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Statement by

Mr Benoît Revaz

State Secretary and Director of the Swiss Federal Office of Energy

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Mister President

Let me first sincerely congratulate you on your election as President of the General Conference. I have the honour to speak on behalf of Switzerland. Liechtenstein associates itself with this statement. We assure you of our full support.

We also thank Director General Rafael Grossi and the entire Secretariat for the consistently high quality of the work done and for ensuring the essential operational activities of the Agency during the ongoing pandemic.

Mister President,

Ten years ago, the General Conference endorsed the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety. Switzerland commends the Agency for its continuous contribution to strengthening global nuclear safety, including through virtual means under the present challenging conditions. We look forward to the “International Conference on a Decade of Progress after Fukushima-Daiichi: Building on the Lessons Learned to Further Strengthen Nuclear Safety” in November. This Conference will provide an opportunity to share experiences and assess the implementation of the Action Plan. Switzerland will participate actively and hopes that the Conference will lead to further enhancing national and global nuclear safety.

Periodic safety reviews and the principle of continuous improvement are a fundamental component of a sustainable nuclear safety regime. Another important element mentioned in the Action Plan is to strengthen IAEA peer reviews. Switzerland welcomes that an increasing number of such missions have taken place. Switzerland will host an IRRS mission next month. We are committed to sharing the findings in a transparent manner and to implementing them in order to strengthen further our national regulatory framework. We call on all Member States to host peer reviews on a regular basis.

The Action Plan also calls for improving the effectiveness of the international legal framework. Switzerland will have the honour to chair the Extraordinary Meeting and the Seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention next year. We are committed to improving and strengthening further the Joint Convention's review process and to contributing to a meaningful review of the national reports.

Mister President

In May this year, we were able to mark the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM). Preparations are currently underway for the Review Conference next year, which Switzerland will have the honour to co-chair with Nigeria. This Conference will be an important milestone for further strengthening the international legal framework for nuclear security. It will be an opportunity to promote the further universalization and a more effective implementation of the Convention and its Amendment.

Switzerland also welcomes the elaboration of the Nuclear Security Plan 2022-2025, which sets the framework for the Agency's activities in the coming years. I am pleased to announce that we will again contribute this year to the Nuclear Security Fund.

Mister President,

We welcome the efforts of the IAEA to clarify open questions with regard to Iran's declarations under its Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol. We emphasize that full and timely cooperation with the Agency by all Member States is essential to uphold the integrity and effectiveness of the global safeguards and non-proliferation regime. Switzerland is seriously concerned about Iran's decision to suspend the provisional application of its Additional Protocol. We also encourage all parties to continue the negotiations on a return to the JCPOA. Full compliance with the commitments under the JCPOA is required, in order to uphold the non-proliferation benefits of this important agreement.

On safeguards in general, Switzerland supports efforts to further optimize the safeguards system so that the limited funds available to the Agency can be used to their best effect. We have decided to join the Member States Support Program and are currently finalizing a cooperation agreement with the Secretariat.

Mister President,

Finally, I would like to highlight the important contribution of the Agency's activities in the field of nuclear science, technology and applications for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Switzerland is pleased to continue its support to the second phase of the renovation of the IAEA's laboratories in Seibersdorf, ReNuAL 2. We also congratulate the Agency on the 60th anniversary of its Environment Laboratories, which will be celebrated later this month in Monaco. We will continue our active support to the Agency's activities in the area of nuclear applications.

Thank you for your attention.