

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Almassadam Satkaliyev,
Minister of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan
at the 68th session of the General Conference
of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

(Vienna, 16 September 2024)

Director General,

Excellencies,

At the outset, let me express my sincere gratitude to His Excellency

Mister Rafael Mariano Grossi, IAEA Director General and his team for their professional efforts to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy and effective operation of the Agency. I also would like to extend my congratulations to the elected officers of the Bureau of the 68th session of the General Conference.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Kazakhstan's membership to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Throughout these years, we have consistently supported the idea of peaceful uses of atomic energy under the auspices of the Agency and actively contributed to international efforts aimed at ensuring global stability and security.

Kazakhstan, being a world leader in uranium mining and having its own production of nuclear fuel components and fuel assemblies, as well as significant human resources and experience in this field, will further develop its nuclear energy sector.

Recently, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev **announced the national referendum** on the construction of a

nuclear power plant (NPP) in Kazakhstan. This decision is fully consistent with the key principles and values of the United Nations, such as the principle of democratic participation and self-determination of the people, transparency and accountability. Holding a referendum will give every citizen of the country an opportunity to express their opinion and determine the direction of further development of our energy policy.

We are confident that in case of a positive outcome of the referendum, Kazakhstan will take further steps in developing its nuclear program in accordance with the principles and recommendations of the IAEA. Kazakhstan highly appreciates the IAEA's expert assistance and support in this regard.

Distinguished delegates,

This year in May, **Kazakhstan together with Australia were privileged to co-chair the International Conference on Nuclear Security - ICONS-2024.** This Ministerial platform is devoted to strengthen global nuclear security, as well as the exchange of experience and best practices, and the coordination of international efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism and proliferation of nuclear materials.

In our national capacity, we have implemented a whole range of measures to technically re-equip and strengthen physical security systems in nuclear industry and nuclear installations. At the same

time, **we have joined the key legal instruments in the field of nuclear security** and we call upon Member States to follow our suit.

Kazakhstan is taking **a balanced approach** to the development of its own nuclear industry and is ready to expand its contribution to strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

The unique IAEA Low-Enriched Uranium Bank, which preserves a strategic reserve of LEU as a mechanism of last resort for Member States, continues to operate successfully on the territory of the Ulba Metallurgical Plant. In June, the Agency finalized the second campaign of recertification of its cylinders, successfully demonstrating that the cylinders filled with low-enriched uranium can be certified for transport without decanting them.

We also continue to implement research reactor conversion projects aimed at converting highly enriched uranium fuel into low-enriched fuel, thereby adhering to the nonproliferation policy.

Last year, the conversion of another research reactor was successfully completed at the National Nuclear Center of Kazakhstan, which is now fully powered by low-enriched fuel. The National Nuclear Center has developed **the only unique** technology in the **world** today for dilution and immobilization of irradiated highly enriched uranium fuel (HEU). I would like to emphasize that this technology can be used for similar fuels in other countries participating in the highly enriched uranium minimization program. **Kazakhstan together with partners will showcase this experience in a parallel event on Wednesday.**

Today, the nuclear industry also plays a key role in improving the quality and health of people's lives. Radiopharmaceuticals are used in the diagnosis of diseases including cancer, cardiovascular and neurological disorders. Within the framework of the IAEA technical cooperation project, the Institute of Nuclear Physics of Kazakhstan continues work on the development of radiopharmaceuticals. **This year, a technetium-99 generator has been successfully delivered to Kyrgyzstan.**

Director General,

Bearing in mind our gained experience in the field of at research nuclear reactors and the production of radiopharmaceuticals, I would like to propose, **together with the IAEA, to host the next International Conference on research Reactors in Kazakhstan.**

Distinguished delegates,

In recent decades, thermonuclear energy has become one of the most promising areas in the development of clean and sustainable energy sources.

Today I also want to draw your attention to the work of **the World Fusion Energy Group** and its importance for the future of global energy. The importance of this group cannot be overestimated, as thermonuclear energy can become one of the solutions to global

energy challenges such as climate change and the depletion of traditional resources.

I am also pleased to announce that **Kazakhstan will join the first Ministerial meeting of the World Group on Thermonuclear energy**, which will be held on 6 November in Rome.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Before I conclude, I would like to turn your attention on another **pressing issue in the IAEA.**

Currently, **14 IAEA Member States are still deprived of their fundamental right to be elected to the Board of Governors and General Conference.** Kazakhstan initiated a resolution to restore sovereign equality in the Agency, which **was adopted by overwhelming support of Member States** in the last General Conference. Since its adoption, the number of so-called Arealess Member States were reduced from 17 to 14, but **the problem is not exhausted.** In this regard, we call upon Member States to implement this resolution and fulfill their international obligations.

I reiterate again that the IAEA Statute maintains the sovereign equality of all its members and this provision echoes the requirement of the Article 2 of the United Nations Charter.

Kazakhstan will continue to address this issue until its final resolution.

I thank you!