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## **SWITZERLAND**

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**59th Session of the IAEA General Conference**

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**Statement by**

**State Secretary Mr Walter Steinmann**

**Governor for Switzerland and Director-General of the Swiss Federal Office of  
Energy**

**Vienna, 15 September 2015**

Mr President,

I have the honour to speak also on behalf of the Principality of Liechtenstein, which aligns itself with this declaration.

The Swiss delegation wishes to offer you its most sincere congratulations on your election as President of the 59th Session of the IAEA General Conference, and wishes to assure you of its full support in the performance of the duties of your office.

First of all, I would like to warmly thank the Director-General, Yukiya Amano, for his introductory speech as well as the staff of the IAEA-Secretariat for the high/outstanding quality of their work this past year.

My delegation is especially pleased to welcome the Republic of Turkmenistan, as well as Antigua & Barbuda, and Barbados as new IAEA Member States.

Mr President,

Switzerland would first like to welcome the agreement reached on July 14 on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the E3/EU+3. This landmark agreement, realised after years of intensive and difficult negotiations proves that diplomacy can be effective even when faced with major challenges. Switzerland is convinced that this encouraging development can be a means of restoring trust between the negotiation partners as well as within the Middle East. My country thus hopes that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action will be implemented in a constructive spirit by all involved parties. The Agency, which has contributed to the conclusion of July's agreement in a significant manner, will have to play a key role in the verification of the nuclear component of this deal. Switzerland has supported the process of negotiation which has led to the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. My country has also supported the work of the IAEA in the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action of November 2013 and will continue to do so.

Mr. President

The accidents of Fukushima, as well as the one in Chernobyl thirty years before, have set major challenges for the international atomic energy community. The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident occurred four years ago, and the IAEA has now produced a comprehensive report on it. A summary of this report was submitted to the Board of Governors in June this year, while the comprehensive technical reports were published just shortly before the General Conference.

Switzerland is actively committed to ensuring that new nuclear facilities are built according to the latest safety standards and technologies, that existing facilities are subjected to periodical safety assessments and that corresponding safety improvements are implemented.

In this regard, Switzerland submitted a proposal within the framework of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), which led to a diplomatic conference in February this year at which the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety was unanimously adopted.

Switzerland is committed to ensuring that the objectives of this Declaration will become the reference in terms of nuclear safety, and for that reason, we also strive for them to be implemented within the framework of the IAEA. This is of particular importance in view of the fact that the Agency numbers more than twice as many members as the CNS and that the IAEA defines the global standards in the area of nuclear safety. Switzerland also encourages all contracting parties to the CNS to report on their implementation of the Vienna Declaration at the 7<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of 2017.

The last report of the Director-General on the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on nuclear safety of 2011 and the report on Fukushima Daiichi accident represent significant progress in our view. This does not, however, mean that our work is done. The improvement of nuclear safety is a continuous effort. The Agency's work on the formulation of its nuclear safety strategy must therefore continue. This work should be founded on the basis of the twelve actions of the Plan of 2011, the experiences that states gained in the implementation of the said Plan, the findings and lessons contained in the Fukushima report as well as the principles and actions of the Vienna

Declaration. It is in that respect that my country has introduced an operational paragraph in this year's resolution on nuclear safety. We encourage Member States to support this approach, which will allow all of us to continue to strengthen nuclear safety on an international level.

Mr President,

I should now like to touch on the topic of nuclear security, since nuclear terrorism represents a threat which Switzerland takes very seriously.

My country considers that to fulfil its objective of strengthening international security and stability, nuclear security needs to be thought of in a broader approach. This approach cannot ignore the evident link between nuclear security and the disarmament and non-proliferation aspects. It is also clear, that a true reinforcement of worldwide nuclear security can only be achieved if military nuclear material is included in such an approach. Indeed, if we consider the enormous destructive potential of such military material – which represent over 85% of all nuclear material in the world – we can safely consider that they merit as much, if not more attention than the low enriched civil nuclear material or radiological sources.

This comprehensive approach has been recognised by Member States at the Ministerial-level Conference on nuclear security organised by the IAEA in June 2013, and is also reflected in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 69/39 entitled “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.”

The relevant states must be reminded of their responsibility to provide assurances to the international community that their military nuclear material is secured. My country considers that this responsibility is the greater, as the IAEA does not have the mandate to secure the military nuclear material and that there does not exist – at this date – a multilateral instrument to this effect.

It is in that sense that my country proposed a preambular paragraph in this year's nuclear security resolution. We encourage Member States to support this approach, which will allow strengthening a broader way to address nuclear security on the

international level. This is even more important in view of a new Ministerial Conference on nuclear security scheduled by the IAEA for 2016.

Mr President,

My delegation supports the evolutionary concept of the safeguards system and supports the work of the Secretariat in implementing the State Level Concept (SLC). Faced with future challenges in safeguards matters often mentioned by the Director-General – i.e. more installations, material and information to verify, while there exists a persistent reticence to augment budgets – the work on the evolution of the safeguards system is indeed an essential question for the Agency.

