

**National Statement of the Republic of Armenia
68th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference
as delivered by Mr. Hakob Vardanyan, Deputy Minister of the Territorial Administration
and Infrastructures of the Republic of Armenia,
Vienna, 16-20 September 2024**

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the General Conference and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Esteemed Delegates,

Armenia recognizes the IAEA's central role in promoting a strong and sustainable global nuclear safety and security framework, as well as in assisting Member States in building sustainable national competences and capabilities.

We praise and support the efforts of the Director General and the Secretariat in upholding the Agency's technical and independent mandate at all times, and as a Member of the Board, we will further promote this imperative.

As a committed advocate for non-proliferation, Armenia reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the NPT alongside with IAEA safeguards agreements and additional protocols. Armenia is among the countries for which IAEA continuously draws a comprehensive safeguards conclusion. We attach great importance to ensuring a robust nuclear security regime as well as effective border control. With the IAEA support, Armenia has developed its Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan, reconstructed the Armenian NPP perimeter and enhanced its nuclear security culture. Armenia is also one of the NSTDC's supporters. Active and high-level participation in the ICONS 2024 was another demonstration of Armenia's commitment. Armenia fully implements its international obligations under the 1540 Resolution.

Over the past 30 years, my country has enjoyed growing partnership with the IAEA. Armenia supports the core activities of the Agency, including through its active participation in NSGC, NHSI, IGAL, TSOE and has benefited from the valuable expertise and technical assistance of the Agency in the field of nuclear power and non-power applications.

Armenia appreciates the latest initiatives of the Director General aimed at utilizing nuclear science and application in achieving sustainable development goals. Among them, we would like to highlight the Rays of Hope initiative, which is a great support to national programs in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and express our utmost gratitude to the IAEA for continuing support to the National Centre of Oncology of Armenia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the center of Armenia's cooperation with the Agency is nuclear energy, which is a cornerstone for ensuring the energy security of my country and achieving Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement. For 4 decades, the Armenian Nuclear Power Plan has been serving the economic development of my country and I would like to proudly underscore that no incidents related to nuclear or radiation safety have been recorded throughout its entire operational period.

As a responsible Member State, Armenia is upholding the IAEA standards of nuclear safety and security in the operation of its Nuclear Power Plant and is committed to their continuous improvement. Under its CNS obligations and taking into account the relevant principles of the Vienna Declaration, Armenia systematically performs safety assessments, undertakes safety improvements at the Armenian NPP and updates national regulations in accordance with the IAEA safety standards and international good practices. Armenia regularly hosts IAEA peer review and advisory services, as well as their follow-up missions and addresses their findings and recommendations. For example, two months ago, Armenia hosted a TC Expert Mission on Seismic Safety Peer Review.

With such a background and priorities, Armenia has developed a program to extend the operational lifetime of the NPP's 2nd power unit until 2036. In December 2023, the Government of the Republic of Armenia approved the implementation project for the extension of the operational lifespan and relevant work has already started. We are committed to implementing necessary measures in a timely manner. We acknowledge with gratitude the Agency's assistance, guidance and knowledge, particularly in the area of aging management and safe long-term operation, as well as cooperation with partner countries in this regard.

This extension will lay a solid foundation for the smooth transition to a new power unit upon the end of the ANPP's extended operational period, which is our ultimate objective. Armenia continues to study the feasibility and potential of constructing new nuclear power unit(s). Ongoing research is being conducted on existing technologies and technical discussions are being held with several interested parties. The Government of Armenia has already established a Nuclear Energy Program Implementing Organization (NEPIO) in accordance with the guidelines of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The established Organization will oversee the entire process, from developing the feasibility study of the nuclear power unit to its construction and will later assume the role of operator for the new plant.

Mr. President,

Unlocking the full potential of nuclear power will pave the way towards a sustainable future for generations come. With this approach, Armenia has demonstrated its staunch support to various initiatives of the Agency and its Member States aimed at promoting nuclear energy, including through high-level participation in the IAEA COP28 events in Dubai, the Nuclear Energy Summit in Brussels among others. This Conference provides a unique opportunity for all Member States to create a more conducive environment and strengthen international cooperation for the development of Atoms for Peace, free of politically motivated campaigns and geopolitical considerations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to express my delegation's regret that this General Conference has been used by Azerbaijan to disseminate baseless allegations against my country. The only outdated subject related to the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant are the false narratives of Azerbaijan repeated at this Conference. We consider this claims as direct attack against professionalism and authority of the IAEA in its assessments of safe and secure operation of the ANPP, as well as an attempt to hamper the peaceful nuclear power program of Armenia given its contribution to the economic development of the country.

Thank you.