

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador HAM Sang Wook,  
Temporary President of the 69<sup>th</sup> IAEA General Conference  
15 September 2025, Vienna**

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Excellencies,  
Director-General Grossi,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Colleagues and Friends,

As I conclude my tenure as President of the 68th General Conference, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all Member States for the confidence, trust, and cooperation you extended to me. It has been an immense honor to serve in this role on behalf of the Far East Group and the entire membership of this Agency.

I thank the Vice-Presidents, the Chair of the Committee of the Whole, and especially the Director-General and the Secretariat, whose tireless professionalism has enabled the Agency to deliver on its mandate.

When I assumed the presidency last year, I expressed concern at signs of strain in the “Vienna Spirit,” while stressing that consensus was the only viable path forward. Standing before you today, I remain convinced that this conviction holds true. The challenges we face as an international community are many, but consensus, cooperation, and compromise are the foundation of the IAEA’s enduring success.

The past year has highlighted the indispensable role of the IAEA. Guided by its motto of *Atoms for Peace and Development*, the Agency has supported Member States in addressing some of the most pressing global challenges. Flagship initiatives such as Rays of Hope, ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics, and Atoms4Food have delivered tangible results — from strengthening cancer care

and combating zoonotic diseases, to addressing plastic pollution and enhancing food security. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme in November 2024 reaffirmed the central role of nuclear science and the TC Programme in tackling these challenges.

At the same time, the Agency has continued to uphold its core responsibilities in safeguards, nuclear safety, and nuclear security. In 2024 alone, the Agency carried out more than 3,000 verification activities at over 1,300 facilities worldwide, drawing safeguards conclusions for 175 States. Its role in strengthening nuclear safety and security also remains crucial, particularly in Ukraine, where its continued presence at nuclear facilities helps prevent a nuclear accident amidst the ongoing conflict.

Looking ahead, the Agency's engagement with emerging technologies is equally important. We welcome the International Symposium on Artificial Intelligence and Nuclear Energy this December, which will explore how AI can contribute to the safe and efficient use of nuclear power. In addition, the growing interest in small modular reactors (SMRs) demonstrates both the promise and responsibility of nuclear innovation. Here too, the IAEA has a vital role in ensuring that SMR development is accompanied by robust standards of safety, security, and safeguards.

Excellencies, I am mindful of the many difficult issues on our agenda. In an era of heightened geopolitical instability and sharpened divisions, our deliberations will not be easy. Yet I remain an optimist: I trust in our collective wisdom to overcome obstacles and find solutions together. I firmly believe that if we continue to uphold flexibility, mutual understanding, and a strong sense of community, we can preserve the "Vienna Spirit" that has long enabled consensus at this Conference. Only then can we provide the Agency with the clear and unified direction it needs to continue delivering on its vital mission.

On a lighter note, I recall that last year, when our discussions went past midnight, I had to “stop the clock” so that we could continue our work until three o’clock in the morning. This year, I sincerely hope my successor will be spared such efforts, and that we can all return home before the clock strikes midnight on Friday.

Excellencies, colleagues, friends, it has been my profound privilege to serve as President of the 68th General Conference. I extend my warmest wishes to the incoming President and have every confidence that, with your full support, he will guide this Conference to a successful conclusion.

Thank you. /END/