

**Statement by Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
64th General Conference of IAEA**

Vienna, 22 September 2020

Mr. President,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan I would like to congratulate the President of Conference and the Vice-Presidents on their election and to wish them success in their work. We are grateful to the Director General and all IAEA staff for their dedicated efforts towards facilitating the preparation of the Conference in such a difficult time.

Ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has proved once again the significance of strengthening the multilateralism and international law based cooperation. The IAEA with its almost universal membership, advanced scientific approaches and delivered practical assistance has demonstrated that it is well positioned to effectively address such a global challenge as COVID pandemics. I would like to express a sincere gratitude to the Director General Grossi and IAEA staff for undertaking critical measures aimed at rendering assistance to the states affected by the pandemic and its consequences.

Azerbaijan finds the ZODIAC initiative launched by the DG Grossi as timely and helpful for supporting the concerted efforts of the Agency and Member States to reduce the risk of exposure of humanity to dangerous viruses and pathogens. We welcome it and are looking forward to further discussing details of the initiative and how we can effectively develop and apply nuclear techniques for enhancing our capacities and resilience to zoonotic diseases.

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to commend the IAEA for its continuous efforts aimed at strengthening and implementing the technical cooperation programs, which are promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. TC is of great importance for Azerbaijan to attain the Sustainable Development Goals in priority areas such as human health, water resources management, nuclear physics, environment and smart agriculture.

Mr. President,

Azerbaijan has consistently expressed its serious concerns related to security risks for our region emanating from the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant in Armenia. These concerns are primarily based on the lack of transparency and failure by Armenia to provide reliable information on security and safety of NPP, including environmental impact assessment procedure, which may cause significant transboundary impact.

Recently we draw the attention of Member States to a number of cases of smuggling of nuclear and radioactive materials by the Armenian nationals registered at its border crossing points with neighboring countries. Due to continued occupation of significant part of the territory of Azerbaijan by Armenia and inability to provide a proper border control regime along the occupied territories, such cases raise concern over the lack of mechanism of control of dangerous materials and increases the risks associated with trafficking of nuclear materials and their use for production of dirty bombs. Coupled with the Armenia's aggressive policy in the region, ignorance to the demands of the UN Security Council to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its occupying forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, such an irresponsible behavior by the current Armenian regime requires strong condemnation by the international community and adequate response.

Azerbaijan, extending its support to the efforts of the Agency to strengthen security and safety of civilian nuclear facilities, calls on Armenia to address the concerns of its neighbors about transparency, safety and security of the Metsamor NPP and implement demands of resolutions of the UN Security Council.

In conclusion, I would like to express Azerbaijan's commitment to continue its active cooperation with the Agency.

Thank you.