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IAEA Director General's Introductory Statement to the Board of Governors

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(https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/styles/hd_1920x1080/public/bog0103211140x640.jpg?itok=jp09bxj7)

Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi delivering his opening statement to the IAEA Board of Governors.
(Photo: D. Calma/IAEA)

Mr Chairperson,

Thank you for your forbearance as we again meet virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Having returned yesterday from Tehran, I am ready to update you on the safeguards situation regarding Iran. I had extensive negotiations with senior Iranian officials to address Iran's outstanding safeguards issues. As I will report, these negotiations proved inconclusive

As is customary following the meeting of the Technical Assistance and Cooperation Committee this week, I will begin with technical cooperation issues.

Despite the continuing constraints on global travel because of the global COVID-19 pandemic, TC programme delivery has continued effectively throughout the year. Wherever possible, we have held in-person training, such as long-term fellowships, and in other cases we have conducted capacity-building events online.

The quality of the 568 new projects that have been proposed for the 2022-2023 TC cycle was not compromised by the challenges imposed by the pandemic. Where possible, training on project design, technical review and quality enhancement procedures were conducted on virtual platforms.

We have worked closely with Member States to develop the new programme, building on Country Programme Frameworks, national and regional development priorities, and, where appropriate, alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The top three priority areas for Member States in the coming TC programme cycle are food and agriculture, health and nutrition, and safety and security. The report *Technical Cooperation: The Agency's Proposed Programme for 2022-2023* was published in October and provides further details.

Meanwhile, Member States' support of Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action ZODIAC continues to grow. Some 147 countries have nominated a National Coordinator and we have received 119 nominations for ZODIAC National Laboratories. Procurements

have continued to arrive at the first 25 National Laboratories and are expected to commence shortly for the next batch of laboratories. We continue to engage with prospective donors for further contribution.

Last month, I chaired the final of our well-attended, high-level regional roundtables on the NUTEC Plastics initiative, this one for Europe and Central Asia.

Let me now turn to cancer, a very important part of the IAEA's work. PACT activities for the years 2022-2023, will focus on imPACT Review Missions, development of strategic documents on cancer control and mobilise resource for cancer-related activities. Around the world, countries face significant challenges in addressing cancer, lacking trained staff and equipment. I joined key decision makers at the annual *World Cancer Leaders' Summit* held last month to emphasize the role of innovation in equitable access. Many countries do not have even the most basic radiotherapy and nuclear medicine infrastructure with which to treat and manage cancer. The IAEA's assistance in this area has made some inroads, but a lot still needs to be done. If we want to make a meaningful impact, we need to rethink our approach. To this end, we will soon appraise you of our new approach in integrating our assistance to Member States battling this growing crisis.

As of the beginning of this month, we have received just under 76 million euros in contributions to the TCF, which represents a rate of attainment of 88.2%. I encourage all Member States to pay their contributions to the TCF in full and on time. I also invite Member States that are in a position to do so to make extrabudgetary contributions. Implementation of the new TC cycle will start on 1 January 2022, and in this regard, I remind you also of the importance of timely payment of National Participation Costs. This is essential to starting the project's implementation on time because national projects can only begin when at least half the NPCs are paid.

I thank you for your support through the TC Fund, extrabudgetary and in-kind contributions. They help us help you. One recent example is our fulfilment of a request from the Andean Community, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, which

last month saw the Agency dispatch a technical mission to assist with the prevention and containment of Fusarium Wilt (TR4) disease in bananas.

Meanwhile, we continue to work to augment this with new sources of funding. Through greater external outreach, extrabudgetary resources received by the Agency increased to more than €171 million in 2020, the highest amount since the Board of Governors approved the Strategic Guidelines in 2015. This is an increase of 18.7% for the 2019/2020 period compared to 2017/2018. At the same time, nearly 50 Practical Arrangements and three new Memoranda of Understanding were signed by the Agency. Further details can be found in the *Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Guidelines on Partnerships and Resource Mobilization*, which that is before the Board.

Mr Chairperson,

My report on *Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231* covers relevant activities of the Agency in the past few months.

