

Statement by the **Republic of Austria**

At the **IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology: Addressing Current and Emerging Development Challenges**

28. – 30. November 2018, Vienna

Delivered by Mr Karl Prummer, Chargé d'affaires

Austria fully aligns herself with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU by Sweden. Let me add some remarks from a national viewpoint:

As the IAEA's host country, Austria is welcoming this conference as an excellent opportunity to highlight the contribution this organization is making in a multitude of fields to the advancement of human development.

Austria's recognition of this contribution was underlined most recently when Federal President Van der Bellen became the first Head of State to visit the IAEA's Seibersdorf laboratories. The President was impressed by the work undertaken in the laboratories and called them "a hub of scientific excellence and one more reason for Austria to be proud to host the IAEA in our country". Those laboratories and their outstanding work certainly deserve special recognition in the context of this conference and I would also like to take this opportunity to reconfirm Austria's full support for the "ReNuAL" and "ReNuAL+" projects and our appreciation for the excellent progress on their implementation.

Given that the potential role of nuclear power as a tool to mitigate climate change has already been extensively discussed at many other events, we find it regrettable that this topic is figuring again very prominently on the agenda of this meeting, contrary to its original concept. Let me clearly state Austria's opinion on this issue:

Austria does not consider nuclear power compatible with the concept of sustainable development; in our view, reliance on nuclear power is neither a viable nor a cost-efficient option to combat the greenhouse effect.

Nuclear power entails a substantial risk of severe accidents with large releases of radioactivity possibly leading to severe adverse impacts and the use of nuclear power burdens future generations irresponsibly with radioactive waste.

Austria sees the solution for challenges arising from energy and climate policy requirements in energy efficiency and increased use of renewable sources of energy.

Like many others who have addressed this conference before, Austria regrets that it was not possible to include a reference to the key role of the IAEA's work on peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology in the context of the NPT and its third pillar. Together with the Agency's indispensable work in the field of safeguards, these activities make the IAEA a true pillar of international peace and stability.

Let me also mention, however, that all three pillars of the NPT system have to be seen in conjunction. For all the Agency's achievements in pillars two and three, Austria and many other countries are extremely concerned at dangerous trends that have surfaced over recent years in the area of pillar 1 or nuclear disarmament. The TPNW and its signature by, so far, 69 states and ratification by 19, is a key tool to address these concerns and to ensure that pillar 1 does not fail the NPT architecture.

On a more positive note, let me specifically refer to one of the features of this conference which Austria particularly welcomes and supports, namely the due consideration given to the issue of the role of women in the nuclear sector. Austria wants to emphasize that this is an aspect that needs to be high on the list of priorities in all fields of the Agency's activities, not only in Nuclear Science and Applications or Technical Cooperation. In this context, let me acknowledge the important work the "Group of Friends for Women in Nuclear" is doing here in Vienna under the dynamic leadership of our Australian and Mexican colleagues.

Before I close, I consider it as my pleasant duty as representative of the Agency's host country to pay tribute to DDG Aldo Malavasi, who is about to retire from the Agency. He is certainly the "spiritus movens" behind this event, but among his many impressive achievements in his service to this organisation and its Member States, that is obviously only the uppermost tip of the iceberg. Especially with ReNuAL and ReNuAL+, Aldo Malavasi has left a legacy which will still last for many decades. Without him, these projects and their big success would be unthinkable. The Seibersdorf Laboratories certainly do a lot to help fight some of the most infectious diseases we know, but having seen DDG Malavasi in action, one clearly understood that his enthusiasm and his positive energy were even more infectious than these diseases.

Let me, DDG Malavasi, also in the name of Foreign Minister Kneissl, thank you for all you have done for the Agency and its Member States but also for Austria as the Agency's host country.

We wish you all the best for the future and honestly hope – or rather expect – that you will still visit Austria many times in the years to come, especially in order to see your splendid work on the Seibersdorf Laboratories come to full fruition.

With this, I wish all of you a successful conference and an agreeable stay in Vienna.

Thank you.