

National Statement by Finland September 27, 2023 67th IAEA General Conference

Madam President,

It is a great pleasure and an honour to be here among you today. Finland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union, to which I will add some remarks in my national capacity.

Let me start by expressing my full support to the IAEA's work. I commend the Director General Grossi and the IAEA Secretariat for their independent and professional work.

I want to express support to the IAEA's work concerning the nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine. The situation is especially critical at Europe's largest nuclear facility in Zaporizhzhia, which has been attacked and illegally seized by the Russian Federation. This is unacceptable. Russia must immediately withdraw all its armed forces from the Ukrainian nuclear facilities. It must cease military action and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Safety and security of peaceful nuclear facilities should be guaranteed even in the event of an armed conflict. Respect of all international obligations regarding nuclear safety and security should remain therefore in the interest of all parties to conflicts.

Unfortunately, we face major proliferation challenges. We urge Iran to reverse its recent decisions and restore full cooperation with the IAEA. Iran must allow the Agency to carry out verification activities according to its mandate. Diplomatic efforts are needed to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which is a major contribution to nuclear non-proliferation.

Another source of concern is the continued nuclear and ballistic missile programme of the DPRK. We urge the DPRK to engage in discussions in order to reach sustainable peace and security.

Madam President,

Climate change is a global challenge. Finland is committed to meeting emission reduction targets and moving towards carbon neutrality followed by carbon negativity. In Finland, we have over 45 years tradition in the use of nuclear power. I want to underline that nuclear energy and renewable energy sources are not mutually exclusive. We have in our energy mix one of the highest shares of renewables in Europe. Our electricity sector is already now largely decarbonized – the share of CO₂ free electricity production in Finland is currently over 90 %. This year over 40% of electricity will be produced by nuclear power as Olkiluoto 3 nuclear power plant unit has started its commercial production in this April. .

Today, nuclear history is in the making in Finland. We are approaching the start of deep geological disposal of spent nuclear fuel, as the first country in the world. Final disposal of spent fuel is expected to start in mid 2020s'. This will contribute to nuclear safety as well.

Disposal of spent nuclear fuel to ONKALO repository is a solution. It aims to eliminate harmful effects of nuclear energy production for future generations forever. To achieve this goal also safeguards of nuclear materials must be taken carefully into account. Finland is seriously committed together with the IAEA and European Commission to implement safeguards of the repository. This will be done by practically eliminating the risk that any safeguards concerns will ever rise concern-

ing nuclear material disposed of. The methodology features novel safeguards technologies, developed together under the auspices of Finnish and a few other member states' support programmes to the IAEA safeguards.

Dear colleagues

We emphasize the importance and essential responsibility of the IAEA in nuclear security. Finland continues to provide financial and in-kind support to the IAEA Nuclear Security activities.

Finland is willing to share its expertise in nuclear safety and security with the global community. As an example, I would like to highlight our cooperation with AFCONE in a project aiming to the full implementation of safeguards regulation on the whole African continent.

Madam President,

We will continue to do our best to support the IAEA to implement its core mandate and work in its independent expert role. We also want to boost the use of new technologies, most notably small modular reactors.

I thank you, Madam President.