Up to 23 February 2021, the Agency verified and monitored the implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. However, since that date, these activities have been seriously undermined as a result of Iran's decision to stop the implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA, including the Additional Protocol.

In the absence of regular Agency access to its surveillance and monitoring equipment at all facilities and locations in Iran in relation to the JCPOA, the Agency considers the temporary agreement I reached with Iran in February 2021 facilitated the maintenance of continuity of knowledge. However, the repeated prolongation of the agreement, which has now been in place for around nine months, is becoming a significant challenge to the Agency's ability to restore this continuity of knowledge.

In addition, contrary to the agreement reached between the Agency and Iran on 12 September 2021, the lack of access to the Karaj workshop has meant that the restoration of surveillance and monitoring at all of Iran's facilities and locations in relation to the JCPOA could not be completed. This is seriously affecting the Agency's ability to restore continuity of knowledge at the workshop, which has been widely recognised as essential in relation to a return to the JCPOA.

You have also received my report entitled *NPT Safeguards Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran*, which describes the Agency's efforts since my last report to clarify questions relating to the correctness and completeness of Iran's declarations under its Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol.

The presence of multiple uranium particles of anthropogenic origin at three locations in Iran not declared to the Agency, as well as the presence of isotopically altered particles at one of these locations, is a clear indication that nuclear material and/or equipment contaminated by nuclear material has been present at these locations.

I am also concerned by the incidences of Agency inspectors being subjected to excessively invasive physical searches by security officials at nuclear facilities in Iran. I reiterate the call upon Iran to take immediate steps to remedy the situation, and to implement security procedures at nuclear facilities in a manner consistent with internationally accepted security practices and Iran's legal obligations in relation to privileges and immunities of the Agency and its inspectors.

In the two reports mentioned above, I informed the Board of Governors that I had accepted an invitation to visit Tehran to hold high level consultations with the Iranian Government as agreed in the Joint Statement of 12 September 2021.

On 23 November 2021, I had meetings in Tehran with the Vice President of Iran and Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, H.E. Mohammad Eslami, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, H.E. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. Despite my best

efforts, these extensive negotiations and deliberations to address Iran's outstanding safeguards issues, detailed in the two reports, proved inconclusive.

The number of States with safeguards agreements in force has not changed since the last Board. It stands at 186, while 138 of these States have brought additional protocols into force. I commend Santa Lucia for accepting to amend its original SQP.

I ask States Parties to the NPT without comprehensive safeguards agreements in force to bring such agreements into force without delay. I also reiterate my call on States with small quantities protocols based on the old standard text, to amend or rescind them. This is essential to addressing a weakness in the IAEA safeguards system recognised by the Board 16 years ago. The old standard SQP is simply not adequate for our current safeguards system.

Next year will mark the 25th anniversary of the approval of the Model Additional Protocol by the IAEA Board of Governors.

Taking this occasion, I am writing to the remaining States to encourage them to conclude and bring into force an additional protocol to their safeguards agreement. The Agency stands ready to assist any State in this endeavour, including those who may want to take the opportunity of the upcoming NPT Review Conference to announce they have concluded and will bring into force the additional protocol as a vital contribution to the international safeguards regime.

Since my report to the Board and General Conference in August of this year we have continued to monitor the DPRK nuclear programme. There are ongoing indications consistent with the operation of the 5MW(e) reactor at the Yongbyon site. There continue to be no indications of operation of the Radiochemical Laboratory since early July 2021. We have observed new and ongoing construction activities at the Yongbyon site, including construction of an annex to the Yongbyon reported Centrifuge Enrichment Facility, the purpose of which has yet to be determined. Near the light water reactor (LWR) under construction a new building is being built,

possibly to support reactor construction or maintenance activities. There are ongoing indications of activities at the Kangson complex and the Pyongsan Mine and Concentration Plant.

The continuation of the DPRK's nuclear programme is a clear violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions and is deeply regrettable.

I call upon the DPRK to comply fully with its obligations under relevant UN Security Council resolutions, to cooperate promptly with the Agency in the full and effective implementation of its NPT Safeguards Agreement and to resolve all outstanding issues, especially those that have arisen during the absence of Agency inspectors from the country.

