



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

Provisional

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New York

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| <i>President:</i> | Mr. De Rivière. | (France) |
| <i>Members:</i> | Albania | Mr. Hoxha |
| | Brazil. | Mr. Costa Filho |
| | China | Mr. Geng Shuang |
| | Gabon | Mr. Biang |
| | Ghana | Mr. Agyeman |
| | India | Mrs. Kamboj |
| | Ireland | Ms. Moran |
| | Kenya. | Mr. Kiboino |
| | Mexico | Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez |
| | Norway | Ms. Heimerback |
| | Russian Federation. | Mr. Nebenzia |
| | United Arab Emirates | Mr. Abushahab |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . | Dame Barbara Woodward |
| | United States of America. | Mr. DeLaurentis |

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Germany and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this briefing on developments in and around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine. I want to salute the courageous efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the mission led by Director General Grossi. Allow me to also thank the parties for their cooperation. I will leave it to Director General Grossi to provide an overview of what he and his team observed during their stay.

The Secretariat proudly supported the IAEA in its critical mission to ensure the safe operation of the plant. I want to personally thank all the colleagues assisting their mission, especially the 13 United Nations support and security professionals who played an essential role in allowing for the successful deployment of the IAEA mission.

(*spoke in English*)

I remain gravely concerned about the situation in and around the Zaporizhzhya plant, including reports of recent shelling. Let us tell it like it is. Any damage — intentional or not — to Europe's largest nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhya or to any other nuclear facility in Ukraine could spell catastrophe, not only for the immediate vicinity but for the region and beyond. All steps must be taken to avoid such a scenario. Common sense and cooperation must guide

the way forward. Any action that might endanger the physical integrity, safety or security of the nuclear plant is unacceptable. All efforts to re-establish the plant as purely civilian infrastructure are vital.

As a first step, Russian and Ukrainian forces must commit not to engage in any military activity towards or from the plant site. The Zaporizhzhya facility and its surroundings must not be a target or platform for military operations.

As a second step, an agreement on a demilitarized perimeter should be secured. Specifically, that would include a commitment by Russian forces to withdraw all military personnel and equipment from that perimeter and a commitment by Ukrainian forces not to move into it. Operators at the plant must be able to carry out their responsibilities, and communications must be maintained. Now is the time to urgently agree on concrete measures to ensure the safety of the area.

Regrettably, last month, the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons fell victim to the war in Ukraine. The outcome document sought to address the issue of the safety and security of nuclear power plants in armed conflict zones, including in Ukraine. But the Conference failed to reach consensus to utilize the opportunity to strengthen the Treaty. I appeal to all States to use every avenue of dialogue and diplomacy to make progress on those critical issues.

Looking ahead, I trust that the IAEA experts now deployed to Zaporizhzhya will be able to carry out their work without hindrance and contribute to ensuring lasting nuclear safety and security at the plant. All of us have a stake in the success of their critical mission. Let us commit to do everything we can to support them. And let us resolve to continue working for peace in line with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his opening remarks.

I now give floor to Mr. Grossi.

Mr. Grossi (*spoke in French*): It is a pleasure to speak before the Security Council for the third time this year on the situation in Ukraine, and a special pleasure to do so under the French presidency.

(spoke in English)

I also want to thank the Secretary-General for his presence among us today. In his remarks, he referred to the remarkable work that the United Nations provided through its personnel to our important mission in accompanying its members for a few days and sharing some very tense moments. I could see their heroic dedication and devotion to the cause of the United Nations. I thank the Secretary-General once again. We will continue, I hope, working together to bring stability to the nuclear facilities in Ukraine.

Today Council members may have seen that I issued a comprehensive report emanating from the mission I had the honour to lead last week in Ukraine and the visit to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. The mission was the result of the painstaking work of almost six months, during which time strenuous efforts were deployed to try to do just that: to be there with our inspectors and draw up a comprehensive report of the situation to corroborate some of the facts that we have been observing for the past six months. It was our intention to not stop there, but also provide very concrete recommendations based on what we saw at the plant.

The first important safety pillar that exists at any nuclear facility is not to violate its physical integrity. Unfortunately, as I had the opportunity to say in my briefing on 11 August (see S/PV.9109), under the Chinese presidency, that has happened, and that continues to happen. Wittingly or unwittingly, the physical attacks and the hits that the facility has taken that I could personally see and assess together with my experts are simply unacceptable. We are playing with fire, and something catastrophic could happen. That is why, in our report, we propose the establishment of a nuclear safety and security protection zone, limited to the perimeter and the plant itself. I will return to this point later.

The second pillar, which is important, states that all safety and security systems and equipment should operate normally and unhindered and be fully functional. We know and we observed that the operators at the plant were operating under extremely challenging circumstances, with the presence of military equipment and vehicles in its various areas. In that regard, our concrete recommendation is that the military vehicles and equipment that are currently present inside nuclear plant buildings on the site be removed so as not to

interfere with the normal operation of the nuclear safety and security system.

The third pillar states that the members of the operating staff must be able to perform their duties without undue pressure or difficult circumstances. As Council members know, that has been addressed time and again during the crisis, especially since the nuclear power plant was occupied in March. We were able to work together alongside the experts, and we came to the conclusion, which is in a specific recommendation of my report, that the operator should be allowed to return to exercising its clear and routine line of responsibilities and authority and that an appropriate work environment must be re-established, including with proper family support for the staff.

The fourth pillar refers to the off-site power supply. I have also referred to that in the past, and, as everyone knows, that is crucially important in the sense that a nuclear power plant without any external power supply may lose crucial functionalities, including the cooling of its reactors and spent fuel. Without that, we could have a very serious nuclear accident. With regard to this pillar, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recommends that the off-site power supply line redundancy be re-established and be made available at all times. For that to be possible, all military activities that may affect the power supply systems must be stopped immediately.

The fifth pillar states that there must be uninterrupted logistical supply chains and transportation to and from the site. As the Secretary-General rightly reminded us, we must keep in mind that, as the biggest in Europe, the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is a large industrial site requiring a constant flow of spare parts and other equipment. That situation is currently being abnormally disrupted in the context of the conflict. In that regard, our concrete recommendation is that all the parties should commit and contribute to ensuring effective supply chains. Accordingly, we would like to recall that, through the IAEA assistance and support programmes that we have provided, for example, in Chernobyl a flow of supplies has been significantly re-established, and a similar mechanism could be put in place in Zaporizhzhya.

The sixth pillar refers to the functioning of the radiation monitoring systems in order to ascertain the situation and whether there is radiation in the atmosphere. We have networks of monitoring

equipment that have been affected. The concrete sixth recommendation in our report indicates that the site should continue ensuring that functionality, including by drills and exercises that the IAEA can help ensure.

The seventh and last pillar states that there must be continued and reliable communications with the Ukrainian regulator and others. We have seen repeatedly that those lines of communication have been interrupted. In its seventh recommendation, the IAEA therefore recommends that, in line with each one of the seven safety and security pillars, reliable and redundant communication means and channels be secured at all times.

The historic mission that took place last week provided us and the international community with a precious instrument in the presence of an IAEA assessment and monitoring mission that could provide us all today with a comprehensive report that provides a neutral, impartial and technical reading of the situation.

