

## STATEMENT OF GEORGIA

International Atomic Energy Agency

67th General Conference (25 – 29 September 2023)

Madam. President,

I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of the General Conference. You have our full support and cooperation.

Georgia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to highlight some key points in our national capacity.

At the outset let me extend our congratulations and best wishes to Director General Grossi on his reappointment.

Handling the risks and challenges related to nuclear proliferation represents one of the top priorities in the modern security environment.

Georgia condemns Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, which is a gross violation of international law, notably the UN Charter, and severely undermines European and global security and stability. Russia's actions pose serious and direct threats to nuclear safety and security and the Agency's safeguards verification activities in Ukraine.

The Russian Federation must stop its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, unconditionally withdraw all its armed forces and military equipment from the entire territory, notably from the Zaporozhya Nuclear Power Plant so that the Ukrainian authorities can resume their sovereign responsibilities and that the legitimate operating staff can conduct their duties without outside pressure and interference.

In this context, we thank the Director General and the Agency for closely monitoring the situation and keeping the international community informed.

In these uncertain and troubling circumstances, it is more important than ever for international community to act in the spirit of unity. Universalization of internationally agreed mechanisms and deep devotion to these instruments and obligations are of utmost importance in this condition.

The Conference takes place in a complex international security environment. Hence, the role of the Agency in ensuring that nuclear material and technology are used only for peaceful purposes, is vital. We attach great importance to the IAEA's core mandate in the fields of nuclear safeguards, safety, security, nuclear energy and technical cooperation. In this context, we support universal and effective implementation of the NPT and underline the importance of the Agency's safeguards system in the implementation of the Treaty. Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional

Protocols constitute the current verification standard and we continue to call for their universalization without any delay.

Dear colleagues,

Since the restoration of our independence, breaching obligations of international norms and principles on prevention and response to CBRN threats by Russia has been weakening our national security. Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions – illegally occupied by Russia – represent a significant challenge in the context of non-proliferation. Georgia had previously detected the smuggling of nuclear and radioactive materials through the territories of occupied regions. In response, law-enforcement agencies of Georgia carried out effective measures and accordingly prevented these illegal activities.

However, the absence of international presence in the occupied territories of Georgia makes it impossible to conduct any type of verification activities on the ground.

Therefore, the threat of proliferation on the occupied territories of the Black Sea region, stays high on the agenda for regional and international security environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Georgia, as one of the strategically located countries in the Black Sea region, strives to ensure high standards of CBRN security and safety at national, regional and international levels and plays its essential role in supporting global security architecture.

The National Interagency CBRN Council of Georgia, in close cooperation with strategic partners, continues to implement unified approach and policies of the government of Georgia in CBRN safety and security. This includes implementation of the new 10-year National Strategy for CBRN Threat Reduction and the responsibilities taken under EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

This summer Georgia adopted a new Law on “Radiation Protection, Nuclear Safety and Security” which was elaborated in accordance with the recommendations of IRRS Mission conducted by the Agency. The new Law ensures enhanced compliance with fundamental principles and requirements of nuclear safety and security.

Technical, financial assistance and active contribution in developing national regulations and systems for nuclear and radiation safety and security that Georgia receives from the Agency and our partners, namely from US, EU and Sweden are highly appreciated.

In closing, let me once again thank the Director General and the dedicated staff of the IAEA for their invaluable contribution to building a safer and more prosperous world. In this vein, we encourage the Agency to continue all its activities related to peaceful uses of nuclear science and technologies.

Madam. President,

I assure you of my delegation's full support. We are ready to work in a constructive way for a successful Conference.