The Agency continues to maintain its enhanced readiness to play its essential role in verifying the DPRK's nuclear programme.

As far as implementation of safeguards in the Syrian Arab Republic is concerned, no new information has come to the knowledge of the Agency that would affect our assessment that it was very likely that the building destroyed at Dair Alzour was a nuclear reactor that should have been declared by Syria pursuant to its NPT Safeguards Agreement. This was more than ten years ago. I urge Syria to cooperate fully with the Agency in connection with all unresolved issues. I am ready to talk to Syria constructively and cooperatively. Let us engage to take concrete steps towards a mutually acceptable solution to this matter that has been on the Board's agenda for a very long time.

You will note that, following a request from China, there is an additional agenda item named *Transfer of the nuclear materials in the context of AUKUS and its safeguards in all aspects under the NPT*.

Since the last Board meeting in September, when I briefed you on the communication received from the three parties, the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom, the Secretariat has not received additional information concerning

the project and its possible safeguards implications for the parties and the Agency under the existing safeguards instruments.

I have reminded the three parties of their reporting obligations under their safeguards agreements and additional protocols that could be of relevance to their safeguards implementation in relation to this project. We are ready to engage with all parties to discuss the implications of the project on the implementation of safeguards under the existing legal instruments of the parties.

Mr Chairperson,

Turning now to nuclear energy.

At COP26 our presence helped ensure nuclear power gained a place at the table at one of the most important forums where climate change and the transition to clean, reliable energy were discussed. The IAEA's contributed to a robust and well-informed debate through its unique evidence-based information.

I am pleased to report the United Kingdom was the first national COP-meeting organizer to facilitate discussion on nuclear power through its official host-country programme and that the IAEA played a significant role at the event.

In cooperation with the Member States and international partners, the Agency organized and participated in a significant number of other events on the role of nuclear power and technology in mitigating climate change and in adapting to it. The high-level of interest, also from the international media and young climate activists, was testimony to the renewed interest in nuclear energy in tackling the climate change.

As a follow up to COP26, high-level meetings are to be held in New York and Pittsburgh in September 2022. The dates of these meetings conflict with the current schedule of next year's IAEA General Conference. We have been approached by some Member States with a suggestion therefore to postpone the GC for one week

as this would enable Energy Ministers and other senior officials to participate in all the relevant events. Correspondingly, the short Board meeting that follows the GC would need to be rescheduled to 3 October 2022. For this reason, the action is requested of the Board under item 6 of the Agenda.

As of today, the 442 nuclear power reactors operating in 32 countries provide approximately 394 gigawatts of installed capacity, supplying some 10% of the world's electricity and more than a quarter of all low-carbon electricity. There are 51 reactors under construction in 19 countries, which are expected to provide almost 54 gigawatts of additional capacity.

One issue key to the safe use of nuclear power is what to do with its waste. Earlier this month, more than 300 virtual and in-person participants discussed solutions for the safe and responsible management of radioactive waste at the *IAEA International Conference on Radioactive Waste Management: Solutions for a Sustainable Future*.

Mr Chairperson,

As you know, the IAEA has been asked by the Government of Japan to provide assistance before, during and after the discharge of the water treated by the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) and stored at the Daiichi Nuclear Power Station in Fukushima. Together with international experts, the Agency will conduct its next mission to Japan in the coming weeks.

The *International Conference on a Decade of Progress after Fukushima-Daiichi: Building on the Lessons Learned to Further Strengthen Nuclear Safety*, was held in Vienna earlier this month. The conference offered an opportunity for experts to discuss past lessons, as well as improvements that have been made, and call for actions to maintain the momentum to further strengthen nuclear safety.

The Agency hosted the *International Conference on the Development of Preparedness for National and International Emergency Response* in October and only a few weeks later conducted the world's largest and most complex nuclear emergency exercise.

ConvEx3- was a two-day event involving participants from 75 Member States and 12 International Organizations. It tested the response to a simulated accident at a nuclear power plant in the United Arab Emirates, generating lessons that can be incorporated into Member States' response preparedness to nuclear emergencies.