Moreover, what is also of enormous value is the fact that IAEA inspectors have remained at the site. At present, through the IAEA, the United Nations and the international community have the capacity to obtain a direct and immediate evaluation of the situation on the ground as it develops. Such a fact is unprecedented. In the past, when IAEA inspectors visited places that had undergone difficult circumstances, such as Chernobyl and Fukushima, or armed conflict, such as in Iraq, it was always after the fact. It was always to pick up the pieces and to remediate what had already happened. In this case, we have the historical and ethical imperative to prevent something from happening. By having established a presence and by agreeing to a special safety and security protection zone, we have the opportunity to prevent an incident from happening.

As is stated in the report, we are ready to consult quickly with the parties. Such a measure can be considered an interim measure in the hope that other, more comprehensive measures of a more effective nature in the context of the conflict — which is not in the remit of the IAEA, of course — can be agreed upon. Nonetheless, it is something that can be done now. We have the inspectors already deployed there and they are doing their work. We can agree on a very simple but incredibly necessary protective mechanism to avoid what is happening now, as we speak — the shelling of a nuclear power plant.

Let us seize this opportunity so fundamental for peace and security and to protect the populations of Ukraine and beyond.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Grossi for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Secretary-General Guterres and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Rafael Grossi, for their briefings.

We commend Mr. Grossi on his decision to carry out the Agency's mission at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which constitutes a responsible and courageous step on the part of the IAEA leadership and confirms the Agency's global role in the field of nuclear energy. We are pleased that the visit allowed the Director General and his team to personally assess the situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and ensure that the pillars of nuclear safety and security they formulated are being strictly observed by us.

It is important that the Director General, as we heard at his briefing in Vienna on 2 September, was able to see for himself that, thanks to the well-established cooperation between its personnel and the Russian armed forces guarding the plant, it is functioning normally overall and there are no internal threats to its security. He had an excellent opportunity to observe that the only threat to the plant derives from the shelling and sabotage by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. We see a confirmation of that in his conclusion, voiced at the briefing I mentioned, that the Agency's greatest concern is the physical safety and integrity of the station, the threat to which has increased due to shelling in August.

We regret that, in the Director General's report on the implementation of IAEA safeguards in Ukraine from April to September this year — which appeared just a couple of hours ago — the source of the shelling is not directly indicated. We understand his position as the head of the international regulator, but in the current situation it is extremely important to be clear and direct. Perhaps if the document were devoted exclusively to the results of his visit to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, his conclusions could have been clearer and less ambiguous. We will need additional time to study the document, so I will not dwell on it in detail. I would simply ask the Director General to please clarify

what military equipment he saw during his visit to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

We are not sitting idly by and allowing the reckless actions of the Kyiv regime to be hushed up. Last month, we twice convened a meeting of the Security Council on the issue (see S/PV.9109 and S/PV.9114). We tried to get through to our Western colleagues by explaining that the shelling poses a genuine threat of a nuclear disaster at the largest nuclear power plant in Europe. We urged Western delegations to think about the possible consequences for the peoples of the continent and to rein in their protégés in Kyiv. Unfortunately, they did not heed our calls. With the tacit consent of its Western backers, the Kyiv regime continued to shell the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. It continues to do so today, but I will elaborate on that later.

We welcome the decision of the IAEA leadership to establish a permanent Agency presence at the power plant. This qualitatively changes the state of affairs, as the IAEA can now independently assess the situation in real time, given that two inspectors are at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant on a permanent basis. We stand ready to lend them all possible assistance in their work.

I would like to underscore that, from the very beginning, we have consistently supported the IAEA's efforts to ensure the nuclear safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities. The Russian side has done everything in its power to ensure that Mr. Grossi and his team were able to safely reach the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, carry out their work and return to Vienna. That fact was noted by the representative of the Secretary-General, who underscored that the Russian Federation had done everything necessary to ensure the safety of the IAEA inspectors who visited the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We would be glad to hear the Director General's assessment on how satisfied the IAEA is with its interaction with the Russian side, in particular in terms of ensuring the proper level of mission security.

Unfortunately, as we feared, the Ukrainian side, having realized that it cannot use the IAEA's visit to the power plant for its propaganda purposes, did everything it could to disrupt it. On 1 September, when the Agency's mission was due to arrive, the Armed Forces of Ukraine opened massive artillery fire on the power plant and the city of Enerhodar from 5 a.m. onwards. They continued to shell the Zaporizhzhya

nuclear power plant until the very last minute, when the IAEA team was already on its way to the power plant. Ukrainian artillery shelled the territory of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, as well as the township of Vasylivka, where the IAEA mission was due to meet with Russian specialists, and their route of movement to Enerhodar. Four shells exploded at a distance of 400 metres from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant's Unit 1. The actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine directly threatened the life and safety of the Agency inspectors.

But the Kyiv regime did not stop there. It resorted to a heinous provocation, attempting to seize the station by force right before the arrival of the IAEA mission. At 6 a.m. on 1 September, Armed Forces of Ukraine combat sabotage groups were directed towards the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant through the Kakhovka Reservoir in order to capture the station.

In other words, in order to create the impression that the Armed Forces of Ukraine were successful, which is of course necessary for the Zelenskyy regime to beg for more Western arms, active hostilities were launched around the power plant, which could lead to critical damage to its integrity. Were that operation to have succeeded and the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant fallen under the control of the Kyiv authorities, the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Grossi, and mission experts would have become human shields for Ukrainian saboteurs.

Those provocations were halted thanks to the effective actions of Russia's armed forces and its National Guard, as well as the vigilance of the local population. As a result, the meeting of representatives of the Russian Federation with the IAEA team took place at noon, four hours later than the scheduled time. We commend the courage of the Agency's representatives and their readiness to work literally under Ukrainian fire.

We would like to ask the Director General how the attempt of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to disrupt the Agency's visit by landing saboteurs with the aim of forcibly seizing the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant affected the work of the mission. What are his comments on the actions of the Ukrainian side in the context of threats to the physical security of the power plant and the safety of the Agency's personnel? I would like to address a similar question to the Secretary-General. United Nations Department for Safety and

Security employees were part of the IAEA mission and directly involved in ensuring its safety and security. It was their duty to assess the situation and be aware of any potential risks to it. What does his staff have to say about the risks created for the mission by the Ukrainian side?

Kyiv did not even bother to hide its disappointment with the outcomes of the IAEA visit to Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Vladimir Zelenskyy's adviser Mykhailo Podolyak in particular said that "all these mediation missions look extremely inefficient and extremely cowardly, extremely unprofessional." According to him, they have never been ready to work in extreme conditions, and that applies not only to the IAEA but also to the United Nations. In the description of the Ukrainian functionary, international organizations "look untrustworthy from the very outset." Mr. Podolyak also doubted that the IAEA mission was able to carry out a comprehensive examination in two hours.

