

IAEA BOARD OF GOVERNORS: Extraordinary Session

2 March 2022

**The Safety, Security and Safeguards Implications of the Situation
in Ukraine**

New Zealand Statement

As Delivered

Mr Chair,

New Zealand joins others in thanking the Director General, the Secretariat team, and the Permanent Missions of Canada and Poland for convening this extraordinary session to discuss the situation in Ukraine and its nuclear safety, security and safeguards implications.

Mr Chair,

New Zealand strongly condemns Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and joins our international partners in calling on Russia to immediately cease military operations in Ukraine and permanently withdraw to prevent further loss of innocent life. The unlawful and violent actions taken by Russia constitute a significant threat to peace and security in the region, and will trigger a humanitarian and refugee crisis with devastating consequences for Ukrainian civilians. As this tragedy continues to unfold, it is innocent civilians, including women and children, who will bear the terrible cost of Russia's unprovoked and needless aggression. New Zealand stands by the people of Ukraine in this difficult moment and we reiterate our call for the cessation of hostilities.

Mr Chair,

New Zealand is deeply concerned by the serious and real danger that Russia's unlawful actions pose to the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities and their civilian personnel. We must recognise the grim possibility of a catastrophic nuclear accident or incident occurring as a result of Russia's unjustified violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity - with potentially ruinous consequences for the people of Ukraine, Ukraine's neighbours and the wider international community.

We therefore echo Director General Grossi's urgent and strong appeal to all parties to refrain from any action that could jeopardise the safety and

security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities. We also wish to underline our serious concern regarding the potential impact Russia's actions may have on the IAEA's continued access to Ukraine's nuclear facilities for the purposes of conducting safeguards verification activities. Such access must be maintained to provide reassurance about the peaceful nature of those facilities.

Furthermore, we urge Russia, in concert with our international partners, to act consistently with its international obligations and commitments, including the decision adopted by the IAEA General Conference in 2009 that any armed attack on, and threat against, nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes constitutes a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and the Statute of the Agency.

Mr Chair,

New Zealand will fully support the resolution proposed by Canada and Poland.

Finally, Mr Chair, New Zealand recognises the essential role the IAEA plays in monitoring the safety and security of Ukraine's four active nuclear power plants and other nuclear-related facilities. We reiterate our support for the Agency's ongoing efforts to maintain communications with Ukraine's national nuclear agency and request that the Director General continue to keep the Board apprised of this vital issue.

Thank you.