



**IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century
Abu Dhabi, 30 October – 1 November 2017**

Statement made by Switzerland

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first express my sincere congratulations to your nomination as president of this conference. At the same time, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the organizers of this conference and to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for their hospitality.

Mr President

Switzerland has a long history in the peaceful use of nuclear technology and was actively involved since its earliest days. Nuclear Power has and still remains an essential pillar of the Swiss energy policy. In the past 40 years, Switzerland has operated successfully five Nuclear Power Reactors providing roughly 40 per cent of the country's total electricity production. In May of this year a majority of the population accepted in a popular referendum the new Swiss energy policy called Energy Strategy 2050. The aim of this strategy is to reduce energy consumption, improve energy efficiency and promote the use of renewable energies. Our geographical location gives us the

opportunity to work close to major European markets and to have a close exchange with our neighbors. The reduction of renewable energy costs and new efficiency technologies combined with smart grids and progress in storage are the assets that Switzerland wishes to develop in order to move towards a more sustainable energy system.

Under the new energy strategy no new nuclear power plants can be constructed, while existing nuclear power plants can be operated as long as they are safe. There are therefore no fixed dates for the closure of existing nuclear power plants. The Swiss Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate, ENSI, which monitors the safety of our nuclear power plants, will decide on the safety measures to be implemented so that operators can continue to get the license to operate their nuclear power plants. In the event that the regulatory authority decides that the operators do not meet the statutory safety requirements, the nuclear power plants will have to be taken out of operation.

At this stage, it seems highly realistic that our nuclear power plants will be able to operate until the 2030s, which gives us enough time to implement our energy transition. Even if Switzerland renounces the construction of new third-generation nuclear power plants, nuclear research will continue and will not be limited by the 2050 Energy Strategy. Switzerland will continue to invest in national and international research on nuclear fission and fusion.

Through the continued production of electricity in our existing nuclear power plants, the future decommissioning of nuclear power plants and the search for sites for the deep storage of radioactive waste will ensure that Switzerland remains involved in the nuclear sector for decades to come.

Mr President

Nuclear Safety is and remains of great importance to Switzerland. Especially after the accident in Fukushima Daiichi over six years ago the issue of nuclear safety has gained large international attention and the IAEA is expected to play a leading role in its contribution to enhance the safety of nuclear installations worldwide. In order to fulfil this important task an underlying strategy on nuclear safety with clear priorities, timelines and performance indicators is fundamental. Such a strategy would establish the foundation against which the Agency can create, monitor and measure its success.

The seventh review conference of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) held this spring in Vienna reaffirmed the commitment of States Parties to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety (VDNS). This ensures that the VDNS remains a reference document for future review processes within the Convention. The Agency can play a vital role in further promoting the universalization of the principles of the VDNS. This was also demonstrated in this year's IAEA General Conference Resolution on Nuclear Safety. Member States have encouraged the IAEA to further enhance the mutual sharing of experience and information exchange in the field of safety improvements at existing nuclear power plants.

Mr President

The Security of Nuclear Material is of great importance. With the end of the Nuclear Security Summit Process the IAEA is the best platform for enhancing comprehensive efforts in nuclear security and coordinating the various existing initiatives due to its almost universal membership and its unique

expertise. We therefore encourage the IAEA to continue its engagement in this important area.

Mr President

In conclusion, I can assure you that Switzerland remains fully committed to the work of the IAEA and will continue to actively engage in the different areas and in international cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.