And, feeling powerless and enraged, Kyiv decided not to abandon its dangerous plans. Despite the continued presence of the IAEA at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, on 2 September the Kyiv regime undertook yet another unsuccessful attempt to capture the plant. But that attempt was foiled by the Russian armed forces, the Kyiv regime has continued to attack the plant on a daily basis since then. On 3 September, the armed forces of Ukraine used eight drones with suspended munitions. However, thanks to our Russian armed forces, the drones nearing the station were blocked. After that, they were forced to drop their grenades in deserted areas more than 1.5 kilometres away from the station's security perimeter. On 4 September, the Ukrainian forces used an unmanned combat aerial vehicle to strike. As a result of the action of the Russian armed forces, the Ukrainian drone lost control and crashed one kilometre away from the nuclear power plant. On 5 September, the Ukrainians again shelled the nuclear power plant. One of those three shells hit the roof of Special Building 1, which contains the fuel assembly and solid radioactive waste. According to the information of our Minister of Defence, the shelling of the plant and Enerhodar is conducted from the other side of the Kakhovka Reservoir, namely, from the towns of Nikopol, Marhanets, Maryevka, which are under the control of the Ukrainian armed forces.

As a result of the Ukrainian attacks, five out of seven power lines of the Zaporizhzhya facility were damaged. We call on Security Council members and the

United Nations leadership to strongly condemn those acts of provocation by the Kyiv regime. They are aimed not only against the staff of the station but also against international civil servants — IAEA staff. The Armed Forces of Ukraine also keep using the population of Enerhodar as a human target. Just today, five incidents of artillery shelling occurred there. We know that the citizens appealed collectively to the Director General, asking him to put an end to those acts of provocation by the Kyiv regime. That was covered very widely in mass media. The Director General responded that he would do everything in his power. We would like to ask him to provide details on that. What are his thoughts on his interaction with the people of Enerhodar?

We will continue to do everything we can to ensure the safe operation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Its standard technical personnel, with the support of Russian specialists, are ensuring its functioning. So far, the radiation situation of the plant is normal. However, should the provocation by the Kyiv regime continue, no one will be immune to the potential more serious consequences. The responsibility for that lies fully with Kyiv, its Western backers and all other members of the Security Council that have not yet found the courage to call things by their proper name, or to call on Kyiv to stop its reckless acts against the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which creates a real threat to international peace and security. We expect that Security Council members will have enough courage today to do that, in order to prevent a potential radiation disaster.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I thank Secretary-General Guterres and Director General Grossi. We appreciate their continued support to ensure the operational safety and security of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant despite Russia's ongoing attacks and refusal to silence its guns and withdraw from Ukraine so that this situation can be resolved peacefully and diplomatically.

First, let us commend the parties involved in facilitating the visit of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team. The visit allowed them to carry out their important ongoing work despite the increasingly dangerous situation within the Zaporizhzhya facility. The United States welcomes the technical report of the IAEA mission to the Zaporizhzhya facility. We support continued, unhindered and safe IAEA access to the facility. To that end, it is essential that Russia allow Ukrainian operators to implement any and all

measures the IAEA team and Ukrainian operators deem important for the safe and secure operation of the plant to decrease the risk of a nuclear incident.

This is a matter of international nuclear safety and security. The potential danger here is enormous. It concerns us all. And so once again, we support Ukraine's call for the demilitarization of the area surrounding the Zaporizhzhya facility. And we demand Russia's immediate withdrawal from Ukraine's sovereign territory. Despite Russia's song and dance here today to avoid acknowledging responsibility for its actions, Russia has no right to expose the world to unnecessary risk and the possibility of nuclear catastrophe. Worse, this is a situation entirely of Russia's making. The current danger at Zaporizhzhya is a result of Russia's unprovoked and unlawful invasion of Ukraine. And specifically, it is a result of Russia's premeditated seizure of this plant on 4 March. The international community called for Russia to avoid the nuclear plant. Instead, Russian troops struck and seized the facility, jeopardizing the IAEA's seven pillars of nuclear safety and security. Russia continues to conduct military operations around the plant. For every day that Russia controls the plant, the risk of a nuclear incident increases.

Over the weekend, shelling once again led to the disconnection of an external power line, putting at risk the plant's operations. While we understand that the plant is currently generating enough power to operate its cooling systems, Russia's continued military presence in the area will continue to put the plant — and the entire region — in serious danger. We continue to urge Russia to end all military operations at or near Ukraine's nuclear facilities and to return full control to Ukraine. The IAEA's report instead details conditions that drastically increase the stress and duress on the operators, thereby unacceptably raising the risk of human error. The report also notes continued combat operations in the vicinity and the installation of military equipment and personnel within the plant, which also contribute to the risk of nuclear disaster. I want to mention that we join the Director General in commending the staff at all nuclear facilities for their endurance and resilience in keeping the sites running in a safe and secure way amid the conflict.

Nikopol's brave Mayor recently told a media outlet, "Our biggest challenge is that we cannot predict what is going to happen tomorrow, or even if there is going to be a tomorrow." Another Ukrainian citizen was quoted saying, "All of us are just scared all the time. I am old,

I have diabetes. If anything happens, I will only have time to lie on the floor and close my eyes." No one should have to live like this. There is no excuse for the unnecessary risk of a nuclear incident. No one should be questioning if there will be a tomorrow.

The plant and the electricity it produces belong to Ukraine. Any attempt by Russia to disconnect the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant from Ukraine and redirect the power it generates towards Russia would be highly provocative, selfish and short-sighted. We reject all efforts by Russia to use Ukraine's electric grid as a pawn in this unjustified war, and Ukraine's nuclear power plant as a military shield or deployment site. Russia is responsible for this crisis, and it can also resolve it now. The solution is not complicated. The Russian Federation must end its reckless behaviour and immediately withdraw its troops, not only from the area surrounding Zaporizhzhya but from all of Ukraine. Wry cynicism from Russia claiming profound concern about the risk of catastrophe will not cut it.

It is obvious that the fastest way to fix this is for Russia to withdraw immediately. Unfortunately for all of us, the Russian Federation showed its true colours when it obstructed the outcome document of the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Russia alone blocked consensus on a final document. That should come as no surprise, given that Russia's actions during its further invasion of Ukraine have undermined the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy — the exact kind of issues that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its Review Conference are called on to address. That lack of commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy calls into question Russia's reliability as a supplier of nuclear material, equipment and technology. The world's responsible NPT States parties have called for Russia to end all military activity near the Zaporizhzhya facility and rightly return full control of it to Ukraine. Now is the time for Russia to listen before it is too late.

As the conflict's toll on civilians grows ever higher, I hope that each of us, on behalf of the countries we represent, will underscore in this Chamber that Russia must silence its guns, withdraw from Ukraine and embrace diplomacy. General statements of concern or appeals to all parties will not help resolve the crisis. All parties are not responsible for this situation. Russia is, and it is now incumbent on Russia to show with its actions that it respects the Charter of the United

Nations by respecting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I would like to start by commending Director General Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as well as his staff, for their visit to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant under extremely challenging circumstances. We welcome the IAEA's ongoing presence there, and I also offer my thanks to Ukraine for helping to facilitate the visit.

The IAEA has assessed that the physical integrity of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant has been violated several times, and with the publication of its report today, the IAEA has confirmed the presence of Russian military personnel, vehicles and equipment in the plant. We understand that in some cases, Russian military equipment has been no more than 60 metres from the nuclear reactors. The report also confirms the immense stress and pressure under which the plant's brave Ukrainian staff are operating. They are no longer workers but hostages being held at gunpoint. By choosing to invade a nuclear power plant and putting Zaporizhzhya in the crossfire, Russia is playing roulette with nuclear safety. As long as Russia's occupation of the plant continues, its safe and secure operation cannot be ensured. Any measures to address nuclear safety at the plant should therefore involve a full withdrawal of Russian troops and personnel.