In Switzerland's view it is important to ensure that the SLC gives rise to a real optimisation of the safeguards system. This optimisation must be tangible, substantial and measurable, not only for the Agency, but also for Member States. The IAEA must therefore optimise the use of its resources, e.g. by lightening the burden of states for which she has the most efficient verification tools, while directing its limited resources towards the most sensitive cases and areas in terms of nuclear proliferation. The SLC must not signify a continuation of the status quo under a new label, but must bring real advantages both for the Agency and for the Member States.

Mr President,

Within the framework of international organisations, Switzerland fundamentally pursues a budget policy of zero nominal growth. However, my government has repeatedly demonstrated flexibility in the past when important activities have called for a deviation from this policy.

The IAEA plays a key role in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The growing number of members of the IAEA and additional duties in a broad variety of areas such as peaceful and sustainable use of nuclear material for energy, medicine, nutrition and the environment, science and technology, safety, security and technical cooperation, signal that the Agency needs to have sufficient financial resources and highly qualified staff at its disposal.

Therefore, at the beginning of this year we contributed 230,000 euros towards the ReNuAI project of the laboratories in Seibersdorf and will be providing an additional 90,000 euros PLUS Zeit(rahmen).

In view of the growing activities of the IAEA, Switzerland voted in favour of the increase of the ordinary budget by 1.6 percent. For the implementation of the treaty between E3/EU3+3 and Iran (JCPOA) that was concluded in July, the IAEA will have to carry out additional verification activities. So far, these costs will be covered by voluntary contributions – Switzerland's amounted to 100'000 euros up to now – In the future, at least a part thereof will have to be borne through the regular budget. This development leads me to remind that Switzerland expects real efficacy gains by the implementation of the "state level concept".

Mr President,

I would now like to add a few words on the use of nuclear energy in the view of Switzerland's new energy policy, "Energy Strategy 2050".

In the wake of the accident in Fukushima, the Federal Council and Parliament of Switzerland took a fundamental decision in 2011 to withdraw from the use of nuclear energy on a step-by-step basis. The operational five nuclear power reactors are to be decommissioned when they reach the end of their natural safe service life, and will not be replaced by new ones.

This decision, together with other far-reaching changes we have been witnessing on the market and in the areas of technology and internationalisation, calls for a successive restructuring of Switzerland's energy system. In view of this, the Federal Council developed its new long-term energy policy, "Energy Strategy 2050", which is based on the revised perspectives that incorporate scenarios for maintaining the existing high level of supply security at acceptable prices and with ever fewer negative impacts on the environment.

During the next few years, however, Switzerland will continue to focus on the further development of the safety and security of the existing nuclear facilities, and to work closely together with the IAEA. Indeed, Switzerland is pondering the introduction of specific regulations governing their long-term operation.

In this context, a first nuclear facility is to be shut down in 2019 after a 47-year period of operation. The main reasons behind this decision were economic and political aspects, together with the high investments that would have been required for the safe operation of the power plant over the long term. The dismantling of the facility is planned for 2019 or later.

Mr President,

Allow me to share some comments on radioactive waste disposal. In accordance with the Swiss Federal Nuclear Energy Act, the operators of nuclear facilities are obliged to finance the costs relating to the disposal of their radioactive waste and the decommissioning of nuclear power plants.

The search for a suitable site for accommodating the planned deep geological repository for radioactive waste is ongoing. The relevant federal authorities and other expert groups, the site regions as well as our neighbours Germany and Austria have been closely examining the proposed options. The Federal Council will, most likely in 2017, decide on this proposal and on the next steps of the process.

Mr President,

For Switzerland it is once again an honour to actively participate in the Board of Governors. In view of this I regard it as indispensable to define fields of cooperation between my country and the IAEA.

Alongside the already cited objectives relating to nuclear safety, security and safeguards, there are other possibilities of collaboration that Switzerland regards as of great importance.

These include, for example, active cooperation with another organisation based in Vienna, namely the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), which is focusing on the impacts of radiation in the environment, the medical sector and industry on human beings, and whose findings form the basis for specifying limit levels and defining working practices for protection against radiation.

We are also seeking to intensify our cooperation with the “Analytical Laboratories for the Measurement of Environmental Radioactivity” (ALMERA network), especially in the field of water and air analyses. For Switzerland, collaboration with ALMERA / RANET is of particular importance. Switzerland’s objective here is for Reference Laboratory Spiez to be designated an IAEA Collaborating Centre.

The final objective for Switzerland in the Board of Governors concerns the field of verification, in which we wish to work closely together with the IAEA on safeguards

for deep geological repositories. Here we are entering into new territory, not only in Switzerland, but also internationally, that needs to be explored jointly.

Mr President, thank you very much for your attention.