

**National Statement of the Republic of Armenia
at the 67th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference
as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan
Resident Representative of the Republic of Armenia
to the International Organizations in Vienna
*Vienna, 27 September 2023***

Madame President,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the 67th session of the IAEA General Conference and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in achieving a successful General Conference. I take this opportunity to congratulate Director General Grossi on his reappointment and express Armenia's appreciation for his tireless work at the helm of the Agency.

Today we mark an important milestone - the 30th anniversary of Armenia's membership in the International Atomic Energy Agency. During this period Armenia has immensely benefited from the Agency's valuable expertise, technical assistance and cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, science and technology and has supported and facilitated the Agency's activities in promoting effective safeguards regime, high standards of nuclear safety and security and access to nuclear technology and applications in accordance with the Agency's Statute, General Conference resolutions and relevant international conventions.

To further support and facilitate the Agency's core functions and activities, the Republic of Armenia submitted its candidature for the membership to the Board of Governors for the term 2023-2025 with the elections to be held tomorrow. If elected, Armenia will act as a fair and constructive Member State with strong support to dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation among Member States in promoting the core objectives of the IAEA in all key areas. Due to the relevance of the nuclear sector for Armenia, we will continue to be a strong supporter of nuclear safety, security and safeguards, in a proper balance with the Technical Cooperation Programme for peaceful uses and will continue to strongly support the TCP, which meets the needs and priorities of Member States. Armenia will continue to be among the supporters of IAEA's activities in the area of nuclear applications for human health, food security, agricultural development, zoonotic disease control, protection of the environment, green energy transition and climate change mitigation.

In order to fulfill the mentioned goals, Armenia relies on the valuable support of its candidacy by esteemed Member States.

Esteemed Delegates,

Nuclear energy constitutes an important element for ensuring the stability and sustainability of the energy sector in Armenia. Armenia continues the safe operation of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant, adhering to the high standards of nuclear safety and security and carrying out large-scale modernization and re-equipment. We are proud to note that no nuclear or radiation accident has been recorded during the entire history of the Plant operation.

A project aimed at extending the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant's 2nd power unit's operational period was approved by the Government of Armenia, which will enable to further continue the modernization of safety related systems, investigate and justify residual life time and extend the unit's operational period until 2036.

In this regard, we welcome the Agency's priority of assisting member states in implementing and improving programs for aging management and the safe long-term operation of nuclear installations.

At the same time, the Republic of Armenia continues studies for the construction of the new power unit(s), which may replace the current one after the end of its extended operational period.

As a country expanding its nuclear programme, Armenia is planning to establish the Nuclear Energy Programme Implementing Organization (NEPIO) with the Agency's comprehensive support. In this regard, we were privileged to enjoy the valuable expertise provided by the IAEA at the working meeting on the Role and Responsibilities of a NEPIO and an Owner/Operator, and on the development of a Comprehensive Report, which was conducted in Yerevan in July.

Madame President,

The enhancement of nuclear and radiation safety and the development of a safety culture remain important priorities for my country. Armenia effectively implements all its obligations under the relevant conventions and has hosted several IAEA safety review missions aimed at verifying compliance with international safety standards.

Reviews of the National Reports presented at the Joint 8th and 9th Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety identified several areas of good performance by Armenia. In July 2023, a Regional Workshop on Applications of Levels 2 and 3 of Probabilistic Safety Assessments was organized in Yerevan under the framework of TC.

Relevant experts from Armenia are involved and actively contribute to the IAEA's various initiatives, such as the Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative's (NHSI) Regulatory Track. Armenian experts participate in four working groups of the International Generic Ageing Lessons Learned project (IGALL).

Human health remains a crucial domain of the Agency's contribution to the SDGs. We highly value the Agency's continued support to national cancer control programmes and welcome the Director General's Rays of Hope initiative. We support the advancement of this initiative, which could help more states to overcome the burden of cancer.

Esteemed Delegates,

In view of the existing and emerging nuclear security threats, Armenia is consistently strengthening and improving its nuclear security regime in close cooperation with its partners and the Agency.

I am glad to inform you that, with the IAEA's financial support, the project on the reconstruction of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant perimeter has been implemented

recently upon the recommendation of the IAEA IPPAS mission. Armenia continues the enhancement of the nuclear security of the NPP in this area with the valuable support of partner countries.

Armenia has an active engagement in the work of the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee and provides an in-kind contribution for the development of training materials for the Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre.

Madame President,

Armenia reiterates its principal position that nuclear facilities dedicated to peaceful purposes and other associated facilities should under no circumstances become the target of an armed attack or a threat of attack. Armenia believes that the international community should be seized by proactive thinking to achieve viable national mechanisms and the necessary level of international cooperation.

In this regard, Armenia strongly supports the introduction by the Director General of the Seven Indispensable Pillars, as well as the Five Principles, which should be the bare minimum for ensuring the safety and security of nuclear facilities during armed conflicts. Armenia commends the devoted work of the DG and the IAEA staff towards ensuring nuclear safety and security during armed conflicts.

In conclusion, Madame President, let me express our full support for the Agency's mission in all areas of its mandate, "Atoms for Peace and Development" and fully share the universal recognition of the Agency's central role in the development of the peaceful, safe and secure use of nuclear science and technology.

I thank you, Madame President.