

**IAEA StatementStatement by the International Atomic Energy Agency
(IAEA)**

**Fourth Session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone
Free of Nuclear-Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction**

New York, 13 – 17 November 2023

Mr President,

On behalf of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), I am pleased to address this Fourth Session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

We join others in congratulating you, Mr President, for presiding over the Fourth Session of this Conference.

I would like to draw the distinguished delegates' attention to the updated technical background documentation which the IAEA provided to this session. It provides a comprehensive review of the work undertaken by the IAEA on modalities of the application of safeguards in the Middle East and its role under nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) treaties and regional arrangements.

As the background documentation notes, the work on modalities of the application of safeguards in the Middle East first began in 1988 when the IAEA's General Conference (GC) requested the then Director General to prepare a technical study on different modalities of application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East taking into account the IAEA's experience in applying its safeguards.

This was the first such request of the IAEA General Conference. It has subsequently been followed by other GC resolutions requesting the IAEA Director General to pursue consultations with States of the Middle East to facilitate the early application of full-scope IAEA safeguards on all nuclear activities in the region as relevant to the preparation model agreements, as a necessary step towards the creation of a NWFZ in the region referred to in resolution GC(XXXVII)/RES/627. Over the years, pursuant to relevant GC resolutions and decisions, the Agency has organized workshops on the application of safeguards in a future NWFZ in the Middle East and to deepen understanding of the IAEA safeguards system. In addition, as mandated by decision GC(44)/DEC/12, the Director General made "arrangements to convene a forum in which participants from the Middle East and other interested parties could learn from the experience of other regions, including in the area of confidence building relevant to the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone". The IAEA's Forum on Experience of Possible Relevance to the Creation of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East took place in 2011 at the IAEA Headquarters in Vienna.

The IAEA continues to contribute to the objective of creating such a zone in the Middle East, both in formal and informal settings. The IAEA has attended, as an observer, all sessions of this Conference, in 2019, 2021 and 2022, respectively. And it is doing so again at this session.

Since this Conference began, the IAEA has also participated in other meetings related to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including workshops organized by UNODA and UNIDIR. The IAEA also delivered presentations to the intersessional meetings of the Working Committee. In September 2022, the IAEA presented on status of safeguards agreements and additional protocols in the Middle East region. In March 2023, following the last year's session of this Conference, the IAEA presented on the IAEA Safeguards Glossary (2022 Edition), under the topic of 'Glossary to Terminologies'. The aim of the Safeguards Glossary is to facilitate "understanding of the specialized safeguards terminology within the international community." We hope the Glossary is useful as a technical reference document also here in New York and are also pleased to inform you that, as of September 2023, the Glossary has been translated into all six official languages of the IAEA. It is available as an online e-Book in our website.

As described in the background document, the IAEA plays an essential role in verifying States' compliance with their non-proliferation and safeguards obligations to use nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes.

The existing NWFZ treaties require the parties to accept comprehensive IAEA safeguards. The safeguards agreements required under these NWFZ treaties are equivalent in scope to the comprehensive safeguards agreements (CSAs) required under Article III of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Central Asian NWFZ Treaty further requires States parties to conclude not only a CSA, but also an additional protocol (AP).

The IAEA's background documentation also provides information on the status of safeguards agreements, small quantities protocols (SQPs) and additional protocols (APs) for the States in the region. Since the first (2019) session of this Conference, Sudan has amended its original SQP, United Arab Emirates has rescinded its original SQP and the State of Palestine has brought into force a CSA in connection with the NPT, with an SQP based on the modified text. In this regard, the IAEA also welcomes the statement of the Minister of Energy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that the Kingdom has decided recently to rescind the Small Quantities Protocol and implement the full Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

To assist States in the implementation of their obligations arising from those agreements and protocols, the Director General of the IAEA in 2020 launched the IAEA Comprehensive Capacity-Building Initiative for SSACs [State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material] and SRAs [State or regional authority responsible for implementation], commonly known as 'COMPASS'. This initiative builds on existing IAEA assistance to States by providing tailored

support to meet the State's safeguards related needs. Its multifaceted assistance include support in the areas of outreach; legal and regulatory frameworks; training; information technology; procurement; and expertise. Seven States participated in the pilot phase of COMPASS, including two States from the Middle East region: Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Over the years, the Director General of the IAEA has continued to stress the emphasis that has been placed in General Conference resolutions on the application of comprehensive Agency safeguards on all nuclear activities in the Middle East region and the mandates entrusted to him in this context. The Director General has continued to encourage the development and consideration of relevant new ideas and approaches that could help to move his mandate forward.

Since taking office in December 2019, the Director General of the IAEA, Mr Rafael Mariano Grossi, has continued to consult and work with the States of the Middle East region to find the common ground required to develop model agreements as a necessary step towards the establishment of a Middle East NWFZ. During meetings with senior officials from States of the Middle East region and other Member States, the Director General has underlined the importance of an early application of comprehensive Agency safeguards on all nuclear activities in the Middle East region. He has also recalled the IAEA's contributions to advance the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East and has expressed the IAEA's availability to continue contributing to this process as appropriate and in line with the relevant IAEA General Conference resolutions. The Director General has called on all countries which are not party to the NPT to adhere to it.

Mr President, distinguished delegates, thank you for giving us the floor. We join others in wishing you, Mr President, every success in the work ahead.