

STATEMENT

BY

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Madame President, Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Collinson, on chairing this distinguished forum and presiding over the 61st session of the IAEA General Conference. I take this opportunity to welcome Grenada, the newest member of the Agency. Israel looks forward to working with its delegates, and all member states, in the coming year.

Madame President,

This week, Israel and the Jewish people worldwide celebrate the Jewish New Year. Shana Tova to all of you. Traditionally, this is a time of reflection on the year that is ending, and looking ahead to the year about to begin.

This past year, Israel was honored to take part in events marking the IAEA's 60th anniversary. We intend to continue participating in the important work of the Agency for many more years to come, as we have since its establishment in 1957.

Madame President,

One of the pillars of Israel's activity as a member of the IAEA remains our significant collaboration with the Agency's Technical Cooperation Program. Israel's contribution to the Technical Cooperation Fund has increased considerably in recent years.

As part of the program, Israel has developed new initiatives in education, medicine, agriculture and more. Within the TC regional group, Israel and its partners in the Middle East have undertaken a groundbreaking regional program to ensure food security for the people in the area.

Israel greatly supports regional initiatives to promote peaceful applications of nuclear technologies. Israel is a founding member of the Synchrotron-Light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East, located in Jordan, and has donated five million dollars to this project. Additionally, Israel looks forward to participating in the

upcoming IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century this year, in the UAE.

Israel would also like to commend the IAEA on the recent opening of the Low Enriched Uranium Bank in Kazakhstan. This venture should contribute to international non-proliferation efforts.

Madame President,

Israel continues to strictly follow IAEA guidance regarding the safety and security of its nuclear facilities and the protection of materials used in nuclear research and applications.

Furthermore, Israel continues to maintain the highest standards of safety and security within its facilities, both routinely and in emergency preparedness. We also comply with the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its amendment.

Israel takes part in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, as well as the Nuclear Security Contact Group and in many more IAEA nuclear security-related initiatives, committees and exercises.

As the Head of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission, I call upon my Arab colleagues to join forces with us to address the common challenges related to nuclear security in our region. The State of Israel has repeatedly expressed its willingness to cooperate with any state in the Middle East to strengthen nuclear security and safety.

Unfortunately, the Arab Group continues to abuse this professional, technical forum in order to attack Israel politically.

The agenda item entitled, "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities", placed on the agenda each year, is politically driven and contradicts the IAEA Statute and mandate. We strongly object to its inclusion on the agenda. The use of this platform for political attacks undermines the spirit of mutual confidence and cooperation so needed in the Middle East.

Madame President,

The continuing unrest in the Middle East threatens peace and security worldwide and requires the attention of all member states. Political and social instability, internal conflicts and lack of governance provide fertile ground for proliferation of WMD capabilities and terrorism.

Two nations in the Middle East have a leading role in destabilizing the region. Iran continues to develop, test and deploy ballistic missiles in direct violation of UN Security Council Resolutions and supports terrorist groups throughout the Middle East.

Two years after the signing of the JCPOA, Iran has yet to earn the international community's trust, due to its longstanding record of obstruction, aggression and concealment.

Iran must fulfill its nuclear-related commitments in good faith, fully and transparently. The international community must send a strong message of zero-tolerance to any obstructions, and make clear to Iran that it is under close scrutiny.

Madame President,

Ten years ago the secretive nuclear reactor at the Dair Alzour site in Syria was revealed to the international community. Many questions remain regarding this clear breach of Syria's safeguard agreements.

Syria's lack of cooperation and transparency is a source of significant concern, and sets a dangerous precedent. We strongly support the Director General's call on Syria to cooperate fully with the Agency on issues relating to all relevant sites.

The international community must persist in demanding that Syria urgently remedy its non-compliance and provide full access to all information, sites, material and persons.

Madame President,

On the eve of one of our holiest days, the Jewish New Year, I wish you and all fellow delegates prosperity, success and peace in the coming year.

I look forward to meaningful discussions in this forum, and to continuing Israel's fruitful relationship with the Agency this year, and in the years to come.

I thank you, Madame President, for the opportunity to address this distinguished forum.