

**69th IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE
CANADA NATIONAL STATEMENT
MR. JEFF LABONTÉ
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER, NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA**

Mr. President, on behalf of the Government of Canada, congratulations on your election to the Presidency. My delegation is fully committed to working with you to ensure a successful General Conference.

In these challenging times, the IAEA plays a more vital role than ever. Canada is a strong supporter of the Agency's efforts to promote peaceful nuclear applications, advance nuclear safety and security, and maintain a rigorous safeguards system to prevent proliferation. This includes significant extra-budgetary contributions.

We commend the IAEA's impartial, technical approach and the dedication of its Secretariat. Undermining the Agency's credibility and mandate must be universally rejected. We also emphasize the importance of timely and full financial contributions from all Member States.

President,

Peaceful nuclear technologies are central to addressing global issues. As a global nuclear exporter, Canada recognizes their role in reducing emissions, achieving climate goals, supporting the Sustainable Development Goals, and ensuring energy security. Our CANDU technology has delivered these benefits for nearly six decades.

CANDU reactors are not only amongst the world's top performers in safety and reliability, but their unique design makes them amongst the top performers in the production of medical isotopes and Cobalt-60. They also operate using natural, unenriched uranium, providing an accessible and viable option for Member States.

Canada is in a period of nuclear growth. We are planning new nuclear reactors, including both large and small scale nuclear builds. We are increasing medical isotope production. We expect nuclear to continue to play a role in the years ahead, in provinces with existing nuclear power plants, as well as in other newcomer jurisdictions that have growing energy needs.

Canada is exploring advanced reactor technologies such as Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), many of which offer promising low-emission, reliable energy solutions. Canada has several proposed projects in consideration and is working internationally with its regulatory counterparts to support the safe deployment of SMRs globally.

Canada is now building the G7's first SMR at Darlington, Ontario. While this gives Canada firsthand experience in SMR deployment, it also comes with first mover challenges related to first-of-a-kind project risks. In a fast-changing world filled with uncertainty, it is also crucial for us to think about ensuring a robust and consistent supply chain, adequate financing frameworks, and securing fuel from reliable sources.

A sustainable nuclear future requires responsible management of radioactive waste. Canada is committed to advancing long-term management plans for all radioactive waste, and a key milestone was achieved in late 2024 with the selection of a site for a deep geological repository for its used nuclear fuel.

Canada is equally committed to engaging Indigenous communities and Nations, local stakeholders, and civil society across all nuclear initiatives and welcomes knowledge exchange with other nations.

President,

Canada is a proud contributor to the Lise Meitner Programme and also supports scholarships and internships through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme. We are particularly happy to have hosted the latest visit of the Lise Meitner Programme in Ontario this July, with participants representing 13 countries. These initiatives promote gender equality and inclusivity in the nuclear field—values Canada will continue to champion.

Canada supports the IAEA's initiatives to help Member States strengthen their nuclear safety and security regimes. We contribute to several projects including the Regulatory Infrastructure Development Program, with over \$23.5 million in funding since 2017 to benefit over 90 countries in Latin America, Africa and more recently the Indo-Pacific.

The peaceful use of nuclear technology demands robust safeguards. Canada urges continued implementation of the Additional Protocol and, where relevant, updates to the Small Quantities Protocol. These measures are essential for building trust in nuclear activities.

President,

Canada remains deeply concerned by the continued development of the DPRK's nuclear programme which threatens global security. Canada will once again introduce a General Conference resolution intended to support continued IAEA work on this critical issue.

Iran's nuclear program is a matter of grave concern, including its significant stockpile of highly-enriched uranium with no credible civilian purpose and its non-compliance with legal safeguards obligations. We welcome the IAEA Director General's efforts to negotiate a resumption of IAEA verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear program and call on Iran to urgently take concrete steps to implement the necessary technical modalities to allow this resumption. Canada has contributed \$23 million to Agency's verification activities in Iran since 2014.

At this GC, Canada, in close collaboration with Ukraine and other partners, will once again introduce a resolution on nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine which will emphasize our full support to the IAEA's efforts in Ukraine.

The nuclear safety and security situation at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) remains precarious due to Russia's illegal military presence and we reiterate the need for Russia to immediately heed the previous calls of the IAEA Board and GC and return the plant to the competent Ukrainian authorities.

The IAEA remains essential to our shared efforts to advance the safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear energy. Canada remains fully committed to working collaboratively to advance the Agency's work at a time of pressing challenges.

Thank you.