This is the third meeting that Russia has called on this issue in recent weeks. But we should be under no illusion. The situation at Zaporizhzhya is entirely of Russia's making. It is Russia's invasion that has disrupted the operation of nuclear facilities across Ukraine. It is Russia that is jeopardizing the safety of millions in the region who would be affected by a nuclear incident. And it is Russia that can resolve the situation by immediately withdrawing its forces from Zaporizhzhya and all of Ukraine and ceasing its senseless and reckless aggression.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): Let me start by expressing our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his briefing. I also thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for his team's visit to Zaporizhzhya and his report.

The IAEA mission last week to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant was a positive development in a conflict in which moments of good news have been few and far between. The presence of the Agency's inspectors

there enables us to know the real dimensions of the risks to the safety of those nuclear installations. Avoiding a nuclear catastrophe must be a priority for all the parties. This conflict has already resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people and the displacement of millions. We find it extremely concerning that the plant's physical integrity has been violated repeatedly in recent weeks. Even more worrying is the fact that the prospect of an IAEA mission was not enough to stop the bombings. Brazil reiterates its appeal for an immediate suspension of all actions that could jeopardize the security of Zaporizhzhya, before the damage to the plant results in irreparable consequences for human life, the environment and the safety of the region. In that context, we take note of the recommendations that Director General Rafael Grossi has made to the parties.

We would like to once again remind the Council that attacks on nuclear facilities dedicated to peaceful purposes constitute violations of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Statute of the IAEA. We remind the parties of their responsibilities under multilateral instruments such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendment. We expect that rationality will prevail and that fears of a nuclear disaster can be dispelled.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Let me also thank the Secretary-General and Director General Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for their information and leadership on this very important issue.

We are happy that despite having been delayed for no reason, the IAEA inspection team was able to conduct its first mission at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We commend Director General Grossi and his team for their resolve in maintaining the mission despite extremely challenging circumstances. We thank them and welcome their report. We understand that this is the IAEA's most important, complex and challenging field mission since Chernobyl.

The visit and presence of IAEA experts in the plant is reassuring and a relief, even though the findings and what we heard today from the Director General are worrying — in fact alarming. We fully subscribe to the conclusion that continued fighting in and around the nuclear plant can only increase the risk of disaster, since, as has already been verified, the physical integrity of the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhya nuclear power

plant in Ukraine has been violated several times, and that the continued hostilities represent a continuing imminent threat. It is now common knowledge and a sad and worrisome fact that the seven pillars that are essential to maintaining nuclear safety and security, which were recalled by the Director General again here today, have been compromised at the power plant. That is unacceptable.

The presence of Russian military forces at the nuclear power plant is illegal. It prevents the operator and the Ukrainian authorities from fulfilling their nuclear and radiation safety obligations in accordance with international conventions and IAEA safety standards. As has already been stated by the IAEA Board of Governors,

“Russia’s invasion and its continued presence at Ukraine’s nuclear facilities significantly raise the risk of nuclear incidents and accidents”.

The IAEA report released today confirms that assertion. As we have said here more than once, the Ukrainian staff operating the plant under the Russian military occupation are under constant high stress and pressure. That is not sustainable and could lead to an increased risk of human error, with implications for nuclear safety.

Just a few weeks ago, the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was unable to adopt a final document. It was another of those sad moments when diplomacy fails in its core mandate. We all know why it happened. We all know who stood alone, in complete isolation, stubbornly holding hostage the entire world, which had come together to reaffirm the importance of the NPT and its three pillars. It is therefore no surprise that we here in the Chamber, along with every nuclear expert in the world, are right to be seriously worried that the reckless actions of the Russian army may accidentally or intentionally lead to a cascade of dreadful events that will threaten not only Ukraine, its population and all of its neighbours, but also the European continent and beyond.

The situation is clear and there is no room for polemics or the blame game, and certainly not for the distorted narratives that we hear incessantly. We are called here, and not for the first time, to deal with the symptoms of a problem when we know that we need to tackle the problem’s very source. What business is it of Russia’s to attack, overrun, occupy and

militarize a nuclear power plant in another country? Who is responsible for the fighting in and around the nuclear power plant in Ukraine in the first place? Why has Russia not answered the call to demilitarize the power plant, hand it over to those to whom it legally belongs — Ukraine — and agree to establish a secure perimeter in order to avoid the unthinkable? A clear and straightforward answer to those questions would help provide more clarity for us here and ease those worries.

We reiterate our call to the Russian Federation to withdraw its military forces and all other unauthorized personnel from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, its immediate surroundings and all of Ukraine so that the Ukrainian operator can resume its sovereign responsibilities and the legitimate operating staff can conduct their duties without outside interference, threats or oppressive working conditions. We are worried that widespread infrastructure damage — a constant and ferocious feature of the ongoing Russian attack on Ukraine — and the loss of a power supply, which has happened more than once and led to the repeated switching off of reactors, will increase the threat of fire at the plant, which in turn would damage the cooling systems and lead to a nuclear meltdown. That would be dreadful. Albania condemns any act of violence perpetrated inside or near the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant or against its personnel. We fully support the recommendation of the IAEA to establish a secure perimeter around the nuclear power plant and call for its immediate implementation.

Let me conclude by saying that nuclear power plants are not built to resist or survive military activity, either at the plant itself or anywhere near it. They must therefore not be turned into a military garrison or a platform for military attacks. Let us not forget that meddling with nuclear safety is tantamount to playing with fire, the kind of fire that could burn millions and lead to catastrophic consequences for the environment that would last for decades.

Ms. Moran (Ireland): I would like to thank the Secretary-General and Director General Grossi for their briefings. We greatly welcome the support and assistance mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, and I would like to commend both the IAEA and the United Nations for the manner in which the mission has been conducted. We welcome the Director General’s report and its recommendations, as well as the Director General’s intention to maintain an ongoing

IAEA presence at the plant. The IAEA has a key role in assisting Ukraine in upholding nuclear safety and security in the face of Russia's occupation of such critical Ukrainian infrastructure.

We are deeply concerned about the situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, including the ongoing military activity and shelling around the plant. We strongly support the Secretary-General's call for demilitarizing the area around the plant. The fact that the plant has lost all connection to the main Ukrainian grid raises serious concerns. We urge Russia to stop its efforts to disconnect the plant, which creates a significant risk of a catastrophic radiological incident. The Director General has again clearly set out the importance of the seven pillars of nuclear safety and security and how they are being flouted at the Zaporizhzhya plant due to Russia's actions. We call on Russia and indeed all States to fully commit to the seven pillars for all nuclear facilities and materials, including in situations of armed conflict.

