Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

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Statement delivered by H. E. Marina Sereni,
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Mister President,

allow me to congratulate you on your election. Extraordinary times call for extraordinary leadership, and we have full confidence in your ability to successfully steer the work of this General Conference.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by Germany on behalf of the European Union. I will add some comments in my national capacity.

First of all, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to commend once again Director General Grossi for his work over the past months, aimed at ensuring that the Agency would remain operational and relevant throughout the pandemic. The crisis is far from over yet, but at the same time it has provided a confirmation that Member States can fully rely on the IAEA also in difficult times. The Director General can rest assured that Italy will continue supporting the whole range of the Agency's activities both financially, as the seventh contributor to the regular budget, and politically, also having been **a member of the Board of Governors for the past three years**.

Mister President,

by "preventing diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices" as Article III.1 of the NPT states, the **IAEA's system of safeguards** - multilateral, impartial, qualified and effective as it is - remains one of the core components of the NPT and a fundamental insurance for our security.

Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional Protocols represent the current verification standard. Their universalization must be pursued without delay, as a means conducive to mutual trust and as a necessary step forward towards a purely peaceful use of nuclear energy and applications. The effectiveness of the safeguards system can be further strengthened through a consistent and universal application of State Level Approaches, whose development Italy continues to support.

In this context, we highly welcome, as a positive step, the Joint Statement issued by the Agency and Iran, aimed at further reinforcing their cooperation and solving outstanding safeguards issues, and we look forward to its full and timely implementation.

At the same time, we remain deeply concerned by the severe difficulties that the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA)** on the Iranian nuclear programme is still experiencing. For Italy, the JCPoA is a key element of the global non-proliferation architecture and a successful achievement of multilateral diplomacy endorsed by the UN through SCR 2231. Its full implementation is crucial for regional and international security. We urge Iran to return to fully implement its obligations under the JCPoA without delay.

We urge the **DPRK** to take concrete steps towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization, in which the IAEA needs to play a key role. We therefore call on Pyongyang to engage in credible negotiations in this respect and to comply with relevant UNSC Resolutions, to return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to sign and ratify the CTBT and to resume its collaboration with the IAEA. In the meantime, the international sanctions regime needs to remain in place and be effectively implemented, sustaining the negotiating process towards this goal.

Mister President,

we call on all countries that have or intend to develop a nuclear power program to adhere to the relevant international instruments in the field of nuclear safety.

Italy is indeed a party to all main international conventions in the field of **nuclear safety** and it actively supports the IAEA in its continuous efforts to develop standards on all aspects of nuclear safety. We are fully committed also to the implementation of the Code of Conduct on the safety and security of radioactive sources and its supplementary guidance. Moreover, as a Party to the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and of the Convention on Assistance in the case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, Italy participates in the relevant initiatives promoted and coordinated by the IAEA in cooperation with the National Competent Authorities, in particular those aimed at identifying and implementing specific arrangements for the harmonization of the emergency responses and protective actions of countries affected by a transboundary nuclear accident.

For the safety of its nuclear installations, Italy is continuing to implement its national policy for the decommissioning and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste, in close cooperation with the IAEA.

As a part of these efforts, Italy's Ministry of Economic Development, after considering the technical opinion of the National Inspectorate for Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection (ISIN), recently issued a decree authorising the decommissioning of the Latina nuclear power plant, thus placing all four Italian NPPs under decommissioning. Moreover, to enhance safety margins in radioactive waste and spent fuel management, authorizations have also been granted for the treatment and conditioning of radioactive waste abroad, as well as for the construction of treatment facilities and of a spent fuel dry storage facility until the establishment of a national repository.

In August this year, Italy also formally requested an ARTEMIS peer review in order to fulfil its obligations under Article 14.3 of the Council Directive 2011/70/Euratom of 19 July 2011, establishing a Community Framework for the Responsible and Safe Management of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste. Scope of the peer review, which will be coordinated by ISIN, will be the assessment of the Italian National Programme for spent fuel and radioactive waste management and its implementation, as well as the relevant regulatory frameworks.

Eventually, we have recently ratified the 2004 Protocol that amends the Paris Convention on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy of 29 July 1960, as subsequently amended by additional protocols in 1964 and 1982. We have thus enhanced the available instruments in this field, as clear sign of the utmost importance that our Country pays to nuclear safety.

In 2019, as a result of a longstanding dialogue, including on the implementation of two ARTEMIS Peer Reviews and on the application of sustainability and circular economy principles to nuclear decommissioning, the IAEA designated Sogin, the Italian state-owned company responsible for the decommissioning of nuclear installations in Italy, as a Collaborating Centre of the Agency. With this prestigious designation, Italy is among the first countries recognized by the IAEA as a partner for technological promotion, knowledge transfer, education and training in nuclear decommissioning.

Mister President,

we remain fully committed to the achievement of a better international **nuclear security** environment. Ensuring the highest levels of nuclear security is a shared interest of the international community and represents a further contribution to the development of nuclear technologies and applications for peaceful purposes. We

strongly support the central role of the IAEA in the global nuclear security framework and we encourage all States to fulfil their nuclear security responsibilities.

Italy has ratified the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT). We actively participate in the activities of the Nuclear Security Contact Group (NSCG), in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) and in other relevant international and European initiatives.

