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MESSAGE TO THE SIXTY-FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

Vienna, 18 September 2017

*Delivered by Mr. Tom Markram, Deputy to UN High Representative for Disarmament
Affairs*

I am pleased to greet the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Sixty years since its founding, the IAEA continues to serve as a bulwark against nuclear proliferation and as an essential forum for international cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Its technical cooperation programmes help Member States to advance sustainable development – a valuable yet sometimes overlooked dimension of the Agency's work. The international recognition garnered by the Agency is testament to its work and integrity.

Many challenges have been met, but many also remain.

Nuclear security continues to be at the forefront of international concerns, and every care must be taken to minimize the threat of non-state actors acquiring nuclear material. The IAEA's assistance to States in protecting nuclear materials and facilities from malicious acts is crucial.

The world can never be complacent about nuclear safety. One of the IAEA's many roles is helping countries who wish to use nuclear power and nuclear technology to do so safely, securely and sustainably. As such, there is always work to be done.

The IAEA, through the implementation of safeguards agreements, continues to work to ensure that the use of nuclear power will not contribute to nuclear weapons proliferation. This is an integral contribution to international peace and security.

The value of this contribution has been demonstrated clearly by the IAEA's role in overseeing the implementation of nuclear commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. I remain confident that this historic agreement is the best way to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme and realize the great aspiration of the Iranian people. I commend the IAEA for its outstanding efforts in the interest of international peace.

The importance of ensuring full support for the IAEA's safeguards mission has also been underscored by other recent events. I fully condemn the recent nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is yet another serious breach of its international obligations and undermines disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. I welcome the IAEA's continued remote monitoring of the DPRK's nuclear facilities and its readiness to resume verification work in the DPRK.

I commend both the Director-General and the IAEA staff, both past and present, for their efforts. And I look forward to the IAEA and the United Nations continuing to work together for sustainable development and for a world without nuclear weapons.