

## **STATEMENT BY ESTONIA**

### **Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology**

**Mr Harry Liiv**

**Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of the Environment**

**Vienna, 28 November 2018**

#### **Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Estonian delegation, I would like to join the previous speakers in welcoming the organisation of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (Agency) Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology as well as development of ministerial declaration to address current and emerging development challenges.

Estonia fully aligns itself with the EU statement and we would like to highlight some key points for Estonia.

#### **Distinguished Co-Chairs,**

Although Estonia is a non-nuclear power country, we benefit from the diversity of nuclear science and technology in medicine, industry and education to improve the quality of life and contribute to the socio-economic development.

Estonia especially values the Technical Cooperation Programme of the Agency and its role in enhancing a responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology all around the world. We appreciate the role of the Technical Cooperation Programme in contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

Estonia has benefitted from different projects funded by the Technical Cooperation Fund for more than 25 years now. The Agency has supported us in establishing our cancer diagnosis and treatment facilities and nuclear medicine centres, with competent, well trained staff and the necessary equipment. Through the cooperation with the Agency, we have gained valuable knowledge and gained expertise that we are now sharing with other Member States.

Currently, our biggest challenge is to build a radioactive waste repository into Estonia by 2040 to ensure a long term safe storage of radioactive waste. For this purpose, we are starting to launch site selection and strategic environmental impact assessment procedures in 2019.

**Distinguished Co-Chairs,**

In 2015, Paris Agreement was a historic demonstration of all countries' collective commitment to address climate change. The Government of Estonia is committed to fight against global climate change, focusing especially on the situation in the least developed countries and the small island developing states. We acknowledge the continued increased role in the use of nuclear power in the long term in energy security, and using nuclear science and technologies for socio-economic and non-climatic environmental benefits. However, we would like to stress the importance to address undertaken actions in a transparent manner and establish reliable communication between interested parties.

**Distinguished Co-Chairs,**

Estonia fully recognizes the valuable role of the Agency in the non-proliferation regime and in ensuring that nuclear material and technology are used only for peaceful purposes. This can only be achieved by implementing highest standards in safeguards, nuclear and radiation safety and security. We support universal implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons which is the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and stress the essence of the Agency's safeguards system.

Estonia also attaches great importance to the improvement of nuclear safety and updates its regulatory framework on regular basis. For this purpose, we are using the help of the Agency and host Integrated Regulatory Review Service follow-up mission and ARTEMIS mission in March and April next year.

**Distinguished Co-Chairs,**

Finally, I want to express our appreciation of the work done by the Director General and the Secretariat, and we call upon all countries to support the Agency in these efforts.

Thank you, Distinguished Co-Chairs.