

S T A T E M E N T

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Mr. President,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I would like to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents of the Conference on their election and wish them success in their work.

We are grateful to the Director General and the IAEA staff for their professional and valuable work and confident that their efforts will ensure that the Conference successfully completes its tasks. The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan welcomes delegates and participants of the Conference and wish them a successful and fruitful week.

Our delegation also warmly welcomes the membership of Saint Kitts and Nevis and Tonga in the IAEA.

Mr. President,

The COVID-19 pandemic has proved once again the importance of multilateralism and international cooperation. The IAEA with its almost universal membership, advanced scientific approaches and practical assistance tools has demonstrated that it is well positioned to help addressing global challenges in an effective and efficient manner.

Azerbaijan welcomes the progressive initiatives of the IAEA to expand using nuclear science and technology in addressing most pressing challenges of our world. We support the IAEA's activities aimed at solving the urgent problems of Member States which include such important areas as assisting countries in adapting to climate change, securing food and water supplies, developing integrated responses to zoonotic diseases, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer, developing materials with improved properties and using them in quantum technologies for controlling biological processes at the cellular level, prevention of environmental pollution, transition to green energy sources, development of crops that are resistant to harsh conditions and others.

Technical cooperation with the IAEA contributes to successful introduction of peaceful nuclear technologies in our country. In this regard, we would like to highlight our valuable cooperation with the IAEA including on introduction of radiation technologies in cotton growing, monitoring and ensuring radiation safety of the environment, development and implementation of nuclear and radiation technologies in diagnosis and treatment of oncological diseases, creation of opportunities for radiation processing of materials, development of a preparedness and response system to nuclear and radiological emergencies, development of capabilities for systematic control of public exposure to radon and further strengthening of the national infrastructure for radioactive waste management.

Azerbaijan attaches great importance to ensuring security of nuclear and radioactive materials. Benefitting from international cooperation, Azerbaijan is taking active measures to strengthen export and border control which, among others, aims at prevention of smuggling and illicit trafficking of radioactive and nuclear materials, improving security of facilities using nuclear and radioactive materials and ensuring physical protection of such materials during transportation. This year, an agreement was reached to replace technologies using radioactive sources with alternative technologies in our country. Thus, works on replacing blood sterilization equipment containing a highly active Cs-137 source with equipment using X-rays for this purpose have already begun in the National Center for Hematology and Transfusiology.

We are also looking for possibilities for such replacement of equipment in other organizations.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Azerbaijan is closely following the developments around Ukraine's nuclear facilities. We commend and fully support the IAEA's efforts aimed at ensuring safety and security of nuclear power plants and other nuclear-related facilities in vulnerable regions of the world.

We especially note our satisfaction with the activities of the Director General Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi concerning strengthening safety of Ukraine's nuclear facilities. Organization of the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ISAMZ), as well as the personal involvement of Mr. Grossi in this mission, demonstrate the IAEA's commitment to its mandate to serve the goals of global nuclear safety.

While we are focused on ensuring the safety of nuclear facilities in conflict zones, the safety of such reactors in other regions of the world should not be overlooked or forgotten. Azerbaijan has been consistent in drawing attention to safety risks emanating from the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant in Armenia. This NPP located in a highly seismic geography and having on outdated technology and safety standards continues posing a great danger to the South Caucasus region and beyond. Despite the fact that the NPP is well past its retirement age, we receive alarming reports that Armenia is considering to extend its operation until 2036 and even more is planning construction of a new power plant.

Mr. President,

Azerbaijan appreciates the active role of the IAEA in studying zoonotic disease and is confident that these efforts will assist member states in building resilience and response capabilities to better control this disease. Azerbaijan also welcomes another new initiative – Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution (NUTEC) and looks forward to active cooperation with the IAEA in combating environmental pollution by using modern scientific approach and methodologies based on nuclear techniques.

This is especially true for the territories of Azerbaijan liberated from Armenia's nearly three-decade occupation. Currently, Azerbaijan is continuing post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction works in these territories and rebuilding destroyed cities, towns and villages from scratch using the most advanced technologies and concepts such as "smart city" - "smart village" based on green energy technology. As part of this endeavor Azerbaijan is conducting environmental monitoring of these territories, including assessment the level of radioactive contamination. Furthermore, Azerbaijan is taking stringent measures to establish effective border control along these areas to ensure that these territories are no longer used for illegal purposes, including for illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials.

Mr. President,

At the end of my speech, I express our satisfaction with the activities of the Agency aimed at use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes and increasing level of safety and security throughout the world. Azerbaijan will continue to provide the necessary assistance and support to the IAEA.

Thank you for attention.