

March 2023 IAEA Board of Governors Meeting
Joint Statement on Nuclear Safety, Security, and Safeguards in Ukraine

Chair,

Canada and Finland have coordinated the following joint statement on behalf of 50 delegations, including 18 Board Members. The delegations associating with this statement are Albania, Australia, Austria Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland ,Israel, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, EURATOM, Uruguay, and Ukraine.

We thank the Director General for his continued reporting on nuclear safety, security, and safeguards in Ukraine, including his most recent report under GOV/2023/10. We are deeply concerned by the DG's assessment that the situation at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) remains "dangerous, precarious, and challenging". It is dangerous, precarious, and challenging as a result of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, its actions at ZNPP compromising the DG's 'seven indispensable pillars for nuclear safety and security', and its attempts to take "progressive control over the plant".

It has been one year since this Board met in a special session to discuss the nuclear safety, security, and safeguards implications of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. On 3 March 2022, we adopted a resolution deploring Russia's actions and calling for Russia to cease all actions against and at Ukraine's nuclear facilities. One day later, on 4 March, Russian forces took control of ZNPP, Europe's largest operating nuclear power plant. Since then, the Board has twice repeated calls for Russia to cease all actions against and at nuclear facilities in Ukraine. Through these three resolutions, the Board has sent a strong message that Russia's actions are unacceptable and pose grave threats to nuclear safety and security in Ukraine.

In line with A/RES/ES-11/4 adopted by the UN General Assembly in October 2022 and A/RES/ES-11/6 adopted in February 2023, our delegations reject and do not recognize Russia's attempts to take ownership of the ZNPP nor its attempted illegal annexation of the Ukrainian territory on which the plant is located. It is important that the Agency continues to act consistently with the relevant UN General Assembly resolutions, including by not recognizing any altered status of any part of Ukraine.

Russia's actions in Ukraine violate international law and are entirely inconsistent with the objectives of the Agency as outlined in the IAEA Statute. The Russian Federation's irresponsible actions at and affecting ZNPP, including its seizure, attempts to formalize control, and continued military presence are the root causes of all nuclear safety and security threats at the facility. The risks at the plant will remain dangerously high as long as Russian military and ROSATOM personnel remain present at ZNPP. Russia must leave the ZNPP. It is imperative that Russia not target Ukrainian nuclear facilities in its illegal and unjustified war of aggression. In this regard, we express significant concern with the continued fragile off-site power supply situation for Ukrainian NPPs due to Russia's egregious attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

Chair,

We commend the courage, professionalism, and commitment of Ukrainian staff at ZNPP and all other nuclear facilities in Ukraine who continue to work under immensely challenging circumstances. We strongly deplore Russia's relentless pressure on Ukrainian operating staff with potentially severe consequences for nuclear safety and security. It is critical that competent Ukrainian authorities regain full control over all nuclear facilities within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders to ensure their safe and secure operations, and in order for the IAEA to fully and safely conduct its safeguards verification activities in Ukraine.

Our delegations recognize the IAEA's essential role in responding to the nuclear-related crisis emerging from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and we reaffirm the importance of the Director General's 'seven indispensable pillars on nuclear safety and security' as derived from IAEA safety standards and nuclear security guidance. We commend the commitment of the Director General and the Secretariat and applaud the ongoing work of the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhia (ISAMZ). We stress the importance of the safe and regular rotation of IAEA staff at the plant. Our delegations also appreciate the Director General's leadership on efforts to date to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around the ZNPP in full respect for Ukrainian sovereignty as a means to prevent a catastrophic nuclear incident and welcome the international community's ongoing efforts to address this challenge.

We also welcome the establishment of a continuous presence of Agency's Support and Assistance Missions at four additional nuclear facilities in Ukraine. The Agency's on the ground presence provides this Board and the international community with essential, fact-based, and impartial nuclear safety and security information. In the current situation, our delegations remain committed to providing the Agency with the necessary support required for these missions in Ukraine as well as technical assistance for Ukraine.

Chair,

Russia has repeatedly disregarded this Board's calls for ceasing all actions against and at nuclear facilities in Ukraine. It is essential that this Board continue to uphold long-established principles of nuclear safety and security and hold Russia to account for its repeated disregard of these principles.

Some delegations endorsing this statement have taken or are considering relevant steps on a national or regional basis in this regard. Some examples include 1) requesting that the Agency not use our voluntary extra-budgetary contributions to fund activities directly benefiting Russia, 2) not participating in Agency events taking place in Russia, and 3) voicing significant concern with high-level Russian participation in Agency's sponsored events. These delegations believe that it is important for all Member States to look carefully at these and other such measures as a way to signal clearly that Russian actions are inconsistent with the behaviour of a responsible IAEA Member State. Russia continues to place Ukraine and all of us at risk and this cannot be tolerated.

Thank you.