

Statement of the Head of Delegation of the Slovak Republic

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Chairperson of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic

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of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

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Madam President, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Slovak Delegation, let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Madam President, on your election as the President of the Sixty First IAEA General Conference. You may rest assured of the full support of my delegation in discharging your duties. I would also like to welcome Grenada as a new Member State.

My delegation subscribes to the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Estonia on behalf of the European Union. In addition, I would like to address some issues in my national capacity that are of particular importance to my country.

Madam President,

Peaceful use of nuclear energy remains a key priority and of a strategic importance for Slovakia.

Nuclear energy continues to have a stable position in the Slovak energy mix and constitutes one of the main pillars of our national Energy Policy. Currently, 2 new additional units at the Mochovce site are being constructed and a new nuclear source is considered at the Jaslovské Bohunice site. With the finalisation of these additional units, Slovak nuclear power programme should provide for sufficient energy generating capacity for the country in the years to come.

Despite the projections for global installed nuclear power capacity being lowered, we welcome its steady continuous growth, particularly in developing countries with increasing electricity demands. Nuclear power remains an important option for my country when improving our energy supply security and addressing energy needs at affordable and stable generating costs while taking into account environmental protection.

Slovakia is of view that nuclear power, with its low carbon benefits, large capacity and dispatchable outputs, contributes significantly to meeting the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global temperature rise below 2°C, mitigating climate change and plays an important role in reaching the SDG's. In this regards, Slovakia commends the Agency's leading role in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology and wishes to reiterate its full support to all IAEA efforts in this field.

Madam President,

Nuclear safety is one of the key preconditions for the use of nuclear energy. Slovakia supports the Agency's efforts aimed at globalizing nuclear safety by networking, integrating safety-related activities, assisting the Member States in the implementation of the IAEA Safety Standards, and promoting

adherence to the relevant international conventions (in particular the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Management of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste).

Slovakia has actively participated in this year's 7th Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the CNS. The meeting, inter alia, highlighted the importance of sustaining and enhancing a nuclear safety culture, maintaining effective legal and independent regulatory frameworks, addressed financial and human resources constraints, as well as the importance of cooperation in the area of emergency preparedness and response. In case of Slovakia, 4 out of 4 challenges from the previous 6th Review Meeting have been closed and the respective Country Group identified 4 Areas of Good Performance and assigned 2 new challenges for my country to address during the next review cycle.

As regards our recent national legal developments, I would like to mention that the new amendment of the Slovak Atomic Act has entered into force in August this year. It fully transposes the amended Euratom Directive on Nuclear Safety of 2014, as well as selected provisions of the Euratom BSS Directive of 2013 laying down basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionizing radiation. The amended Act together with the existing legislation, incorporates into our national legislation all new provisions introduced in the 2014 Nuclear Safety Directive that, inter alia, makes mandatory the CNS objective to prevent accidents and mitigate radiological releases, sets up a concept of regular topic peer reviews on specific nuclear safety-related issue, strengthens the role of national regulatory authorities and increases transparency; thus further enhancing and strengthening the Euratom's nuclear safety regime.

Madam President,

My delegation fully supports the Technical Cooperation Programme and the role that the Agency plays in further development of the peaceful applications of nuclear technology. Slovakia appreciates the implementation of measures aimed at greater efficiency and effectiveness in technical cooperation management and project implementation, as well as the application of the principles of transparency and accountability. I would like to emphasize the importance and the benefits of technical cooperation for the Member States, e.g. in sharing and providing scientific and technical assistance, expertise and know-how by countries which have reached a high level competence in a given field. In this respect, the first International Conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme held in Vienna at the end of May served as a good platform for discussion and mutual exchange of experiences, good practices and lessons learnt in this area. It was positively appreciated by the participants and Slovakia itself as well.

Given the dependent correlation between the sufficient funding and efficient implementation of the TC projects, it is my delegation's view that the resources of the Technical Cooperation Fund should be sufficient, assured and predictable. We therefore support the Agency's efforts aimed at strengthening the current guidelines on the application of the Due Account Mechanism, and encourage Member States to pay on time and in full their share of TCF target.

At last, Slovakia welcomes the commencement of activities of the Group of Friends for Women in Nuclear, the initiative announced at the June 2017 Board of Governors. I would like to express our preparedness to support the

group's work in achieving the goals of strengthening the position and increasing the number of capable women in the field of nuclear energy.

Finally, Madam President, I need to address one more issue.

Since the last General Conference, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has carried out yet another nuclear test and a number of ballistic missile launches. Such actions are flagrant violations of multiple UN Security Council resolutions and constitute a threat to regional stability and international peace and security. We call upon North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapon and missile programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, cease all related activities and engage in constructive dialogue.

Furthermore, we call upon the DPRK to recommit to the NPT and to comply with its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA and all its international obligations. Slovakia supports the essential role of the IAEA in verifying the DPRK's nuclear programme and appreciates its readiness to immediately resume its verification tasks in the DPRK, once it is possible.

Madam President, let me assure you of Slovakia's continuous and full support to the Agency.

I thank you.