Once again, we must be perfectly clear — the issues at the Zaporizhzhya plant arise solely from the unjust and unprovoked war waged by Russia against Ukraine. The reckless actions of Russia's military forces and their forcible seizure of the nuclear plant have already demonstrated their utter disregard for nuclear safety and security. Once again, let me reiterate that if Russia is serious about safety at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, it must end its illegal occupation of the site and withdraw its troops and munitions. That is essential so that the Ukrainian authorities, together with the IAEA, can uphold their responsibilities for safety and security at the site. Russia must end this war, withdraw from the full territory of Ukraine and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbours.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): I thank the Secretary-General and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for their timely and alarming briefings. The importance of the IAEA mission to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the Agency's continued presence there cannot be overstated. Its professional and impartial efforts are key to our understanding of the situation at the plant. We also commend the crucial work done by the Ukrainian staff, who in severe circumstances continue to operate the plant under its occupation by Russian forces. We call on Russia to return full control of the facility to its Ukrainian operator. One clear line of Ukrainian operational control and authority is vital.

The safety and security situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant has deteriorated solely because of Russia's aggression. It is totally unacceptable that a nuclear facility has become a front line in the ongoing Russian war on Ukraine. We appreciate the IAEA summary report, with recommendations, which was released earlier today. The IAEA has identified an urgent need for interim measures to prevent a nuclear accident arising from the physical damage caused by military means. As the Director General has explained, that can be achieved by the immediate establishment of a nuclear safety and security protection zone.

We reaffirm the importance of the seven pillars of nuclear safety and security outlined by the Director General and support the Agency in helping to ensure the implementation of the pillars in Ukraine. We also echo the Director General's concerns, including about the physical integrity of the plant, its power supply and the conditions for its staff. Nuclear facilities should not be used for military activities or the storage of military material.

We remain concerned about the possibility that Russia's seizure of a nuclear power plant is also a means of taking hostage a central source of electricity supply essential to the civilian population of Ukraine. The electricity generated at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant rightly belongs to the people of Ukraine. Any attempt to disconnect the plant from the Ukrainian grid is unacceptable. Russia must immediately withdraw its forces in and around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and all other Ukrainian nuclear facilities.

The ongoing attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are having a devastating and unacceptable impact. Russia's illegal war and unprovoked aggression have caused terrible suffering for the people of Ukraine and beyond, including by aggravating global food insecurity, affecting the most vulnerable the hardest.

Let me end by again reiterating that Norway condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's choice to wage this war. The Russian Federation must immediately withdraw its forces from within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders. That is the only sustainable solution to the many issues we are discussing today.

Mrs. Kamboj (India): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for his update on the recent

visit of the IAEA team to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

India attaches high importance to ensuring the safety and security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine, as any accident involving nuclear facilities could potentially have severe consequences for public health and the environment. In that regard, we appreciate the recent visit by the IAEA team and will continue to carefully follow developments regarding the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear power reactors and facilities. We have noted that the IAEA will continue to maintain a presence at the Zaporizhzhya plant. We consider the IAEA's discharge of its safeguards and monitoring activities in accordance with its Statute and in an effective, non-discriminatory and efficient manner to be a high priority, and we value its efforts in that regard. With a view to ensuring that the safety and security of nuclear facilities and personnel working there are not endangered, we reiterate our call for strict mutual restraint.

India remains concerned about the situation in Ukraine. We have consistently called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an end to the violence since the beginning of the conflict. We have called on both sides to return to a path of diplomacy and dialogue. We support all diplomatic efforts to end the conflict.

We welcome the initiative backed by the Secretary-General to reopen the export of grain from Ukraine via the Black Sea and to facilitate the export of Russian foodstuffs and fertilizers. Those efforts demonstrate that differences can be resolved through sustained dialogue and diplomacy, which has been India's consistent position. We continue to reiterate that the global order should be anchored in international law, the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates): At the outset, I would like to thank Secretary-General Guterres and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for their briefings. I would also like to take this opportunity to express the gratitude of the United Arab Emirates to the entire IAEA team who visited the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant for their professionalism and dedication under extremely difficult circumstances. The IAEA's mission was a crucial first step in assessing the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities. The United Arab Emirates welcomes the cooperation extended by both parties,

which made the visit possible and allowed access to the power plant. We hope that the constructive spirit of technical cooperation on all matters related to the operation and protection of the Zaporizhzhya plant will continue to prevail and will be extended to all other nuclear facilities throughout Ukraine.

At the same time, we echo the concerns of Director General Grossi and the IAEA in its report issued today about the fact that the physical integrity of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant has been violated several times. As the report highlights, it will be important to put measures in place to prevent a nuclear accident that could arise from physical damage to the plant. In that respect, the recent news that the plant was again disconnected from the power grid owing to fire caused by shelling is a source of serious concern and demonstrates that even with the IAEA's presence at the plant, de-escalation remains critically important to guaranteeing its safety before it is too late. The disruption of the external power supply to the plant and any incident undermining the safety and security of its staff could have disastrous consequences and would be unacceptable. Nuclear plants such as Zaporizhzhya are afforded special protection under international humanitarian law, and those protections must be respected. The risks of a nuclear disaster are simply too great and the consequences too terrible. As we have said before, the United Arab Emirates strongly supports the seven pillars of nuclear safety and security articulated by the IAEA and calls on both parties to the conflict to ensure that they are respected. It is alarming that the IAEA's report today confirmed that all seven pillars have been compromised.

The safe operation of the Zaporizhzhya power plant is crucial not only because of the dire effects of a potential nuclear incident but also because of the critical need for its regular supply of power for civilians, and all the more so with winter approaching. Going forward, the continued presence of international inspectors from the IAEA will remain essential in order to assess safe operations and to stabilize the situation at the Zaporizhzhya plant. We welcome the IAEA's commitment to remaining on the ground while at the same time undertaking further periodic technical visits. Ultimately, however, the parties to the conflict and the international community must work for a return to normalcy as soon as possible. The most crucial step for that is a cessation of hostilities and a diplomatic end

to the conflict. All of us on the Security Council must do all we can to support every effort to that end.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for setting the scene of the situation in Zaporizhzhya. I also thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi, for the helpful information that he just provided about the situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We note with interest the deployment of IAEA experts to the site for an inspection mission and to ensure that the facilities are functioning normally. We have taken note of the state of play described by Mr. Grossi and of his recommendations. We have confidence in his team on the ground, and our attention will remain focused on Zaporizhzhya.

We remain concerned about the information according to which there were several violations of the physical integrity of the power plant as well as disruptions to the electricity supply. The risks of a nuclear accident clearly have not yet been limited or controlled. It will be crucial and urgent to restore and preserve the physical integrity of the nuclear power station. We condemn any use or threat of use of a nuclear facility for military purposes. The possibility of a nuclear accident with potentially catastrophic consequences should in no way be used as a threat or a weapon of war. We call once again for a halt to any kind of military activity within or near the power plant. The parties to the conflict should abstain from any attack on the nuclear site. We call for an independent and impartial investigation to establish responsibility for any military activity that damages nuclear facilities. We would like to point out that parties to the conflict have to abide by the existing rules of nuclear security and cooperate with the IAEA in a transparent manner to make sure that the sites are safe. We cannot be satisfied with half measures, given the scope of the danger.

