

**Statement by Mr Albinas Zananavicius, Vice-minister of Energy
of the Republic of Lithuania, at the 68th Session of the
General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

Mr President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Using this opportunity allow me to congratulate you, Your Excellency, on the election as the President of the 68th General Conference.

Mr President,

Lithuania fully associates itself with the statement of the European Union.

In my national capacity, I would like to add the following.

Mr President,

This year was marked by significant efforts of the Agency and its Member States in shaping the future of nuclear security, improving efficiency and effectiveness of the nuclear safety related instruments such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention. In addition, we are looking forward to the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications to be held in Vienna later this year.

However, Mr. President,

It is regretful that the third year in a row the Agency had to reprioritise its activities and financial resources to the support and assistance for the suffering people of Ukraine. This would not have happened if Russia have not started its unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. It is hard to comprehend that this country continues to threaten the world with a possible nuclear disaster by transforming the seized Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant into a military base. And moreover, continues to destroy Ukraine's entire energy infrastructure posing a threat to the safety and security of all other Ukraine's nuclear facilities.

Mr. President,

The only sustainable way out from this precarious situation – is the Ukrainian way, proposed at the Summit on Peace for Ukraine in June this year. Russia must immediately and unconditionally withdraw its military and other personnel,

including that of ROSATOM, from the ZNPP and from the entire territory of Ukraine. Full respect to Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence within its internationally recognised borders must be ensured.

Mr President,

Let me also remind our persistent concern regarding the Russian-built Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) located close to our capital, Vilnius. Bearing in mind the untransparent and improper site selection process (including selective approach to the IAEA SEED mission modules), the way NPP was constructed, the way it operates with recurrent equipment failures and unplanned shutdowns, and finally this country's specific attitude to openness and transparency to its own and neighbour countries public, we retain our strong position that the Belarusian NPP is not safe and should not be in operation. It is crucial to prioritize the plant's safety to protect the region from any potential hazards.

Mr President,

Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unchecked advances of its nuclear and ballistic weapons programs are unacceptable. The recent statements by the North Korean leader on plans to increase the number of nuclear weapons "exponentially" threatens the security and stability of the region and beyond. We join the international community in a call upon the DPRK to refrain from actions that threaten international peace and security and to take steps aimed at pursuing complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Latest reports by the IAEA show that Iran is expanding its nuclear program in ways that have no credible civilian justification, failing to provide the IAEA with the necessary cooperation to prove otherwise. We strongly urge Iran to reverse its nuclear trajectory and to take steps to build international confidence, fulfil the expectations outlined by the Director General and the Board.

Mr President,

Recently, the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania adopted a renewed National Energy Independence Strategy which sets the goal to analyse option of using

advanced SMR technologies in Lithuania. This decision, along with the goal for a rapid growth of renewable energy, marks a turning point in the development of the Lithuanian energy sector.

Let me also update on the decommissioning activities at the Ignalina NPP. Since 2023, the Plant together with two major global companies as contractors, are working on the design options for the RBMK type reactor dismantling technology. The design solutions, first of this kind, are expected by the end of 2027.

Lithuania is fully committed now and, in the future, to ensure safe and efficient management of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste by investing in the development of the necessary infrastructure. We are at the final stage of decommissioning of the Radon type Maišiagala radioactive waste storage facility. All radioactive waste from this storage facility was already transferred to the modern storage facilities at the Ignalina NPP site. We are consistently working on the thorough selection of the most suitable site from the 77 potential places in Lithuania for construction of a deep geological repository.

Mr President,

Radiation protection of the Lithuanian population is a continuous process encouraging regular improvement of various infrastructure aspects especially in view of the recent geopolitical situation and the new challenges it brings. Lithuania by implementation of the IAEA radiation protection standards in planned, emergency and existing exposure situations and safety guidance on radiation protection, continuously pays a great attention to ensure reduction of doses for population and to preparedness for radiological and nuclear accidents. The input of the IAEA regional and national projects is very important in seeking an advancement in those areas.

And finally, Mr President,

I reaffirm Lithuania's continuous support to the work of Agency which plays a crucial role in ensuring radiation protection and nuclear safety, security, and safeguards worldwide.

I thank you.