

**Statement by Mr Arnoldas Pikzirnīs, Vice-minister of Energy
of the Republic of Lithuania, at the 69th 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 69th General Conference.

Mr President,

Lithuania fully aligns itself with the statement made by Denmark on behalf of 26 EU Member States. In my national capacity, I would like to add the following.

At the outset let me reaffirm Lithuania's continuous support to the work of the Agency. It plays a crucial role in ensuring radiation protection and nuclear safety, security, and safeguards worldwide. Let me also reassure our strongest commitment to uphold same principles domestically.

The last year's amendments to the National Energy Independence Strategy of Lithuania mark a historic moment to my country. It gives us a mandate to start exploring using nuclear energy in Lithuania once again. It is a huge opportunity but also a challenge. We need to restore extensive human resources and technical knowledge for this new chapter. We consider international cooperation as a best tool to fill in this gap. In this respect, we are ready to deepen our technical cooperation with the Agency and to engage with safety regulators and nuclear vendors from around the world, in particular the EU and the US.

With new prospects, we cannot forget our long-lasting commitment to safely and securely decommission the Ignalina NPP. At the end of 2024 the plant has reached one of its important milestones. The Lithuanian nuclear safety regulator has issued a licence for decommissioning activities at the plant's power units and older radioactive waste management facilities. This landmark document officially marks the end of the so-called post operation stage and the beginning of a "classic" decommissioning.

We are strong supporters of the international nuclear safety instruments and their universalisation and effective implementation. We also recognize the value of the Agency's in-depth expert peer reviews. I am happy to welcome IRRS mission to Lithuania in 2026 which we will be hosting for the second time.

Radiation protection of the Lithuanian population and its timely improvement is another challenge requiring of our constant attention. Especially in view of current geopolitical situation. Lithuania places strong emphasis on reducing doses to the population and maintaining a high level of preparedness for radiological and nuclear accidents.

Considering the emerging technologies, we must ensure that our regulatory framework remains flexible, forward-looking, and capable of adapting. To this end the Agency's regional and national cooperation is invaluable tool for access to knowledge, expertise, and qualified assistance.

Mr President,

We remain seriously concerned about the Russian-designed Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), located close to our capital, Vilnius. The site was selected without complying with core international safety standards and excluding key Agency's SEED mission modules, raising fundamental safety questions from the outset. The plant's construction, commissioning and operation have since been marked by recurring incidents, persistent gaps in safety assurance and reluctance to engage transparently with neighbouring countries and the international community. Its operation presents an unacceptable risk, and we strongly urge that it be suspended until all safety issues are fully resolved and independently verified.

Mr President,

It's been more than three and a half years that Russia continues its devastating unprovoked war of aggression against a sovereign country Ukraine. It keeps Ukrainian Zaporizhzhia NPP in great jeopardy by seizing the plant and converting it into a military bastion. Constant Russia's deliberate shelling and drone attacks on the civilian energy grid pose a huge danger to the courageous people of Ukraine. This all poses a grave risk to nuclear safety and security of the operational Ukrainian

nuclear power plants. Russia must immediately withdraw all personnel from the ZNPP and all of Ukraine. Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders has to be ensured. We renew our strong call for an unconditional ceasefire and remain committed to a just and lasting peace.

Mr President,

It is regrettable that we are approaching 100 days during which Agency's experts have been unable to conduct effective and efficient monitoring and verification in Iran. We are concerned about the Agency's loss of continuity of knowledge, particularly regarding the highly enriched uranium (HEU) stockpile.

We strongly urge Iran to allow inspections to resume at all nuclear facilities in Iran and cooperate with the Agency. In this context we commend Director General's efforts and take positive note of the recent announcement that the agreement has been reached in Cairo between Iran and the Agency to resume inspections.

The continued advancement of the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic weapons program remains a matter of grave concern. We urge in the strongest terms 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.

And finally, Mr President,

let me remind that twenty years ago, the International Atomic Energy Agency was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize – a moment of recognition not only for the Agency, but for every Member State committed to upholding the peaceful uses of atomic energy. That prize was not merely an honour. It was and remains an obligation and shared responsibility to ensure that nuclear science serves humanity, not conflict.

Today that obligation is being tested. As the Member States of the Agency we each bear responsibility for upholding the integrity of that award. The Prize belongs not to the past, but to the principles we defend today. Thank you.