We will never stop saying that it is time to restore peace in Ukraine as a top priority. In parallel with efforts to save the world from a nuclear catastrophe, negotiations must be carried out in good faith in order to put an end to the war. We support all initiatives that aim to bring the parties to the negotiations table with a view to achieving a cessation of hostilities. There is an alternative, and none is better than peaceful coexistence. My country dissociates itself from any attempt to use the Council for any ends other than the search for international peace and security.

We support all political and diplomatic efforts that seek to put an end to the escalation, silence the guns and reach an agreement to bring about sustainable peace between the parties. A nuclear disaster would be an extremely serious assault on our collective peace and security. It is in the name of that common destiny that we urge the parties to show goodwill, commitment and perseverance in the search for peace.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to thank Secretary-General Guterres and Director General Grossi for their briefings.

For some time, the safety and security of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant has been nerve-racking for the international community, and it has been the unanimous expectation of all to facilitate an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) field visit to the plant as soon as possible. Thanks to the joint cooperation of Russia and Ukraine, Director General Grossi and his colleagues were able to visit successfully last week, which helps to gain an objective understanding of the operations of, and damage to, the nuclear facilities and to take targeted actions.

China is pleased with that positive development and recognizes the efforts of Director General Grossi and the staff of both the IAEA and the Secretariat. At the same time, despite the repeated warnings and appeals from the international community, the shelling of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant continues. Even after the IAEA visitors arrived at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, the shelling did not cease. That is truly concerning.

The Chernobyl nuclear accident has not faded from our memory, and the effects of the Fukushima nuclear accident have not dissipated to date. The world simply cannot afford yet another nuclear disaster. We once again call on the parties concerned to remain committed to humanity, scientific rationality, communication and cooperation; strictly abide by the Convention on Nuclear Safety and other relevant international laws; strictly implement the seven-pillar principles proposed by Director General Grossi; avoid actions that endanger the safety and security of nuclear facilities and refrain from repeatedly testing this dangerous path.

We support the long-term presence of Agency experts at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and hope that the resident experts can provide continuous, steady and professional technical support in order to guarantee the safety and security of the nuclear

facilities. We also encourage the Agency to maintain its communication with the relevant parties.

Since the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine, the threat to the safety and security of nuclear power plant posed by armed conflict has kept the world under the looming spectre of a nuclear disaster. In the face of countless lives and the well-being of generations, we cannot afford to take any chances or do nothing. Instead, we must do our best to minimize accidents. The international community should step up diplomatic efforts to promote the early resumption of negotiations between the parties, achieve a ceasefire and stop the fighting as soon as possible and eliminate nuclear-security risks at their source.

We once again call upon all parties to adopt a responsible approach in order to promote the de-escalation of the situation, work to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Ukraine, work together to build regional peace and tranquility and jointly maintain global security and stability.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing and Mr. Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for informing us on the visit of the mission to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

At the outset, I welcome that the agreements reached between the conflicting parties enabled a team of 14 IAEA experts to carry out a technical inspection of the nuclear plant and allowed two experts to permanently remain at the plant in order to continue to monitor the situation on the ground. That is extremely important for the Agency to continue to have access to objective, truthful and independent real-time information. As we and others have expressed here in the Security Council, ensuring the smooth operation and security of the plant is vital if we are to avoid a disaster with very serious humanitarian consequences for Ukraine, neighbouring countries and the entire world.

We also thank the United Nations Department of Safety and Security for the logistical support and security they provided to the IAEA mission during its visit to Zaporizhzhya. We once again call on all parties to refrain from taking action that could endanger the integrity and operation of the nuclear plant and to ensure the physical safety of the international experts of the IAEA, in whom we placed our trust due to their professionalism, skill and impartiality.

It is regrettable to hear that the seven pillars of nuclear security are not being fully respected in Zaporizhzhya, according to Director General Grossi, and we take note of his timely recommendations. We reiterate that any attack on the nuclear plant is an unacceptable violation of international law and the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We urge the Agency to continue sharing with the Council all information on the situation on the ground. We hope that the conditions at the nuclear plant will quickly improve in order to ensure its security.

We hope that the visit of the IAEA mission and its permanent presence at the nuclear plant help bring about prompt negotiations to put an end to hostilities in Ukraine. Given the looming threat of a nuclear disaster, Mexico reiterates its commitment to do anything it can to promote a diplomatic path that can put an end to the war.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his statement and Director General Rafael Grossi for this important briefing on the state of play at the Russian-held Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

The briefing we heard this afternoon reinforces our continuing concern about the rapidly escalating risk of radioactive exposure resulting from the militarization of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and its surrounding environs. Following the unrelenting shelling of the facility on Thursday, 25 August, which led to a temporary loss of the main power supply to the nuclear reactors, we received, with equal concern, the news of the loss of the nuclear power plant's main connection to the power grid on Saturday due to sustained shelling. Those incidents compromise the cooling and safe functioning of the plant and elevate the risks of accidental or deliberate radioactive exposure, which, if it should occur, would result in catastrophic levels of harm to human lives, the environment, the climate and biodiversity of Ukraine and the wider European continent, with equally damaging consequences for adjoining continents.

The counter-accusations of both parties have been unhelpful to the situation and serve only to deepen the mistrust and drift between them, further endangering the safety of the plant. We therefore fully endorse the position of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that pending the end of the conflict and the re-establishment of stable conditions, there is an urgent

need for interim measures to prevent a nuclear accident resulting from physical damage caused by military action. We also endorse the two-step approach indicated by the Secretary-General in his statement to the Council this afternoon. In that regard, Ghana supports the professional leadership of the Director General and the sustained engagement of the IAEA to undertake verification and safeguards measures to ensure the physical integrity of the nuclear plant in accordance with the IAEA's seven pillars of nuclear safety and security. We support all efforts to restore and safeguard the security of the plant, welcome the continued presence of the IAEA support and assistance mission to Zaporizhzhya and urge the warring sides to cooperate with the mission to the fullest extent, as we work for the demilitarization of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and all other nuclear zones in Ukraine.

We reaffirm our position on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and urge the parties to take concrete measures in compliance with their international obligations to preserve the integrity of nuclear sites. We underscore the dictates of international humanitarian law on the protection of civilians from harm and civilian infrastructure from destruction in times of war, without exception.

While welcoming the various key initiatives being undertaken at several levels to address the unfavourable effects of the war on the lives and livelihoods of the Ukrainian people, the global economy and food and energy supply chains, we emphasize that such responses cannot replace the composite gains of ending the war. That is why we strongly urge for the active pursuit of a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the war, while addressing the related security concerns of the parties through diplomacy and dialogue. We deem it crucial that the Russian Federation heed the international community's call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of its forces from the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine in order to pave the way for meaningful engagement between the parties towards a pacific settlement.

Lastly, we urge for the continued support of the Council and the international community in finding a speedy, comprehensive and lasting solution to this unjustified attack on the people and sovereignty of Ukraine.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): I thank Secretary-General António Guterres and Mr. Rafael Grossi, Director

General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for their briefings. Their participation in this meeting underscores the extreme sensitivity and gravity of this matter and their resolved commitment and endeavours to avert what could be the worst scenario yet in the war in Ukraine.

