the earliest possible date. We also call on the DPRK to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Switzerland also calls on Syria to cooperate fully with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues concerning the Dair Alzour site and all related locations.

Switzerland supports efforts to further optimize the safeguards system so that the limited funds available to the Agency can be used to their best effect. We therefore joined the Member States' Support Programme last year to support the Agency in addressing nuclear verification challenges in the coming years.

Mr. President,

35 years ago, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) entered into force, and its Amendment 6 years ago. Switzerland welcomes the convening of the first Review Conference of the Parties to the Amendment to the CPPNM by the Agency earlier this year. Switzerland and Nigeria had the honour to be the Co-Presidents of this Conference. We would once again like to thank the

Secretariat for the excellent support it provided to us throughout the whole process. The Conference was a success. It adopted a substantive Outcome Document by consensus and contributed to the further universalization of the Convention and its Amendment. Furthermore, the request by a majority of Parties to convene a next Review Conference lays the foundation for a strengthened and sustainable treaty regime.

Switzerland welcomes the steadily increasing number of countries hosting international peer review missions in the areas of nuclear safety and security. We encourage all Member States, in particular those with nuclear power programmes, to host such missions, including follow-up reviews, on a regular basis. Switzerland hosted an IRRS (Integrated Regulatory Review Service) mission in October 2021 and is currently working on implementing the findings of the mission. Switzerland will also host an IPPAS (International Physical Protection Advisory Service) mission in October and November 2023, as a follow-up to the mission conducted in 2018.

Mr. President,

Switzerland looks forward to the Joint 8th and 9th Review Meeting of the “Convention on Nuclear Safety” (CNS) next March. We will participate actively and seek to achieve an ambitious outcome. We hope that this meeting will further strengthen the effective implementation of the CNS and of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety.

Furthermore, Switzerland would like to thank the Agency for its precious support during the Swiss Presidency of the 7th Review Meeting of the Joint Convention held in June this year. The Contracting Parties discussed and agreed on a number of cross-cutting issues related to the safety of spent fuel and radioactive waste management. The Review Meeting also successfully adopted a number of changes to the procedural mechanisms of the Convention to make the peer review process more efficient and effective.

Mr. President,

Switzerland appreciates the contribution of the Agency's activities in the field of nuclear science, technology and applications for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We welcome the signing of a Practical Arrangement

between the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology and the Agency on the margins of the General Conference. This cooperation will result in the development of aquifer vulnerability maps for Africa and include specialized noble gas analysis.

Finally, I would like to conclude my remarks by highlighting a recent important step in Switzerland regarding the construction of the planned deep geological repository for radioactive waste. Our National Co-operative for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste (Nagra) recently announced the geological subsurface location which offers the best geological barrier effect, the best stability of the rock layers and a high degree of flexibility for the layout of the underground repository compared with other suitable sites. Nagra will now prepare the general license applications and submit them to the Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE) in around two years. After that, the federal safety authorities will assess them in detail. Based on current planning, the deep geological repository could go into operation from 2050.

Thank you.