Mr Chair,

We congratulate you on your election as the Chairperson of the First Committee during the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly.

Pursuant to its Statute, the IAEA continues to seek the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, which has helped countries to produce more food, generate more electricity, treat diseases such as cancer, manage water supplies, protect the seas and oceans and respond to climate change. The IAEA also continues to work with its Member States to ensure that such technology is applied safely and securely, and that safeguards are in place to guard against the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Last month the IAEA concluded the 61st regular session of its General Conference, preceded by the Board of Governors. I would like to briefly highlight some of the outcomes from those meetings of significance to the First Committee.

A resolution on strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of IAEA safeguards, adopted by the General Conference, acknowledged IAEA’s safeguards as a fundamental component of nuclear non-proliferation, by providing assurance that States are complying with their obligations under relevant safeguards agreements and helping to create an environment conducive to nuclear cooperation. The IAEA draws conclusions independently verifying the correctness and completeness of declarations made by States about their nuclear material, activities and facilities. As stated by the
United Nations Secretary-General in his message to the last General Conference, this work "is an integral contribution to international peace and security."

Safeguards agreements are currently in force with 182 States, of which 174 are NPT non-nuclear-weapons States with comprehensive safeguards agreements. However, twelve States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have yet to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency as required by Article III of that Treaty. For these States Parties, the IAEA cannot draw any safeguards conclusions. The IAEA continues, therefore, to urge all remaining NPT States Parties to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements as soon as possible.

The number of States with additional protocols in force now stands at 130. The implementation of an additional protocol significantly increases the Agency's ability to verify the peaceful use of all nuclear material in States with comprehensive safeguards agreements in force. The IAEA encourages all States to bring additional protocols into force.

The IAEA also stands ready to assist with verification tasks, in accordance with its Statute, in connection with nuclear disarmament or arms control arrangements, if requested by States that are party to such arrangements and if approved by the Board of Governors. In addition, the IAEA has supported the creation of Nuclear-Weapon Free Zones.

The IAEA has continued to verify and monitor the implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under the JCPOA are being implemented. Iran is now subject to the world's most robust nuclear verification regime. The IAEA continues to verify the non-diversion of nuclear material declared by Iran under its Safeguards Agreement. Evaluations regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran continue. The JCPOA represents a clear gain for nuclear verification.

The nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a matter of grave concern. The IAEA is working to maintain its readiness to return to the DPRK when political developments make this possible. In this regard a DPRK Team has been
formed in the Department of Safeguards. The aim of such a team is to enhance our ability to monitor the DPRK's nuclear programme, maintain updated verification approaches and procedures, remain prepared for the Agency's possible return to the country, and ensure the availability of appropriate verification technologies and equipment.

Last month, the IAEA Low-Enriched Uranium (LEU) Bank Storage Facility was inaugurated in Kazakhstan. Establishment of the IAEA LEU Bank will provide a last-resort mechanism to give countries confidence that they will be able to meet their future needs for nuclear fuel.

Our verification work is complemented by our work in nuclear safety and nuclear security.

The IAEA helps its Member States to fulfil their responsibility on nuclear safety by developing Safety Standards that may be used as the basis for national regulations and by providing, upon request, a variety of services, including expert review missions. The lessons learnt from the Fukushima Daiichi accident have now been incorporated into the IAEA nuclear safety standards, ensuring that they become part of global safety practice. Nuclear safety must continue to be a priority.

Also, in September, the Board of Governors adopted the Nuclear Security Plan 2018-2021. The IAEA will continue its work as the global platform for strengthening nuclear security, and combatting the threat of nuclear terrorism. Relatedly, the IAEA will host an International Conference on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities, from 13-17 November, in Vienna.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the IAEA continues to play a critical role in ensuring that the benefits of nuclear technology are shared globally, that peaceful nuclear activities are conducted safely, and that the international community is provided with a credible framework for curbing nuclear weapons proliferation.

Thank you.

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