STATEMENT TO

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2026 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE

TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (NPT)

FIRST SESSION

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INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY
Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset allow me to congratulate Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen of Finland on having been appointed the Chair of this PrepCom meeting. On behalf of Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi I would like to assure you of IAEA’s full support for this meeting and for your endeavours to make it a success.

It is the fourth time that an NPT PrepCom is taking place in Vienna, our seat. And rightly so, given that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an organization repeatedly mentioned in the text of the NPT, is playing such a key role in the implementation of the Treaty. This statement aims to provide you with a brief overview of important developments in key areas of the work of the IAEA relevant to the implementation of the NPT.

**Nuclear Applications**

For almost 70 years, the IAEA has helped to improve the economic and social well-being of millions of people by making nuclear science and technology available in cancer control, energy, food and agriculture, industry, and other areas. In a number of ways, the Agency is making a major contribution to the achievement of nine of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Since Director General Grossi took office in December 2019, the IAEA has taken a renewed approach to peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. Director General Grossi launched major initiatives - Rays
of Hope, ZODIAC, NuTEC Plastics, Maria Sklodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, Lise Meitner Programme - to which many of your countries have graciously contributed. These initiatives are ramping up the response to the scourge of cancer and plastic pollution, are enhancing pandemic preparedness and women’s representation in the nuclear field for the benefit of all humankind.

In 2020 Director General Grossi launched the completion of the modernization of the Seibersdorf laboratories, ReNuAL.2, which, along with our Marine Environmental Laboratories in Monaco, are unique in the UN System and help Member States address a range of existing and emerging development challenges. Thanks to the generous contributions from several Member States, these state-of-the-art laboratories will enable us to deliver improved services to all Member States to make food safer, improve control of harmful insect pests, and maximize the benefits of new radiation technology for cancer treatment – to name just a few examples.

The Agency’s Peaceful Uses Initiative, originating at the NPT Review Conference in 2010, provides additional funds for our technical cooperation activities. Over the years it has helped to raise over 220 million euros for more than 300 projects that benefit more than 150 countries. The Agency is grateful to all the countries that have supported this valuable initiative.

**Nuclear Energy**

Energy is indispensable for sustainable development.
Nuclear power can help address the twin challenges of ensuring reliable energy supplies while curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Since December 2019 the IAEA is ensuring that nuclear has a place at the table at COP discussions. Today 437 nuclear power reactors operating in 32 countries provide about 10 per cent of the world’s total electricity and a quarter of its low-carbon supply. Without significant progress on using the full potential of nuclear power, it will be impossible for the world to secure sufficient energy to achieve sustainable development while meeting climate targets. Events of recent weeks only underscore the gravity and urgency of the challenge.

**Nuclear Safety**

Analysts believe nuclear power capacity will need to double if global climate and economic goals are to be met. Therefore, we need to ensure continued safe operations of nuclear power plants as well as to explore new technologies such as small modular reactors (SMRs) with innovative safety features and robust designs.

The IAEA helps its Member States to fulfil their nuclear safety responsibility by developing Safety Standards that may be used as the basis for national regulations and by providing, upon request, a variety of services, including expert review missions. In 2022 alone, the IAEA conducted 62 peer review and advisory services.

In June 2022 Director General Grossi launched IAEA’s *Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative (NHSI)* to support the effective global deployment of safe and secure advanced nuclear reactors, with
particular focus on SMRs. The effort brings together key stakeholders from across the world divided into two tracks: regulators and industry.

Earlier this month, Director General Grossi presented a comprehensive report on the safety review of the ALPS-treated water at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. The report is the outcome of nearly two years of work by an IAEA Task Force made up of top specialists from within the Agency advised by internationally recognised nuclear safety experts from eleven countries. The IAEA’s safety review will continue for decades to come. The Agency will have a continuous on-site presence and provide live online monitoring on its website from the discharge facility.

**Nuclear Security**

To better assist Member States in preparing for security challenges posed by non-state actors, the IAEA is building a new Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Center, part of the IAEA laboratories complex in Seibersdorf. The new Center will provide more capacity for the IAEA to provide training and development in support of sustainable nuclear security initiatives and their effective implementation. Last month, the *International Conference on Computer Security in the Nuclear World* gathered in Vienna with the participation of hundreds of experts.

**Nuclear Safety, Security, and Safeguards in Ukraine**

I am confident that IAEA’s activities in Ukraine are of great interest. Soon after 24 February 2022, the IAEA drew up and agreed with
Ukrainian officials a concrete and detailed technical plan for the provision of nuclear safety and security assistance to Ukraine that comprised four areas: in-person technical assistance, delivery of equipment, remote assistance, and rapid deployment assistance. Director General Grossi has formulated seven indispensable pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict (‘Seven Pillars’), which derive from and are aligned with the IAEA safety standards and nuclear security guidance.