Looking ahead, the *International Conference on the Safe and Secure Transport of Nuclear and Radioactive Materials* is planned for 13-17 December here in Vienna and I hope many of you will find time to attend.

Consultations on the preparations for next spring's *Conference of the Parties to the A/CPPNM*, the first such conference under the Convention as amended, were held in October and will continue in December 2021.

The IAEA will hold its first *International Conference on Nuclear Law: The Global Debate in Vienna 7-11 February 2022*, providing a unique forum for experts from governments, national and international organizations, industry, academia and civil society to share experiences and discuss topical issues with a view to developing further the various areas of nuclear law and promoting international expertise in this field.

The Tenth NPT Review Conference will take place from 4-28 January 2022 in New York, and I will be in attendance to address it. In addition, the Agency has submitted background information highlighting its achievements in relation to Articles III and IV of the NPT on non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy since the 2015 Review Conference.

Mr Chairperson,

We will soon begin construction on the final phase of the modernization of the Seibersdorf Nuclear Applications laboratories and I invite you to join me at a ReNuAL2 side event tomorrow at 1300 to recognize the three new contributors to

this common effort of ours. We urgently need an additional €6.8 million to be able to sign a contract early next year. I ask Member States to make every effort to help us meet that goal and keep our work on track.

The report *Multilingualism at the IAEA*, which was published this month, shows that since my previous report from November 2019, steady progress has been made in reaching a wider audience in official IAEA languages. For example, the number of monthly visitors accessing [iaea.org](https://www.iaea.org) articles in Arabic, French, Russian, Chinese and Spanish, has grown from 44,327 in August 2019 to 140,627 in August 2021.

In terms of improving the gender balance of the nuclear field as a whole, the Agency has finalised the review and selection of the second cycle of applications for the IAEA's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship. This resulted in the acceptance of 110 new fellows, 10 more than in the first cycle. Over the two rounds, we received more than 1,000 applications from 93 Member States. Currently, successful candidates are enrolled in universities in 53 countries around the globe, studying in various nuclear-related fields. We are in the process of placing 20 graduates of the programme in internships positions both at the Agency and at partner organizations. I thank Member States for their generous donations and in-kind contributions and ask them to continue funding this fellowship so that we can build an impactful network of talented women contributing to many areas of the nuclear field.

Mr Chairperson,

COVID-19 cases in Austria are rising and the country's authorities are preparing us for a difficult winter. As we have done throughout this pandemic, the Agency is following their guidance and the recommendations of our medical services so that we ensure our work serving Member States can continue in a manner that protects the health of our staff and all those in the IAEA community. The IAEA's COVID framework is robust and agile. Following the November 22 implementation of further restrictions by the Federal Government of Austria, the Secretariat's COVID work from home guidelines again apply. Meetings, including this one, have been

moved to virtual platforms, allowing for in-person discussions where absolutely necessary. In this way, we ensure the safety of our community and the uninterrupted continuation of the IAEA's indispensable work.

Related resources

- 🔗 IAEA Director General Urges Iran to Resolve Issues Related to Four Undeclared Locations (<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/iaea-director-general-urges-iran-to-resolve-issues-related-to-four-undeclared-locations>)
- 🔗 COVID-19 (<https://www.iaea.org/topics/covid-19>)
- 🔗 A Need for ReNuAL (<https://www.iaea.org/about/organizational-structure/department-of-nuclear-sciences-and-applications/seibersdorf-laboratories/renewal>)
- 🔗 Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) (<https://www.iaea.org/services/zodiac>)
- 🔗 In Focus: Monitoring and Verification in Iran (<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/iran>)
- 🔗 Solutions for Climate Change: the IAEA and CoP26 (<https://www.iaea.org/topics/climate-change/solutions-for-climate-change>)
- 🔗 In Focus: Monitoring and Verification in DPRK (<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/dprk>)
- 🔗 IAEA Board of Governors (<https://www.iaea.org/about/governance/board-of-governors>)
- 🔗 Rafael Mariano Grossi (<https://www.iaea.org/about/rafael-grossi>)

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