

**Statement by Ms Lina Sabaitienė, Vice-minister of Energy
of the Republic of Lithuania, at the 63rd Session of the
General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

Madame President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, Lithuania would like to express the deepest condolences to the family of Director General Yukiya Amano and to the IAEA staff. This is a great loss for the Agency and for the international community as a whole. His wisdom and bright remarks should always be a driving force behind our decisions and activities related to nuclear safety. Let us remember: *“There can be no grounds for complacency about nuclear safety in any country. ... Continuous questioning and openness to learning from experience are key to safety culture and are essential for everyone involved in nuclear power. Safety must always come first.”*

Using this opportunity allow me to congratulate you, Madame Alicia Buenrostro Massieu, on the election as the President of the 63rd General Conference.

Madame President,

Lithuania fully associates itself with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union. In my national capacity, I would like to add the following.

My country continues the decommissioning of Ignalina NPP firmly on time while maintaining the highest level of nuclear safety. Last year the core of Ignalina NPP Unit 2 reactor was completely defueled, the spent fuel from both units' pools is being moved to the Interim Storage Facility. This way Lithuania is preparing for the pioneer dismantling of RBMK reactors – a huge and long-lasting technological challenge.

We believe that IAEA peer review missions are excellent tools for improvement and strengthening nuclear safety during the whole NPP life cycle. Lithuania has invited the Agency to conduct a follow-up IRRS mission in 2020 and ARTEMIS mission in 2021.

Madame President,

Risk and safety assessments (stress tests), carried out by the EU, gave an important input to the strengthening of nuclear safety in participating countries. Implementation of

stress tests peer review recommendations at nuclear facilities could give a real safety improvement “on the ground”. We call upon countries who participated in stress tests to properly respond to and fully implement the findings and recommendations of these assessments in a timely manner.

In our view, future of nuclear energy strongly depends on the proper implementation of the IAEA standards and recommendations. Therefore, Vienna declaration and the revised IAEA safety standards shall be strictly followed. In this light we encourage all IAEA Member States, especially embarking countries, to make use of the IAEA peer review missions and advisory services and to implement the recommended actions.

The highest level of nuclear safety is in the best interests of the whole international community and the IAEA has a key role in this regard. Therefore, Lithuania would like to suggest to prepare an integrated IAEA services package including the full scope of specialized IAEA missions, follow-up missions and encourage newcomer countries to use it.

Madame President,

Lithuania is concerned by continuously incoming news about detection of the artificial radionuclides in the atmosphere while sources of the emission are not timely declared by the responsible state. Although the observed quantities are small, the facts undermine public confidence in safety of nuclear energy. Therefore, we urge all IAEA member states to take steps to further develop international legal instruments and practices in the area of early notification.

The fulfilment of Agency’s safety standards in area of using radiation sources is also of high priority for Lithuania. Our country attaches great importance to justification and optimization of medical exposure, deployment of new technologies in medicine and creation of nuclear research centers for medical purposes. Lithuania hereby makes a political commitment to implement the Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources.

Madame President,

We are looking forward to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Review Conference in 2020, which will mark the 50th anniversary of the treaty. We need to uphold the NPT and maintain its credibility and effectiveness in nuclear disarmament, global non-proliferation regime and further cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Lithuania supports international efforts towards full, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. It is of utmost importance that the DPRK maintains its declared suspension of nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches and complies with its obligations under multiple UN Security Council resolutions and returns to full compliance with the NPT.

At the same time we strongly encourage Iran to return to full and undisputable compliance with relevant UN SC resolutions including JCPOA and to cooperate fully and in a timely manner with the IAEA.

We remain strongly committed to the objective of increasing nuclear security and look forward to the International Conference on Nuclear Security in 2020. The international community must remain vigilant of nuclear security challenges, such as nuclear terrorism, misuse of nuclear and radioactive materials, emergence of cyber-threats against nuclear facilities, and ensure effective international cooperation in those areas.

Madame President, allow me to reaffirm Lithuania's continued support to the work of the IAEA. We are convinced that the Agency plays a crucial role in ensuring nuclear safety and security worldwide.

Thank you, Madame President.