

**SWEDEN**

**Statement**

**by**

**Daniel Westlén**

**Vice-Minister for Climate and the Environment**

**International Atomic Energy Agency**

**General Conference**

**67<sup>th</sup> session**

**2023**

**Vienna**

Thank you, Mr President,

Let me congratulate you, **Ambassador Vilawan Mangklatanakul**, on your appointment as President of the General Conference. You can count on my delegation's support. **Sweden is aligned with the statement delivered by Spain** on behalf of the European Union. The following remarks are in my national capacity.

Mr President,

**By 2045** at the latest, **Sweden is to have net zero emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere**, and thereafter Sweden should achieve negative emissions. This will require an extensive electrification of industry and transport, which is expected to double our electricity consumption by 2045. This transition is driven by the EU's climate policy and Sweden's long-term climate goal. Nuclear energy has a key role in reaching this goal.

The share of nuclear power in the Swedish electricity mix has fallen with closures of the oldest reactors. Sweden now faces a need to expand nuclear energy. We see a massive need for clean electricity to decarbonise transport and industry. With hydro built out many years ago, and with growing need for biomass to replace fossil feed stock in industry, there are three means available for producing electricity fossil free – wind, solar and nuclear. Out of these only nuclear is dispatchable, which gives it a unique role.

For decades it was widely assumed in my country that nuclear energy would be a parenthesis in history. It is increasingly obvious though that nuclear power is and will continue to be an integral part of any climate neutral society allowing its citizens free, safe and comfortable lives.

This insight is leading the turnaround of the energy policy that the Swedish government is now conducting. We are removing institutional barriers towards nuclear energy which were raised over

the years, creating a level playing field where market actors are allowed and encouraged to once again build reactors.

Mr President,

Sweden was very pleased to **host the Director General on an official visit** last month. His visit gave us the opportunity for an exchange of views on Swedish plans regarding nuclear power expansion and the final storage of spent fuel, new nuclear technology developments and nuclear safety considerations.

Rapidly expanding nuclear power globally is a key tool to avert the climate crisis. To allow this, standardisation is necessary. Sweden welcomes the Director General's Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative, with its possible implications for the development of SMRs.

Mr. President,

**The Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine** is a grave violation of international law, including the UN Charter, and is further aggravated by the fact that Russia is a nuclear-weapon state, a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a designated member of the IAEA Board. Russia must implement the Board's resolutions on safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine and end its brutal and senseless war of aggression.

Since the war started, there have been countless breaches of the Agency's seven indispensable pillars of nuclear safety and security in armed conflict. Sweden welcomes the **Agency's support and assistance missions to Ukrainian nuclear facilities**, and has contributed 20 million Swedish Kronor to support that programme in 2023.

Since Russia's aggression began, **Sweden has more than doubled its nuclear safety and security cooperation with Ukraine**, while suspending cooperation programmes with Russia and Belarus.

Sweden recently decided to contribute more than 25 million euros to the Ukraine Energy Support Fund to help Ukraine ensure its energy supply.

Mr President,

Sweden calls on the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea** to fulfil its international commitments and undertake the complete, verifiable and irreversible disarmament of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme, and immediately cease all related activities, in accordance with United Nations Security Council and IAEA General Conference resolutions. Sweden remains committed to supporting a peaceful dialogue on the Korean Peninsula. We recently provided a further 2 million Swedish Kronor to support the Agency's readiness for new verification tasks in the DPRK.

Mr President,

Last year, there were signs that a return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on **Iran's nuclear programme** might be imminent. Since then, however, Iran's escalating nuclear trajectory has led to a rapid deterioration of the situation and questions regarding Iran's intentions. Meanwhile, since early 2021, Iran has limited the Agency's verification authority to the bare minimum under its NPT safeguards agreement. Moreover, Iran has failed to provide technically credible explanations regarding the outstanding safeguards issues.

Sweden **reiterates its call on Iran to reverse this dangerous course** and to provide the Agency with the verification authority it needs to verify the correctness and completeness of Iran's declarations and draw soundly based safeguards conclusions. An indispensable step towards restoring confidence is the resumption of the Additional Protocol.

Sweden appreciates the Agency's professional, impartial and objective verification in Iran, and has made a further extrabudgetary contribution of 2 million Swedish Kronor to support that work.

Mr President,

In the current, severely deteriorated security environment, it is more important than ever to protect the integrity of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. This applies to the **NPT** where the Agency's safeguards system plays an indispensable role in upholding global security. Sweden stresses that comprehensive safeguards agreements with additional protocols constitute the contemporary standard for IAEA safeguards pursuant to Article III of the NPT. Earlier this year, Sweden provided 200 000 Swedish Kronor in support of the Agency's COMPASS programme to help Member States put in place infrastructures for safeguards implementation.

In Sweden's view, it is important that States adopt an approach that highlights the **interplay of nuclear safety and nuclear security**, along with safeguards, in order to better reflect their commonalities, but also situations where safety and security consideration may be at conflict. Such an integrated approach to nuclear safety and security makes it possible to optimize the balance of measures to fulfil the common objective of protecting people and the environment. Sweden recognises the essential role that the IAEA plays and we are pleased to continue to contribute to the Agency's activities in this area.

Continuous improvement and learning from others are important when ensuring safety. Sweden strongly supports the Agency's peer review missions which allow experts to discuss important safety matters and challenge each other's perceptions and actions. Sweden had its second round **IRRS mission in November last year and the first ARTEMIS mission in April this year**. We thank the IAEA and the team members for valuable discussions and feedback that will help Sweden in enhancing our capabilities.

Mr President,

Sweden welcomes the active cooperation on cancer treatment between the Agency and the Elekta company, and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding during the Director General's visit last month. We are pleased that a Swedish company can play a leading role in the Agency's important work to contribute to Member States' socio-economic development and the 2030 Agenda.

We welcome progress towards gender parity at the IAEA, and encourage the Agency to continue promoting the mainstreaming of gender into all its policies and organizational practises. I am pleased to announce that Sweden has contributed to the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme in support of young Ukrainian women wishing to pursue a career in the nuclear field.

Mr. President,

Sweden is looking forward to an even more active collaboration with the Agency in the coming years. In Sweden's view, nuclear power is of special importance as it offers humanity a glimpse of hope in a dire situation of escalating climate change. We must now pace up the expansion of nuclear power globally in order to achieve the climate goals. In this transformation, the Agency has a fundamental role to play in keeping safety standards up to date, and in assisting interested Member States build the competence and necessary nuclear safety, security and safeguards infrastructures they need to adapt and utilize nuclear power for a fossil-free future.

Sweden fully supports the Agency's work to enlarge the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world, and we are ready to do our part to make it happen.

Thank you Mr President!