

## **NATIONAL STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE AT THE 67<sup>TH</sup> IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR UMEJ BHATIA, 25 TO 29 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Mdm President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

1 I begin by congratulating Ambassador Vilawan Mangklatanakul of Thailand, a fellow ASEAN member state, on your election as President. Please be assured of Singapore's full support and cooperation. I also convey our appreciation to the Director General and the Secretariat for their tireless efforts to ensure that nuclear safety, security and safeguards are upheld rigorously in what has been an extremely difficult year.

2 In his speech to the 78<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly last week, the Secretary-General of the United Nations underscored that the war in **Ukraine** has serious implications because nuclear threats put us all at risk. Singapore is extremely concerned that this devastating conflict has put nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine at peril. For the first time, a war is being waged near an operational nuclear power plant, the largest of its kind in Europe. Can we afford to light matches around a petrol station? This is without a doubt, a nuclear accident waiting to happen. Neither the fog of war nor politics should obscure the enormous risk we face. This is not just a regional problem, but one of international concern.

3 Singapore has and will continue to stand on principle. It is for this reason that we decided to co-sponsor the draft resolution on "Nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine". This resolution sends a message to all parties involved in this conflict that the Director-General's seven indispensable pillars and five principles must be observed and upheld, so that the global community does not face a nuclear disaster with catastrophic consequences.

4 The Agency has done commendable work not just at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, but at all of Ukraine's nuclear facilities. Indeed, its pro-active initiative, continued vigilance and weekly reports have often been the sole source of information for many delegations. We commend the Agency's inspectors for their professionalism and dedication to this important task. It is important for all States to send a strong and collective message of support for the Agency's critical work to preserve nuclear safety and security in Ukraine. We encourage every delegation to join us in this endeavour and to vote in support of this draft resolution as a matter of principle to prevent disaster and not as a matter of taking sides.

Mdm President,

5 We have been closely following developments on the status of the outstanding safeguards issues in **Iran** and on the implementation of the Joint Statement of 4 March 2023. We had hoped that Iran would fulfil the commitments it entered into with the Agency in good faith. We are therefore deeply disappointed that a lack of progress has been made. All NPT States Parties have a duty to fulfil their legally-binding safeguards obligations. Iran is not exempt from these obligations, regardless of the status of the JCPOA.

6 We echo the Director-General's strong condemnation of Iran's latest de-designation of about one third of the Agency's most experienced inspectors in the country. This disproportionate and unprecedented act will not contribute to building a positive atmosphere of trust or cooperation with the Agency. We call on Iran to immediately reverse its decision so that the Agency can continue to conduct normal verification activities in the country.

Mdm President,

7 Singapore was deeply disappointed at the failure of the first Preparatory Committee for the **2026 NPT Review Conference** to issue any substantive recommendations. As rhetoric on the use of tactical nuclear weapons increases, can we afford to walk back our collective commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation? We must take concrete and credible action in ensuring that the 2026 Review Conference achieves a substantive outcome.

8 The **DPRK's** continued expansion of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes is another cause for concern. We urge the DPRK to immediately cease all provocative actions, fully abide by its long-standing international obligations and commitments, including those under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs), and return to the NPT so that the Agency may resume its verification activities. Singapore takes our obligations under the relevant UNSCRs seriously, and strongly supports the resumption of meaningful engagement and constructive dialogue to promote peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

Mdm President,

9 The **IAEA** has remained a bulwark in upholding the international non-proliferation regime, including through its essential safeguards verification activities. We are therefore extremely concerned by the Director-General's report of the Agency's serious financial situation due to delays in the payment of outstanding and overdue assessed contributions. Singapore has always paid our contributions to the Agency's Regular Budget and its Technical Cooperation

Fund in full and on time. We call on all member states to pay their assessed contributions in full, on time, and without preconditions.

10 Amongst the Agency's programmatic activities, the **Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme** remains a vital component of its mandate to assist developing Member States in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. Singapore is an active technical cooperation partner of the Agency. We will continue our support for the Agency's TC projects, including through renewing the Singapore-IAEA Third Country Training Programme.

11 We are delighted that the National University of Singapore's Centre of Ion Beam Application was designated as an **IAEA Collaborating Centre** earlier this month. This will strengthen the practical uses of nuclear techniques in Singapore and our region. Discussions are also ongoing to explore enhanced cooperation between Singapore and various Collaborating Centres, and we look forward to a positive outcome in that regard.

Mdm President,

12 To conclude on a positive forward-looking note, despite all the challenges and often unwarranted criticisms directed at the Agency, we can still count it as a model of success in multilateralism as it continues to provide support to Member States in all areas of its core work. Singapore underscores our continued strong support for the IAEA. We look forward to working with fellow Member States as a member of the Board of Governors, to ensure that the Agency remains able to fully discharge its mandate.

13 Thank you.

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