

67th General Conference of the IAEA

Statement

The Republic of Latvia

Mr. Edvīns Balševics, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia,

Vienna, Austria, 25 – 29 September 2023

Madam President,

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Latvia fully aligns with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in a national capacity.

Madam President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as President of this Conference and I look forward to work under your guidance.

Madam President,

For more than a year and a half we have expressed our utmost concern over the nuclear safety and security risks in Ukraine's nuclear facilities caused by the Russian Federation. And for more than a year and a half we have seen the tireless work of the Director General and the Agency in sustaining global nuclear safety and security by supporting and assisting Ukraine and the rest of the world to prevent a severe nuclear accident.

Latvia acknowledges the efforts of Agency's missions in Ukraine's nuclear facilities, especially the permanent presence of IAEA experts at Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant to foster safe and secure operation of nuclear facilities in Ukraine. It is crucial to continue to monitor Ukraine's nuclear facilities, and to provide the required technical support and assistance. Latvia is deeply grateful for your work that helps to keep global society safe.

Madam President,

It is with grave concern that we look upon Iran moving further away from its JCPOA commitments, thus posing a threat of creating irreversible proliferation implications in the region and beyond. It is also worrying that Iran continues not to engage with the Agency timely and transparently concerning the NPT Safeguards Agreement, despite Agency's continued efforts and numerous calls to do so. We condemn such detrimental actions.

Latvia also condemns continued provocations from the DPRK. We urge it to pursue complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization, as its nuclear program and arsenal are clear violations of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. We are grateful for the Agency's readiness to verify DPRK's nuclear programme.

Overall, Latvia fully supports the Agency's role in enhancing global nuclear safety and security, as well as facilitating peaceful uses of nuclear technology and fostering nuclear research. We must maintain these efforts in order to prevent nuclear terrorism and sustain peaceful uses of nuclear technology that enable responsible innovations in energy, medicine, and elsewhere.

Madam President,

Latvia commends the IAEA Technical Cooperation Department for its invaluable support to Member States, particularly its guidance on adjusting regulatory frameworks to ensure high standards of safety, security and safeguards.

Three Latvian national projects have been implemented within the framework of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Program during the cycle 2022 – 2023. This year we also have hosted already 5 fellowships and scientific visits in food safety and our institutions are ready to host more fellows and visitors in dosimetry and medical physics and food safety.

For the next planning cycle 2024-2025, Latvia has submitted three national projects where our focus will be on improvement of radiation safety control in radioactive waste management, strengthening of the state regulatory infrastructure for radiation and nuclear safety, and improving the quality and availability of health care by strengthening diagnostic radiology and radiation therapy services.

To assess national progress in strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness of the regulatory infrastructure, Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) follow-up mission next year will be held in Latvia.

We are grateful to the IAEA for the possibility which it has provided to Latvian institutions to strengthen the competence in various areas of nuclear safety and security.

Madam President,

In conclusion, Latvia highly values the important role of the Agency and international cooperation that helps to solve essential issues of global safety, security and peace.

Thank you.