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Statement by

Mr Gabriel Luechinger

State Secretary and Head International Security Division ISD

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

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Thank you, Mr President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of Switzerland. Liechtenstein associates itself with this statement. Let me first congratulate you on your election as President of the General Conference. We assure you of our full support. We would like to commend the Director General for his leadership and thank him and the entire Agency for their high-quality work. We have full confidence in the independent, impartial and professional manner in which the Agency carries out its mandate.

Mr President,

The IAEA plays a vital role in allowing us to reap the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy while curbing and preventing nuclear proliferation. However, we cannot ignore that the global non-proliferation architecture and the nuclear safety and security regime are under severe pressure.

We would like to highlight three areas of concern regarding safeguards compliance.

First, Iran's continued suspension of the provisional application of its Additional Protocol, its non-implementation of other transparency measures related to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as well as the outstanding safeguards questions have seriously impacted the Agency's ability to verify that Iran's activities are exclusively peaceful. Switzerland urges Iran to fully implement the mutually agreed steps contained in the Joint Statement of 4 March 2023 and to act upon resolutions by the Board of Governors. We specifically reiterate our call upon Iran to implement all legally binding obligations, most notably Modified Code 3.1. The Subsidiary Arrangements to the Safeguards Agreement cannot be modified or suspended unilaterally.

Switzerland deplores the fact that since 2021 no agreement has been achieved to restore the non-proliferation measures of the JCPOA despite attempts to do so. The preservation of these measures and their benefits remains crucial for safeguarding the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Second, the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) pose a threat to regional and international peace and security. Recent reporting by the Director General on the DPRK's nuclear programme

are deeply troubling. We urge the DPRK to take concrete steps towards abandoning its nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and related programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to cease all related activities. We call on the DPRK to return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards at the earliest possible date.

Third, Switzerland calls on Syria to cooperate fully with the IAEA in connection with unresolved issues related to the Dair Alzour site and other locations.

With regard to safeguards in general, Switzerland supports efforts to further optimize the safeguards system in order to make the most efficient and effective use of the limited resources available to the Agency. Through its Member State Support Programme (MSSP), Switzerland actively contributes to various safeguards development projects.

Mr President,

It is not possible to address safety and security aspects of nuclear technology without mentioning the deeply worrying situation at nuclear facilities caused by Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. Any attack on any nuclear installation is irresponsible and unacceptable. We have repeatedly called on the parties to the conflict to refrain from conducting any hostilities in the vicinity of nuclear power plants or other nuclear facilities. All parties must comply with international humanitarian law, and in particular with the Geneva Conventions and the First Additional Protocol.

We welcome the continued commitment of the IAEA and the Director General to protect nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine. We support the IAEA in its crucial work at the political level as well as with financial and in-kind contributions. We strongly support the "Seven Pillars" and the "Five Principles". The IAEA's experts at the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) and Ukrainian Regulatory Authority SNRIU must always be granted timely access to all areas of the plant. We call on Russia and Ukraine to fully respect the Five Principles.

Switzerland once again calls on Russia to immediately withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory, including from the ZNPP, and to implement all relevant resolutions.

Mr President,

Nuclear security is indispensable both for preventing nuclear proliferation and for ensuring the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Switzerland will therefore continue to engage actively to strengthen global nuclear security and we fully support the statement of the Co-Presidents of the 2024 International Conference on Nuclear Security.

In addition, we encourage all Member States to use IAEA safety standards and security guidance as well as to regularly host IAEA advisory services and peer-review missions. Switzerland regularly hosts IAEA peer-review missions, such as an IPPAS Follow-Up Mission in 2023. On the basis its findings, we are committed to further improving our nuclear security regime.

Switzerland has ratified and remains fully committed to all Conventions concluded under the auspices of the IAEA. We encourage all Member States to accede to these Conventions as well as to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We also underline the key role of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety. We are honored to currently hold the chairmanship of the Commission on Safety Standards and appreciate Member States' cooperation in this regard.

Mr President,

Switzerland is since many years an ongoing active supporter of the Agency's activities in the field of nuclear science, technology and applications which are indispensable for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for example, through its collaborating centers. The École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), in the field of nuclear energy, is enhancing advanced reactor experiments and high-fidelity multi-physics nuclear simulation techniques. The Spiez Laboratory, in the field of nuclear technical applications, is involved in the inter-laboratory comparison study by the Agency in connection with the discharge of ALPS-treated water at Fukushima-Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Furthermore, we have deepened the cooperation between the Agency and the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (Eawag) by signing a Practical Arrangement.

I thank you Mr President.