

IAEA 67th General Conference
National Statement – CANADA

Delivered by H. E. Troy Lulashnyk, Ambassador and Permanent Representative

President, on behalf of the Government of Canada, congratulations on your election as President. My delegation is fully committed to working with you to ensure a successful Conference. I would also like to welcome The Gambia, Cabo Verde, and Guinea as the Agency's newest member states.

The international community faces increasingly stark challenges. The devastating effects of climate change are already a lived reality for so many including in Canada, and the uneven economic and social recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic creates new obstacles for attaining the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We face growing nuclear proliferation threats and are increasingly undermined by actors flouting international law and norms. The fabric of our multilateral system, intended to advance collective and global solutions, is fraying as several countries choose a route of confrontation and misinformation.

In this context, the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency is more critical than ever. Canada has been steadfast in its support for the Agency's work in all areas. This includes the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology, the advancement of nuclear safety and nuclear security as key facilitators for these peaceful uses, and the implementation of a robust system of nuclear safeguards as the international community's best assurance against nuclear proliferation. We commend the Agency's impartial, technical, and fact-based work and recognize the professionalism and dedication of the Secretariat staff who have ably responded to a host of challenges over the past year. Let us be clear: efforts to undermine the Agency's credibility, authority, and technical mandate should be unacceptable to us all. We also stress the critical importance of all IAEA Member States paying their assessed contributions in full and on time. Canada also thanks Director General Grossi for his tireless efforts and warmly congratulates him on his re-appointment.

The peaceful use of nuclear technology plays a positive and increasingly prominent role in responding to global challenges. Canada recognizes the key role of nuclear energy and technologies in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, meeting climate change targets, supporting the SDGs, and delivering energy security. Indeed, Canada's CANDU nuclear technology has been delivering these benefits at home and abroad for almost 60 years. Nuclear capability will be a key part of decarbonization, and several jurisdictions within Canada are exploring new investments in large generating capacity.

Advanced technologies such as Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) have the potential to further enhance access to low emission, secure, baseload energy. Canada is actively pursuing SMR development and is currently reviewing a licence application for a grid scale SMR. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is reviewing multiple applications for advanced technologies in

various stages of the licensing process. We have strengthened regulatory collaboration with international partners and recognize its importance in deploying a global fleet of standard SMR designs. We encourage Member States to work together on this. Leadership from national governments is required to support the progression of legal frameworks and policies to fully leverage the opportunities provided by nuclear technology.

At the same time, a positive nuclear future is only possible if we successfully deal with our past. This means responsibly managing waste in ways that meaningfully engage Indigenous peoples, local communities, and civil society. Canada is pleased to share our experiences, and to learn from others in this area.

Canada welcomes the successful launch of the IAEA's Lise Meitner Programme, reinforcing the importance of supporting career development for women in the nuclear sector, and we are pleased to fund scholarships under the Marie Sklodowska Fellowship program. These are the type of initiatives that will support more inclusive approaches across the nuclear landscape and for which Canada will continue to strongly advocate. Canada is also pleased to have recently announced a further financial commitment to the Agency's ReNual 2 project. The IAEA laboratories provide unique and invaluable technical assistance to member states, thereby supporting their capacity to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

President,

The use of nuclear technologies comes with important obligations regarding nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation. Now more than ever, it is paramount for the Agency and Member States to continue the full and robust implementation of nuclear safeguards, including the application of the Additional Protocol and, where applicable, the amendment of the original Small Quantities Protocol. These tools are essential to building confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of nuclear activities.

Canada deeply regrets that regional actors such as North Korea and Syria continue to pose direct challenges to international peace and security, and undermine the credibility of the IAEA safeguards system upon which we all depend. Canada has committed CAD \$4.5 million to support the Agency's DPRK team's continued work to provide IAEA Member States with updated and technical assessments of the DPRK's nuclear program.

At the same time, Iran's nuclear program remains of significant concern. We remain deeply troubled by Iran's continued nuclear escalations, including the deployment of advanced centrifuges and production of uranium enriched to 60% U-235, its limited cooperation with the Agency to address outstanding safeguards questions, and its recent de-designation of experienced Agency inspectors. This unilateral action openly contradicts the cooperation that should exist between the IAEA and Iran. Canada firmly supports the Agency's verification and monitoring activities in Iran, as an essential contribution to regional and global security, and has contributed CAD \$21 million to these activities since 2014.

We welcome the Agency's continued efforts to help Member States fulfill their nuclear safety and security responsibilities. Canada is contributing to the Agency's work through a number of projects including the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Regulatory Infrastructure Development Program projects which are providing comprehensive nuclear safety and security assistance for 69 beneficiary states in Africa, Latin America and in the Caribbean.

The IAEA marked the 20th anniversary of the approval of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, with a record number of States participating in the 2023 Open Ended Meeting showing their commitment to using sources within this framework of radiation safety and security. Global safety is established by the implementation of the Code and its supplementary Guidance documents. We encourage States that have not done so to commit to the implementation of the Code.

We also applaud the Agency's efforts to support Member States in implementing nuclear liability conventions and look forward to continued collaboration on the development of a global nuclear liability regime.

President,

The Director General has added an item on Nuclear Safety, Security, and Safeguards in Ukraine to the Agenda of the GC. Canada, along with Costa Rica, Finland and Singapore, will introduce a resolution on this critical issue later this week. We fully support the Agency's efforts to support nuclear safety and security in Ukraine, including through the ongoing physical presence of the Agency ISAMZ mission at the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) and its comprehensive program of assistance for Ukraine. Canada has provided \$2M CAD in funding support for the Agency efforts, offered technical personnel to join the IAEA's mission in Ukraine, and has supported the delivery of nuclear safety equipment. Canada also signed an Memorandum of Understanding between our regulator and Ukraine's State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate (SNRIU) for cooperation and exchange of information in nuclear regulatory matters.

The Agency's work in Ukraine remains essential given the grave conditions created by Russia's illegal invasion and continued occupation of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant. The nuclear safety and security challenges at ZNPP will not be fully resolved until Russia withdraws its military and other unauthorized personnel from the plant and returns the plant to the competent Ukrainian authorities. Each and every day that Russia continues its illegal occupation of ZNPP, the international community faces unacceptable nuclear safety and security risks.

We face unprecedented times and increasingly complex challenges. To overcome these, the IAEA remains an effective and essential instrument in our collective response. Canada is committed to playing its role in advancing the Agency's core mandate of ensuring the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Thank you.