The IAEA has conducted thirteen in-person missions to Ukraine to help stabilize the situation, assess closely the nuclear safety and security situation, and assess the needs. Eight of these missions, including the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya (ISAMZ) in September 2022 when the continued presence of Agency’s staff at ZNPP was established, were led by Director General Grossi. At the request of the Ukrainian officials a continued presence of Agency staff at all nuclear sites in the country was established in January 2023. In addition, the IAEA arranged several deliveries of nuclear safety- and security-related equipment. Safeguards activities in Ukraine have also continued.

Last May, Director General Grossi outlined at the UN Security Council the IAEA’s five principles to help ensuring nuclear safety and security at Zaporizhzhya NPP, which received strong support from the Members of the Council. These principles are:

1. There should be no attack of any kind from or against the plant, in particular targeting the reactors, spent fuel storage, other critical infrastructure, or personnel;
2. Zaporizhzhya NPP should not be used as storage or a base for heavy weapons (i.e. multiple rocket launchers, artillery systems and munitions, and tanks) or military personnel that could be used for an attack from the plant;

3. Off-site power to the plant should not be put at risk. To that effect, all efforts should be made to ensure that off-site power remains available and secure at all times;

4. All structures, systems and components essential to the safe and secure operation of Zaporizhzhya NPP should be protected from attacks or acts of sabotage;

5. No action should be taken that undermines these principles.

Director General provides information on the situation in Ukraine through reports and periodic Updates.

**Nuclear Verification**

The IAEA is the competent international authority entrusted by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to verify and provide assurances of compliance by States parties with their non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty. We do this by implementing safeguards – legal and technical measures set out in safeguards agreements in 187 States Parties to the NPT. Besides that, 141 States have brought additional protocols into force, giving the Agency greater access to locations and information.

The number of nuclear facilities and other locations under IAEA safeguards has risen 10% over the past decade (from 1212 to 1353). Over
the past two decades it has risen by almost 50% (from 908 to 1353). In this context, the Agency has improved its analytical capabilities with new state-of-the-art safeguards laboratories near Vienna, and by incorporating the use of emerging technologies, including AI - within well-defined ethical guidelines - to support and optimize nuclear verification.

Since taking office, Director General Grossi has urged the States parties that have yet to do so to bring CSAs into force. He has also encouraged States without APs to conclude and bring into force APs and called upon States with the old SQPs to amend or rescind them as they are no longer adequate for the current safeguards system. The Agency may no longer be able to draw a safeguards conclusion for such States unless the States concerned respond positively to the repeated calls by the Director General to amend or rescind such SQPs.

In 2020 Director General launched a comprehensive capacity building initiative for systems of accounting for and control of nuclear material and national authorities responsible for safeguards implementation named COMPASS.

Mr Chairman,

The IAEA has focused on Iran’s nuclear activities since 2002. For over two years, the Agency has not been able to perform the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) verification and monitoring activities in relation to the production and inventory of centrifuges, rotors and bellows, heavy water and uranium ore concentrate, including in the period
after June 2022 when no surveillance and monitoring equipment related to JCPOA was installed and operating.

With regards to the implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in Iran, the process of implementing the Joint Statement by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and the IAEA of 4 March has started and some progress has been made, but not as much as the Director General had hoped for. The remaining outstanding safeguards issues stemming from Iran’s obligations under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement still need to be resolved for the Agency to be in a position to provide assurance that Iran’s nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful.

In the past 14 years since IAEA inspectors were required to leave North Korea, DPRK’s nuclear programme has significantly expanded. Since Director General Grossi took office, the Agency has intensified its efforts to monitor the DPRK nuclear programme and enhanced its readiness to undertake verification and monitoring activities in DPRK. In the past months, the Agency has seen indications of ongoing operation of nuclear facilities, and a significant increase in construction work at the Yongbyon site. The continuation of DPRK’s nuclear programme is a clear violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions and is deeply regrettable.

As far as implementation of safeguards in the Syrian Arab Republic is concerned, no new information has come to the knowledge of the
Agency that would affect our previous assessments. The IAEA continues to urge Syria to cooperate fully in connection with all unresolved issues.

Naval nuclear propulsion has recently become a matter of considerable interest. The IAEA has begun working with the relevant parties on this complex technical matter in accordance with both the Agency’s statutory mandate and the relevant safeguards agreements.

Mr Chairman,

The IAEA makes an important contribution to the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons in a number of ways. Our safeguards activities, through which we aim to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities, are a valuable international confidence-building measure. We also assist States in the creation and implementation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which already cover vast regions of the world. The Agency attended as observer the first, second and third sessions of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, held in November 2019, November 2021, and November 2022, respectively, at the UN Headquarters.

To conclude, by helping States benefit from peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology while exercising credible verification and promoting effective nuclear safety and security, IAEA continues to make a tangible and essential contribution to the implementation of the NPT.

Thank you for your attention.