As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Kenya upholds the Treaty's aims of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, fostering the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and furthering the goal of disarmament. We are conscious that any attack, intended or accidental, on any nuclear installation will instantly activate and deploy them as nuclear weapons with catastrophic consequences. We are therefore deeply concerned about the fragile nuclear safety and security situation in Ukraine, in particular at the Zaporizhzhya plant, especially with the alarming reports of increased shelling at the nuclear site in recent weeks and days. Kenya welcomes the presence of the members of the IAEA support and assistance mission to Zaporizhzhya and urges that they receive full support and cooperation to enable them to accomplish their objective.

We reiterate our call to the parties concerned to exercise restraint, act with caution, refrain from any action that could compromise nuclear safety and security and spare no effort to minimize the possibility of a nuclear incident. In that regard, we welcome the seven pillars articulated by the Director General of the IAEA and in particular endorse the call, including by the Secretary-General, for a demilitarized perimeter around the nuclear facility. Kenya continues to call for an immediate cessation of the war by prioritizing the available diplomatic tools to spare the people of Ukraine from further suffering. Lastly, I reaffirm Kenya's respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

I thank the Secretary-General and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for their briefings.

On 24 February, trampling on the Charter of the United Nations and every principle of international law, Russia attacked and invaded Ukraine. The consequences of this illegal and unjustified war have had repercussions in every area, including the

humanitarian, food, energy and nuclear sectors. Let us not shift blame. We would be facing none — I repeat, none— of those many challenges if Russia had not started this war. The solution to every one of them lies first and foremost in a return to full respect for international law, as the International Court of Justice demanded on 16 March, and in the full restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty.

Among those challenges, Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues to pose a serious threat to Ukrainian nuclear facilities. Russia's illegal occupation of the nuclear plant and the actions of Russian armed forces in its vicinity are significantly increasing the risk of an accident. The situation is creating an unacceptable risk not only for Ukraine but for all of Europe. Russia bears the responsibility for it, and Russia must live up to its responsibility to withdraw its troops from the plant and from all of Ukraine. Russia is attempting to blame the other side, but it is Russia that is acting like a pyromaniac firefighter, setting fires all over Ukraine in order to subsequently offer its advice on how to put them out.

France has been actively engaged for several weeks at the highest level in facilitating sending the mission of IAEA experts to the Zaporizhzhya plant. President Macron and the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs welcomed the Director General of the IAEA to Paris to provide him with our full support. France welcomes the mission as an encouraging and necessary first step as well as the constructive role played by the Ukrainian authorities in ensuring that the mission can do its work in the best possible conditions.

The findings reported by the Agency are very worrisome. The plant has been disconnected from the power grid several times over the past few days. The plant's only remaining operational reactor was temporarily disconnected because of a fire. As the Director General said, the physical integrity of the plant has been violated on several occasions, and that cannot continue. In view of the emergency, it is imperative that the strikes and shelling around and from within the plant cease. All Russian military personnel and equipment must be immediately withdrawn from the plant — in other words, we call for its demilitarization. The Ukrainian personnel operating the plant must be able to carry out their duties without threat or pressure, and Ukrainian sovereignty over the plant must be respected. Russia must restore full control of it and of all nuclear facilities in Ukraine to the Ukrainian

authorities and cease its attempts to divert the electricity generated to the territories that it is occupying illegally.

France commends and will continue to support the efforts of the IAEA Director General. In that regard, we welcome the Agency's willingness to establish a permanent presence at the site of the power plant to address nuclear safety and security and safeguards issues. It is important that the Agency be able to carry out its mission safely and without interference.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Grossi to respond to the comments and questions raised.

Mr. Grossi: I value all of the comments made by delegations concerning the work we have carried out so far. They are a tremendous source of encouragement with regard to the work we are undertaking and that is to come. The purpose of all that work, as I was saying before, is not only to produce reports — although reports are often the indispensable basis for political action — but to get things done and to improve the situation. I am also grateful for the recognition of the importance of the seven pillars we have delineated, as well as the widespread support for our idea and our initiative to establish an interim measure to maintain the safety and security of the power plant through a protection zone.

The representative of the Russian Federation asked some more concrete questions, but if I may I will address them globally, given that he referred to the interactions that led to the mission and how it was facilitated. I think it took a lot of effort from all sides and I am very grateful for the fact that if we go back to the start of the year — and, indeed, the months that followed — there were plenty of obstacles that the mission had to face in terms of its itinerary, characteristics and even logistics. Finally, I think there was a minimum common denominator in terms of reaching the conviction that the mission had to proceed. That was indeed the case, which is why I would like to acknowledge all who made it possible. Some of the representatives here today also referred to that.

At the moment, I would say that I think the most important developments are yet to come. As I said in my report, I will soon be approaching the relevant parties with some very concrete elements for their consideration in order to try to move forward with the

next logical step after the important first one, which will be to establish immediate protection for the plant.

I am always at the disposal of the Security Council and the Secretary-General, whose support I am very grateful for. We will continue to count on his support to our personnel, especially those who remain at the plant and will have to be replaced at some point in the rotation that we are going to establish. I know that with the bright and dedicated people from the United Nations Department for Safety and Security, the Department of Operational Support and the Secretary-General himself, we are going to be able to do it.

Now my invitation, my urge and my appeal are for us to work together for the protection of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant through the establishment of a nuclear safety and security protection zone. The International Atomic Energy Agency will be contacting all sides very soon with concrete steps for their consideration.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Grossi for the clarifications he has provided.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): As well as the other members of the Council, I recognize the representative of the terrorist State of Russia in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union.

I thank Secretary-General Guterres for his participation in today's meeting. I would also like to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Rafael Grossi, for his informative briefing.

It is a matter of regret that Russia has again attempted to misuse the Security Council toolbox to distract the international community's attention from the urgent need to demilitarize and de-occupy the Ukrainian nuclear facility that the Russians have turned into a military base. It is indeed interesting to observe in this Chamber how the Russian envoy whines that he has not had time to properly study the report released by the IAEA, as if it were not Russia itself that called for this meeting in such an urgent manner. I would suggest that the only explanation for Russia's haste is that it was attempting to exert pressure on Director General Grossi and his team while they were still in the process of drafting the report. When that plan failed, thanks to the round-the-clock work of the IAEA, which issued the report today, before the meeting, the Russian

envoy tried desperately to manipulate the situation, using the report that he himself admitted he had not had time to study. My advice to the Russian envoy is as follows. First, next time he should be patient. He should not rush, unless it is a matter of the Russian army's withdrawal from Ukraine; and secondly, he should not put words in my Government's mouth. It is my role to speak on behalf of my Government in this Chamber, and it will never be his.

Against a backdrop of increased security threats following the occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, Ukraine has clearly demonstrated its readiness to explore every option to neutralize a nuclear risk and avert horrific consequences. In early August, following numerous violations by the occupiers of all the IAEA's nuclear safety and security pillars, the Ukrainian leadership officially requested that the IAEA lead an international mission to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, with an option to establish a permanent presence for the Agency at the site until the competent Ukrainian authorities regained full control of the facility. Despite various provocations by Russia on the mission's way to the plant, Ukraine made every effort to ensure that the mission took place as quickly as possible and could operate safely. The preparations for the visit and the ensuing developments revealed that the occupying Power was willing to further engage in nuclear terrorism and to spare no effort to misuse the IAEA for manipulative purposes.

