

Excellencies, Distinguished Ministers, Director General [Rafael Mariano Grossi], Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the co-chairs from Australia and Kazakhstan for their tireless work on the preparation of a Ministerial Declaration and for their Joint Statement. We strongly deplore the fact that one single delegation blocked consensus on the Ministerial Declaration, despite the significant concessions made in good faith during the negotiations. Sweden is aligned with the statement by the European Union. Let me add the following points in my national capacity.

This conference offers a timely opportunity to take stock of challenges, opportunities and trends in nuclear security. We must be mindful that non-State actor threats are real and have become more pressing due to the worsened security environment caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Russia's illegal seizure of Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant must end. Russia **must immediately withdraw all its troops from Ukraine**, in full respect of its internationally recognized borders. As part of our broader commitment to Ukraine, we are also co-chairing the Working Group on Nuclear Safety and Security in the Ukrainian Peace Formula together with the Czech Republic, Japan and France.

Nuclear security threats must **always** be taken into consideration in the design of new and advanced nuclear technology, including Small Modular Reactors. Artificial intelligence and cybersecurity are tools to strengthen nuclear security, but we must remain vigilant against their abuse.

Sweden is an active and committed partner in nuclear security. We contribute regularly to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund. We have cooperated closely with countries in Eastern and Central Europe to build up their nuclear security infrastructures. This has been done together with members of the G7 Global partnership, and the Nordic countries. Our nuclear safety and security cooperation with Ukraine has **redoubled** as a result of the Russian aggression, while cooperation with Belarus and Russia has been suspended.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

On the national level, nuclear security is of growing importance as nuclear power is expected to expand over the coming years. Sweden is a nation with a long history of a diversified energy mix where safe and reliable nuclear power has played a major role. Recently Sweden has changed **its goal regarding energy policy from 100% renewable to 100% fossil-free electricity production by 2040**. Nuclear energy still has a key role to ensure a strong energy mix for security of supply and for our fight against climate change.

To achieve this goal, it will be of utmost importance to maintain safe **existing** nuclear power programmes, but also **to expand and enhance** new programmes. In our regulatory work, Sweden adopts an integrated approach to nuclear safety, security and safeguards, seeking synergies and efficiencies. We encourage all Member States to do the same.

Sweden recognises the fundamental importance of maintaining high standards of nuclear security. The Agency's Nuclear Security Series plays an important role in helping Member States develop their nuclear security framework, and they should be kept relevant and updated. Sweden will continue to be active in this regard.

The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its amendment are **crucial international legal instruments**. They highlight the obligation to refrain from the threat, or use of force, against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. We look forward to comprehensive technical discussions in the coming years. We urge States that have not done so yet, to become Parties to the Convention and its Amendment without delay.

Sweden strongly supports the Agency's peer review missions which are essential in strengthening the nuclear security framework. Continuous improvement and learning from others are critical elements to enhance nuclear security. Sweden has benefited greatly from the Agency's advisory service and we encourage others to host their own IPPAS missions.

Sweden encourages the Agency and all Member States to continue **promoting gender equality**. As an example, Sweden contributes to the Marie Curie Sklodowska fellowship programme. We also sponsor the Black Sea Women in Nuclear Network here at the ICONS exhibition.

In summary, addressing nuclear security challenges requires international cooperation, robust policies, and continuous vigilance. Nuclear energy and technology have not only contributed immensely in striving to achieve a fossil-free environment with reliable energy, but also contributes with important initiatives to help fight cancer, reduce plastic pollution and boost food security. By working together, we can mitigate risks and create a safe and better world.

In line with our current policy priorities, Sweden will participate actively in this work over the coming years.

Thank you.