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Opening Remarks

At the

IAEA 67th GC Side Event

on

SENIOR SAFETY AND SECURITY REGULATORS' MEETING

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INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

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Dear Chairs,

Dear Ladies and gentlemen,

- **A very warm welcome to all of you and thank you** for participating in this **Senior Safety and Security Regulators’ meeting**.
- **On today’s agenda there are two important sessions.**
- The first session is focused **on regulatory effectiveness**. The purpose of this session is to share the **“Call for Action”** identified in the international conference that took place in February 2023 in Abu Dhabi on Effective Nuclear and Radiation Regulatory Systems: Preparing for the Future in a Rapidly Changing Environment.
- The Conference was the sixth in a series of IAEA conferences on effective nuclear and radiation regulatory systems. It reviewed issues of importance to the global regulatory community and **highlighted the role of the regulator in ensuring a high standard of safety and security**.
- Presentations will be made today by **Australia, Chile, Spain and Senegal**, on each of the **4 elements** of the “Call for Action” namely — leadership; organizational readiness and agility; trust; and collaboration and capacity building.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- Achieving effective, independent and sustainable governmental, regulatory and safety frameworks for nuclear installations **is vital to ensure robust nuclear and radiation safety**.
- To highlight these efforts, let me draw attention briefly to some points regarding the 4 elements of the “Call for Action”:
 - **First**, on leadership, innovative and diverse methods are needed to support the next generation of leaders in nuclear safety. The Agency is keenly interested in discussions related to **the preparation of the next generation of regulatory professionals and leaders and the sustainability of regulatory capacities**;
 - **Second**, on organizational Readiness and Agility, the anticipation and identification of new and evolving threats on safety and security from a regulatory perspective is key to continue strengthening nuclear and radiation safety worldwide. Much can still be shared and learned on **establishing solid regulatory strategies and programmes for newcomers or countries expanding nuclear power programmes as well as for other nuclear activities**;

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- **Third**, on trust, information sharing, transparency, communication, and international cooperation **are essential elements of the global nuclear safety and security framework**. The second session of our meeting today has directly to do with the topic of trust and the Agency's work in this area – I will be telling you more about that shortly.
- **And Fourth**, capacity building is a major first step in the process of ensuring a sustainable supply of human resources that will have the necessary qualifications and competence to cover the full scope of nuclear and radiological activities and facilities. The Agency is interested in the exchange of experience on **how to transfer knowledge to the next generation** and **how to establish sustainable capacity building programmes** to align regulatory capabilities with future needs.
- As you will hear during the presentations today, there are several projects conducted by the Agency, such as the International Schools on Nuclear and Radiological Leadership for Safety, initiatives such as the Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative (NHSI) and a wide range of activities on trust, communication and capacity building.
- This session of the meeting will be **jointly chaired** by Mr Christopher Hanson and Mr Christer Viktorsson, who were, respectively, the President and Vice President of the RegCon2023.
 - Mr Hanson is the Chairman of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission; and
 - Mr Viktorsson is the Director General of the Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation of the United Arab Emirates.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- The second session is focused **on the challenges of public communication on nuclear and radiation safety and security issues in the age of mis-, and disinformation**. While mis- and disinformation are not new phenomena, today they present much more of a challenge, as the new technological advancements have **significantly increased their availability, scale, and impact**.
- The purpose of this session is threefold: to **raise awareness** of the challenges posed by these mis- and disinformation; to **share experiences** in addressing them; and to begin **identifying the ways in which the Agency could further support regulators**, especially in terms of fostering wider partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders.
- Overall, the Agency has always been committed to keeping abreast with broader technological advancements. The recently held **International Conference on Computer Security in the Nuclear World held in Vienna in June 2023** serves as an excellent example of its efforts in this regard. This Conference has provided a forum for Member States to discuss the evolving nature of computer security in the nuclear field.

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- It is important to stress that, as a **key communicator on nuclear safety and security issues**, the Agency also faces the challenges of mis- and disinformation, which extend well beyond communicating in a nuclear emergency. Just as its Member States, the IAEA is becoming increasingly aware of the **importance of maintaining trust** in the communicating institutions and of the **need for proactive messaging via multiple channels** to ensure that the right message gets across in an extremely crowded and competitive information space.
- In this regard, the **Agency has established a coordinated research project** in which researchers from several universities, including Cambridge and Harvard, AI developers such as Open AI, Google Mind, as well as Member States national laboratories are **assessing potential tools, measures, and collaboration processes** to mitigate this novel source of disruption. Presentations will be delivered on these topics and during the panel discussion, **Canada and Finland will be sharing their experience and initiatives on these challenges of public communication.**
- The session will be chaired by Mr Ramzi Jammal.
 - Mr Jammal is Executive Vice-President and Chief Regulatory Operations Officer of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

To conclude:

- Thank you all **for your active participation.**
- I wish the meeting success under the Chairpersons' leadership.