As a further demonstration of our commitment to promote a nuclear security culture and capacity building worldwide, Italy continues to fund the **International School on Nuclear Security,** jointly run by the IAEA and the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste. The financial support of the Italian Government amounts to EUR 360,000 over the last five years. The School is highly valued by developing and emerging countries, for its contribution to the development of a cadre of professionals in the national framework for nuclear safety and security and represents a model for capacity building in nuclear security worldwide. Unfortunately, this year's edition of the School could not be held due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but Italy looks forward to hosting it again next year. We remain committed to support young students and researchers from emerging countries to promote nuclear security culture, providing expertise, knowledge transfer, training and helping to establish national capability.

The tenth anniversary of the Trieste International School on Nuclear Security was celebrated with a dedicated side event co-organized by Italy and the IAEA in the margins of the 2020 International Conference on Nuclear Security held last February in Vienna (and which I had the pleasure to attend).

Italy highly welcomes the outcomes of the Conference, which gave a clear signal of political commitment to sustaining and strengthening nuclear security worldwide and we believe that its Ministerial Declaration, adopted by consensus, does provide a good foundation for our current and future work to strengthen nuclear security.

Mister President,

Italy highly values the **technical assistance and cooperation** programs implemented by the Agency, and will renew in 2021 its full contribution to the Technical Cooperation Fund, amounting to almost 3 million Euros. A specific support in this respect has been provided by making available to the joint IAEA/FAO division an Associate Immunology Officer for a period of two years.

Italy looks forward to hosting again, as soon as the current situation allows it, foreign researchers in its laboratories, universities and medical centers in the framework of fellowships financed under the Agency's Technical Cooperation

Programme, while a two-year Master of Advanced Studies in Medical Physics jointly run by the ICTP and the University of Trieste continues to enable young graduates to become clinical medical physicists in their home countries.

Also in the field of **nuclear applications**, Italy is making a significant contribution to international research and development activities. We are proud of promoting the advancement of nuclear medicine through various initiatives, such as, recently, a project for the production of radiopharmaceutical technetium for diagnostic purposes carried out by ENEA (the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development) at its TRIGA reactor in Rome, and a program of studies on Boron Neutron Capture Therapy (BNCT) and on copper isotope production for theranostics application at the LENA TRIGA Reactor of the University of Pavia. On this, ENEA is currently committed to building a technology infrastructure for the production of technetium through the neutron irradiation of Molybdenum target (Moly Project), in the research reactor TRIGA RC-1 at ENEA- Casaccia R&D center in Rome, with the aim of creating a center of excellence in the production of radioisotopes in the most suitable chemical-physical form for the experimentation of new radiopharmaceuticals, and establishing collaborations with relevant international institutes and research centers. Moreover, ENEA, in collaboration with the Lazio Region and the National Institute for Health, is designing and building an innovative compact linear accelerator for proton therapy (TOP-IMPLART project), which will be the experimental prototype for treatment of superficial and semi-deep tumors. ENEA has also been co-financing, in collaboration with the Emilia Romagna Region, two projects on radiopharmaceutical production (SORGENTINA) and neutron therapy (LINCER) aiming to establish an industrial district for testing innovative medical application in its centres of Bologna and Brasimone. ENEA ensures the management of all the stages of radioactive waste cycle produced in the medical activities, including transport, characterization, storage, treatment and conditioning.

The National Institute for Nuclear Physics (INFN) is also focusing on state-of-the-art nuclear applications, such as radiotherapy with ion beams and accelerator-based alternatives to Uranium-based production of radioisotopes of medical interest. The Institute also continues its research programs on nuclear data relevant for innovative nuclear systems and on hybrid systems for the incineration of nuclear waste. Concerning safeguards, it pursues new technologies for the safety and security of radioactive waste and spent fuel, both during transport and storage, which could offer enhanced and cost-effective surveillance of repositories and ports.

Also in the field of environmental, agricultural and animal-health nuclear applications, Italy has been providing a significant contribution to international research and development activities. The Centro Agricoltura Ambiente “G. Nicoli” in Bologna has been for years an IAEA Collaborating Centre in the development and implementation of a Sterile Insect Technique package for Aedes Mosquitoes suppression. Moreover, a dedicated laboratory for isotopic and radiometric analysis

has been set up by ENEA, to address food safety and security, to trace the geographical origin and to perform isotopic hydrogeology studies on water resources, emerging pollution and climate change.

At the ENEA Calliope irradiation facility, materials characterization and biological researches are carried out on conservation and preservation of Cultural Heritage archives and artifacts, in the framework of IAEA Coordinated Research Programme, agriculture, environmental fields, AgroSpace, nuclear applications, Space and High Energy Physics experiments.

My country is also actively engaged in advancing research on fusion and innovative nuclear systems, notably by supporting the realization of the ALFRED demonstrator in Romania and by contributing to the International Fusion Materials Irradiation Facility project through the INFN's specific competence in accelerator technology. Furthermore, preparations are underway for the construction of the Divertor Tokamak Test facility (DTT), aimed at bridging the gap between the international project ITER and the reactor DEMO, thus becoming an international center of excellence for nuclear fusion research.

Italy strongly believes that any project involving nuclear energy, as well as any technology or application making use of radioactive materials, should integrate elements of safeguards, safety, security, emergency preparedness and response. Only such synergies can grant a long-lasting sustainable approach, as well as the actual well-being and protection of both the population and the environment.

In this vein, we encourage the Agency to continue all its activities related to peaceful uses of nuclear science and technologies, especially in the fields of human health, climate change and sustainable development.

Mister President,

rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation throughout this week. We are ready to work in a constructive way with all delegations for a successful Conference, with the hope of being able to all convene in person in Vienna next year.

Thank you.