Ukraine appreciates the bravery and professionalism of the IAEA mission's experts. However, the visit was only the first step. The Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant remains under occupation. Russian military equipment and weapons are still deployed at the site. Armed provocations continue and the illegally present representatives of the Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation continue to interfere in the technological process of the plant's management.

Ultimately, the only way to remove the nuclear threats resulting from the illegal Russian presence at the plant is through the withdrawal of Russian weaponry and troops and the return of full, legitimate control of the station to Ukraine. That is a key prerequisite for restoring not just nuclear safety and security but also respect for international law. According to the IAEA mission's report, which we did have time to study, the Russian military occupation has seriously affected the safety and security of the plant. It states that under

“the condition that the operating staff is subject to constant high stress and pressure while operating the [plant] is not sustainable and could lead to increased human error with implications on nuclear safety.”

We are concerned about the fact that the Ukrainian staff are working under such conditions, dealing with threats and pressure from the Russians. We fully agree with the report’s statement that it is

“essential that the Ukrainian staff operating the plant under Russian occupation must be able to carry out their important duties without threats or pressure undermining not only their own safety but also that of the facility itself.”

During previous meetings of the Security Council, the delegation of Ukraine drew attention to Russia’s practice of using the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant as a shield for its own personnel and hardware. Our information has now been verified by the IAEA. Let me quote the report.

“The team observed the presence of Russian military personnel, vehicles and equipment at various places at the [Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant], including several military trucks on the ground floor of the Unit 1 and Unit 2 turbine halls and military vehicles stationed under the overpass connecting the reactor units. The team also observed the presence of an expert group from Rosenergoatom.”

The IAEA points to another important consideration in the report, which is that

“the presence of Rosatom senior technical staff could lead to interference with the normal lines of operational command or authority and create potential frictions when it comes to decision-making.”

The delegation of Ukraine, like the IAEA mission, finds that the efforts made by the operating personnel

“are being taken under very challenging circumstances with military personnel and equipment, as well as representatives of Rosatom being present on the site.”

We therefore call on Russia to implement the report’s recommendation for their removal.

The issue that is currently under discussion, which is the continuing presence of the IAEA at the Zaporizhzhya

power plant, is an idea that I would like to point out was put forward by Ukraine. The Ukrainian side stands ready to further discuss the specific modalities of such a presence with the IAEA. The proposal currently under discussion should be properly assessed against the background of potential risks and challenges. Given the willingness of the Russian occupiers to continue their staged provocations, we should find an efficient way to ensure both the safety of the IAEA experts and their immunity to Russia’s manipulations. Ukraine is ready for immediate substantive consultations with the IAEA on the issue of the modalities of the Agency’s continued presence at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant with a view to stabilizing the critical situation at the facility and avoiding further aggravation.

As President Zelenskyy said in his video address to the nation less than an hour ago, with regard to Director General Grossi’s proposal to create a nuclear safety and security protection zone, we need to look at the specific content of such an instrument. What exactly does “protection” mean? If the proposal envisages the demilitarization of the territory of the nuclear power plant — which is logical, since it was the Russian military presence that put the plant under the threat of a radiation disaster — then we can support such a demilitarized protection zone. In any case, it is clear that modern international organizations will need a much broader mandate for their actions. The President believes that the world not only deserves, but needs the representatives of the IAEA to force Russia to demilitarize the territory of the nuclear power plant and return full control of it to Ukraine.

We confirm that under no circumstances has Ukraine ever resorted to forceful military actions in relation to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which would endanger not only our own State, but also millions of lives in neighbouring countries. Yesterday, due to provocative shelling by Russia, the last power transmission line that connected the station to Ukraine’s energy system was damaged. It was the second time that Russian provocation had put the Zaporizhzhya power station one step away from a nuclear disaster. As President Zelenskyy said in his statement yesterday, we consider the fact that Russia is doing this right now, on the eve of the IAEA’s conclusions, to be very telling. The shelling of the territory of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant means that the terrorist State does not care what the IAEA says or what the international community decides. All Russia wants is for the

situation to remain at its worst for as long as possible. That can be corrected only by strengthening sanctions and by officially recognizing Russia as a terrorist State at every level.

Ukraine has a very clear, transparent and honest position. While we controlled the station, there was no threat of a radiation disaster. However, as soon as Russia arrived, the worst-case scenario immediately became possible. That requires an international response from the United Nations and every normal State. Let me reiterate that the main outcome of the joint international efforts must be the withdrawal of the Russian military and civilian personnel from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant territory and from Enerhodar. That will definitely restore the plant to safe and secure operation, as it was before the full-fledged Russian war against Ukraine. As the IAEA's report says,

“the current situation is untenable and the best action to ensure the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities and its people would be for this armed conflict to end now.”

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Zahneisen (Germany): First of all, let me thank you, Sir, for giving us the opportunity to speak in the Council today on this matter, which is of deep concern to my country. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement and Director General Grossi for his comprehensive briefing. Like other delegations, we thank Director General Grossi for his leadership on the matter and very much welcome his recent report on Zaporizhzhya. Our deep appreciation also goes out to the International Energy Agency (IAEA) team on the ground and to the Ukrainian operating staff in Zaporizhzhya, who continue to work under extremely difficult conditions.

As I said previously, my country remains deeply concerned about the immense danger to nuclear safety resulting from Russia's unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine — a nuclear danger that could threaten the entire European continent and beyond. There can be no doubt as to who is responsible for the precarious situation. It is not a chicken-or-egg question. It is the Russian Federation that attacked its neighbour Ukraine and illegally occupied parts of Ukrainian territory, including the premises of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Without Russia's aggression, we

would not be sitting here for the third time discussing the blatant lack of nuclear safety and security in Europe, and there would be no risk of a nuclear incident with consequences reaching far beyond Ukraine's borders.

In contrast to Russia's false claims, it is the Russian seizure of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant that poses a serious threat to the safety and security of that very site. It is Russia that is militarizing the power plants. It is Russia that is placing equipment and troops on their premises. That has created the dangerous situation in Zaporizhzhya. That can be changed by the Russian Federation at any time by demilitarizing the site, and we call on Russia to do so.

Under the current circumstances, it has been of the utmost importance to investigate the situation and to assess the safety of the plant's operation on the ground. Germany, nationally and as President of the Group of Seven, was among the countries that actively pushed for the mission to be deployed as a matter of urgency, and we thank the IAEA for conducting the mission under exceptionally difficult circumstances. We agree with the Director General that the situation at the plant remains of grave concern with regard to nuclear security and other issues concerning the infrastructure and power lines, as well as the safety of the operating staff.

It is of crucial importance that the mission can continue its work at the power plant and remain consistently present at the site. The IAEA must be able to permanently respond to safety, security and safeguards concerns related to the Zaporizhzhya power plant.

Finally, we demand that Russia hand back full control of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant to its rightful sovereign owner, Ukraine, in order to ensure its safe and secure operations and provide continued electricity supply to the Ukrainian population.

In conclusion, the Russian Federation must change its course, fully respect the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and withdraw its armed forces from all Ukrainian territories. The Russian Federation must comply with the legally binding order of the International Court of Justice to immediately suspend all military operations against Ukraine. Germany will continue to support the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.