

**Statement of the Republic of Armenia**  
**at the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century as**  
**delivered by Mr. Hakob Vardanyan, Deputy Minister for Territorial Administration and**  
**Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia**

*Washington DC, October 26, 2022*

Esteemed Delegates,

Nuclear energy plays a vital role in the development agenda of Armenia. Being a country with an operating nuclear power plant, Armenia opted for a transparent and open policy for safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy and continuously undertakes necessary measures to enhance and maintain nuclear and radiation safety.

With this understanding, since 2016 Armenia has undertaken an overall modernization of the main safety systems of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant, within the framework of the “ANPP Second Power Unit Operation Extension Program” in line with IAEA guidelines and recommendations. Among others, the block of power generation systems (turbines-generators-transformers) have been entirely renovated, and the safety systems have been replaced or upgraded, thus significantly increasing the reliability and safe operation of the plant. The results of the modernization were assessed by the Agency during the SALTO follow-up review mission to the Armenian NPP in October 2021, which identified significant improvements in relation to its 2018 recommendations.

Armenia highly values the central role of the IAEA in strengthening the nuclear security framework globally and its continued assistance to States. Early this month, we were honored to host Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the IAEA in Yerevan to discuss the important agenda of cooperation between Armenia and the Agency. We are grateful to DG for his positive and encouraging appraisal given to the safety and security improvements made in Armenian Nuclear Power Plant and his reassurances that the IAEA will help Armenia to ensure current nuclear power program to be safe and secure and will assist the country in realizing its future nuclear energy plans.

Environmental issues have an important place in the overall program for improving the safety of the ANPP, including the safe management of radioactive waste (RW) and spent nuclear fuel (SNF). Armenia has developed and approved the “Strategy for the Management of Radioactive Waste and Spent Nuclear Fuel”. In accordance with this document, “Program for Modernization of RW Management Systems” was developed and launched as part of ANPP Operating Life Extension Program. The problem of safe management and storage of spent nuclear fuel can be considered resolved up to the year of 2050, due to the dry storage facility for spent nuclear fuel built with the support of international partners and operated by the ANPP. Meanwhile, the Government adopted a decision on the establishment of the structure of the National Operator of Armenia for the management of radioactive waste, which is currently in the process of formation.

Continuous enhancement of nuclear security is another top priority for Armenia and I would like to emphasize especially the partnership and assistance of the United States for strengthening our national capacities in this field. In particular, the Laboratory for Technical and Criminal Analysis of Nuclear and Radioactive Materials was established on the basis of the ANPP External Dosimetry Laboratory. The equipment of the Laboratory, which is unique not only for Armenia, but also for the entire region, was procured with the support of the US Department of Energy. Also, with the support of DOE USA, the modernization of the physical protection system of the station and the storage of spent nuclear fuel is currently being completed.

Armenia attaches high priority also to ensuring the security of nuclear installations devoted to peaceful purposes, during all times and in all circumstances. Armenia has been expressly voicing its position in this regard since July 2020 when it first received a public threat against its nuclear power plant from Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense. We wish the international community would have heard to our concerns more seriously... Recently on the night of September 12-13, 2022, the armed forces of Azerbaijan launched a large-scale aggression against the Republic of Armenia, invading our sovereign territory in several directions and targeting a number of civilian and critical infrastructure, including high-voltage power lines, forcing Armenia to halve the capacity of the nuclear power plant. Moreover, the Azerbaijani Armed Forces did not allow our specialists to fix the damage for 12 hours, intentionally disrupting the entire energy system of our country. Our aim is to prompt international understanding and acceptance that there is a need to revitalize the process of elaboration of an international legally binding treaty prohibiting armed attacks and threats of attacks against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The development of nuclear energy through the construction of a new power unit to be completed by 2036 is a high priority for Armenia, reflected in the “Strategic Program for the Development of the Energy Sector of Armenia for the Period up to 2040”. Currently, we are in the stages of development of a preliminary feasibility study for the construction of a new nuclear power unit and rely on the close cooperation with the Agency and partner countries to identify and undertake the necessary activities.

In conclusion, let me express my sincere gratitude to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the OECD and the US Department of Energy for their excellent work and efforts to provide this important forum to engage in high-level dialogue on the role of nuclear energy and to assure Armenia’s utmost interest and full support for enhancing the safe and secure application of nuclear energy and technology for the benefit of humanity.

Thank you.