



SLOVAKIA

National Statement

The 68th Session of the IAEA General Conference

Delivered by the Head of Delegation

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Chairperson

Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic

Vienna, 16 September 2024

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr. President,

1. Allow me to start with congratulating you on your election as the President of this session of the General Conference and to assure you of my delegation's full support in navigating this conference towards a successful outcome.
2. Slovakia aligns itself with the official statement of the EU as published on the Agency's webpage. In addition, allow me to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

3. We remain gravely concerned over the persisting precarious state of nuclear safety and security of Ukrainian nuclear facilities, particularly at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), which is a direct consequence of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. It is unacceptable that ZNPP continues to be illegally occupied by the Russian forces and all seven pillars continue to be compromised either fully or partially. We stress that the five principles established by the Director General must be respected.

Slovakia joins others in calling on Russia to cease its aggression and withdraw all of its troops from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. We reiterate our solidarity with Ukraine and support its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

4. Slovakia commends the IAEA Director General's steadfast dedication and tireless efforts of the Agency in supporting Ukraine to uphold nuclear safety and security in these challenging circumstances. The IAEA has been instrumental in providing assistance to Ukraine to maintain nuclear safety and security of its nuclear installations. We deem it instrumental that the Agency continues to offer impartial

assessment of nuclear safety and security situation in Ukraine and to consistently deliver up-to-date and objective information.

A tangible demonstration of our support to the IAEA and its work in Ukraine was the extra-budgetary contribution, which Slovakia provided to the Agency last year.

5. In the context of the current deteriorating security environment, maintaining the integrity of the NPT regime is crucially important. Slovakia continues to remain strongly committed to the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, and to its key role in advancing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this regard, the IAEA safeguards play a crucial role, with Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and the Additional Protocol constituting the current verification standard. In this context, we commend the Agency's impartial role and professionalism in the implementation of safeguards and verification.

6. The continued advancement of the nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran fuels international concerns. We call on Iran to reverse its nuclear trajectory. There is no credible civilian justification for Iran's rates and levels of uranium enrichment. We also call on Iran to resolve all outstanding safeguards issues and implement the March 2023 Joint Statement and engage constructively with the Agency.

Nuclear Power, Energy and Climate Change

Mr. President,

7. The current geopolitical dynamics and energy landscape enable nuclear energy to demonstrate its pivotal and indispensable role for many countries, including Slovakia. As a safe, stable, carbon free source of energy with the potential to tackle pressing energy challenges, nuclear energy has the capacity to complement various renewable energy sources on electrical grids. More so in the context of

climate change as its impacts intensify and the urgency to decarbonize becomes even more urgent.

8. Nuclear power has a long-standing position in our energy mix and will continue to be a strategic priority and an essential element of Slovakia's energy policy in the years ahead. The commissioning of Unit 3 of the Mochovce NPP is an important milestone in the Slovak energy architecture and represents an important pillar of Slovakia's efforts to ensure a stable and secure supply of electricity for our country. Full integration of Mochovce Unit 3 to the grid increases our total electricity share from nuclear production to 67 %. This long-term and substantial contribution to Slovakia's total electricity consumption accelerates our overall reliance on nuclear production, secures our electricity self-sufficiency and ranks Slovakia among the cleanest energy mixes in the world.
9. In the context of nuclear power, the topic of innovative technologies, including the SMRs, remain among the key focus areas for Slovakia. We continue our efforts in tracking the development of SMRs and innovations, mainly in the form of bilateral cooperation with other Member States and through various forums, inclusive of the IAEA's NHSI Initiative.

Nuclear and Radiation Safety, Security and Non-proliferation

Mr. President,

10. Application and advancement of nuclear and radiation technologies require strict adherence to safety and security standards. We recognize the Agency's key role in setting a global reference for enhancing nuclear safety, radiation protection and security framework, in particular through the development of the IAEA Safety Standards and guidance for nuclear security. Strong commitment to these core principles is of high priority for Slovakia and we constantly seek for improvement,

inter alia, by regularly inviting the IAEA's peer review and advisory services missions, such as the IRRS mission, as well as the ORPAS mission in 2022, followed by the ARTEMIS mission in back-to back format last year. In addition, Slovakia expressed and implemented its political commitment towards the Supplementary Guidance to the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

Nuclear Applications, Technology & Technical Cooperation

11. Slovakia strongly supports the IAEA's mandate to promote safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, while addressing global challenges and offering lasting solutions across various fields, including the environment, human health, energy and climate change. We continue to attach great relevance to the crucial role that nuclear power and non-power applications play in meeting the socio-economic and sustainable development objectives, not to mention their contribution to the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

As the main mechanism for transferring nuclear technology and knowledge to Member States, the IAEA Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme continues to be highly beneficial for Slovakia, primarily in the field of capacity building and knowledge transfer. We reiterate our support for a demand-driven, non-discriminatory, efficient and need-based programme. Slovakia looks forward to the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme, to be held in November this year, and calls on all IAEA's Member States to continue to share their latest scientific developments and good practices in using nuclear technologies to contribute to a high level of safety and security worldwide.

12. We compliment the remarkable impact of the IAEA flagship initiatives in bringing added value while addressing pressing global challenges, ranging from fighting cancer, tackling hunger, to leveraging a high level of nuclear and radiation safety,

and contributing to reach net zero by 2050, all by using nuclear science and technologies for the benefit of all. Slovakia commends the Agency's dedicated approach and will continue to follow these initiatives with interest.

Mr. President,

13. To conclude, Slovakia wishes to reiterate its strong and continued support to the IAEA's mandate and for managing its statutory functions effectively and efficiently. Slovakia stands ready to continue supporting the IAEA Secretariat in the fulfilment of its statutory tasks.

Thank you.