



European Union

Statement on the occasion of the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology

Vienna, 28-30 November 2018

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

1. The EU and its Member States welcome the organisation of the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology which provides a good occasion to engage in a dialogue on nuclear science and technologies and their application for achieving sustainable development as well as their role in addressing current and future emerging development challenges. We look forward to fruitful discussions during these upcoming days on this topic, including the importance of the Agency's TC programme and other delivery mechanisms. The numerous topics that will be addressed throughout the conference also illustrate the diversity and the richness of nuclear applications and their possible contribution to a wide array of socio-economic development issues, thus improving the quality of life and wellbeing of society. In addition the conference will in our view contribute to increase public awareness on what the IAEA is providing to enable the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technology.
2. We welcome the participation of other international organisations at this conference. We are convinced we stand to gain collectively by strengthening their existing partnerships with the IAEA and explore further/additional traditional and non-traditional partnerships with relevant regional and multilateral organisations, such as WHO, FAO, UNEP and others.
3. First, we would like to commend the work done by the co-chairs in ensuring a high level of consultation in the preparation of this conference, by both presenting a comprehensive, yet balanced programme that addresses a number of nuclear applications relevant matters, and also by developing a draft ministerial declaration. We welcome the attention paid in preparing the conference to achieving gender-balanced panels as well as the inclusion of a specific discussion of "Women in nuclear science and technology". This is in the line with the importance the EU attaches to the empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming, including as a contribution to the implementation of SDG 5.
4. The EU would like to take this opportunity to underline the strong contribution of the IAEA's work to the implementation of the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Agency's work on nuclear science, technology and applications underpins the right of States Parties to the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with Article IV of the NPT, also known as the "third pillar" of the treaty.

The Agency's activities, inter alia, facilitate and provide assistance in the application of radiation and nuclear-related technologies to advance the goal of the eradication of poverty and hunger worldwide, and to significantly contribute to the worldwide improvement of sustainable development and human health. By demonstrating the valuable contribution of the IAEA and its Member States to this end throughout the years, this Conference will make a positive contribution to the upcoming NPT PrepCom in New York next year as well as to the ongoing review process of the NPT as a whole.

5. Our responsible use of nuclear science and technologies and their applications for peaceful purposes can only be widely acceptable if they are carried out at the highest standards in safeguards, nuclear and radiation safety as well as nuclear security.
6. We believe that the IAEA has an important role to play, including through its Technical Cooperation Programme and other delivery mechanisms in attaining the SDGs. These goals include, among others relevant to the Agency's mandate and programmatic work, ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture, ensuring healthy lives and promotion of well-being for all. Nuclear science and technologies can also contribute to Member States' efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as to monitor its effects, for instance through the measurement of ocean acidification. All these areas are directly linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and this conference will provide an opportunity to further highlight the IAEA's contribution in this endeavour.
7. Nuclear technologies play an imperative role in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of non-communicable diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases, through screening instruments and adequate treatments. In a globalised world, nuclear technologies also have a key role to play to help food traceability, healthcare and anti-counterfeiting of drugs. Hence, we encourage the Agency to remain involved, in a cross-cutting manner, and in cooperation with other relevant international organisations, to face these challenges.
8. In order to pursue a responsible development of such technologies, and thus foster their role in the achievement of SDGs as well as in other global environmental challenges, the EU and its Member States attach particular importance to the work of the Agency in supporting research and development. We strongly encourage the Agency to promote exchange of practices, research networks and projects and collaboration with technical experts and scientists from Member States involved in R&D in the field of nuclear science and technologies. The Agency's work in training and education also contributes to this objective.
9. For instance, the EU and its Member States value the importance of Coordinated Research Projects (CRPs) in the framework of the IAEA, one of the latest one being on "Enhancing Vector Refractoriness to Trypanosome Infection", which allowed nineteen countries to jointly study symbiotic bacteria and pathogens associated with tsetse flies. Such projects are an example of how scientists from both developed and developing countries can work together to foster exchange of knowledge, best practices and techniques.
10. Furthermore, we recognize the importance of research reactors for capacity building, research and development and their major contributions in fields such as

human health, food and agriculture. In this regard, we commend the continuing development of the ICERR (IAEA designated International Centre based on Research Reactors) programme. This growing network will play an important role in the promotion of capacity building and research, along with the Internet Research Laboratories.

11. The long-standing and successful collaboration between the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and the IAEA has been reinforced by a practical arrangement on cooperation in nuclear science and applications for sustainable development, covering a range of different specific topics, including for example soil sciences, earth observation, food safety, food traceability and authenticity, ocean science, health, environmental monitoring and sustainable water management.
12. The IAEA's Technical Cooperation programme, as well as its other delivery mechanisms, play a key role in delivery and transfer of nuclear technologies. In this regard, the EU and its Member States continue to be strong supporters of the TCP, including through the TC Fund and other extrabudgetary contributions such as the Peaceful Uses Initiative.
13. The effective application of IAEA safety standards and security guidance in the course of the implementation of Technical Cooperation projects that involve the peaceful uses of nuclear and other radiological material is necessary for ensuring that they are used safely and remain secure and thereby contribute to building the required public trust and confidence in the use of nuclear energy applications worldwide.
14. We also would like to express our high appreciation to the IAEA for its role in the international response to emerging threats, like the outbreak of the Zika and Ebola viruses. It is important that the Agency continues to develop its capacity in such areas. The EU and its Member States fully support the Director General's initiative on the much needed modernisation of the nuclear sciences and application laboratories in Seibersdorf (ReNuAL and ReNuAL+) as one key priority in order to ensure the ongoing ability of the Agency to respond effectively to the Member States demands in the above mentioned areas. The EU has collectively contributed with more than €5.7 million to the laboratory renovations, in addition to providing in-kind support.

Thank you, Distinguished Co-Chairs.