**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY !**

**Statement by Ambassador Barbara Žvokelj,**

**Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the IAEA,**

**at the meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors,**

**on Strengthening of the Agency’s technical cooperation activities,**

**Technical Cooperation Report for 2020 (Agenda item 3),**

**Vienna, 7 June 2021**

*Madame Chairperson,*

In addition to what has been said on behalf of the European Union, I would like to make several short comments in my national capacity.

*Madame Chairperson,*

Slovenia continues to strongly support the Agency’s TCP (Technical Cooperation Programme), especially because we are convinced that the TCP is an important element in the broader process of achieving the SDGs. We note with appreciation that this is well represented in the TC Report.

In addition to this, we believe that systematic monitoring and evaluation of the TCP is of utmost importance, since only efficient and effective projects developed on a needs-based principle have a tangible impact on the ground.

We sincerely appreciate Agency's efforts to assist and support Member States in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. IAEA’s prompt response to the new reality enabled continuity of technical cooperation activities in this unprecedented situation. Numerous activities were carried out in 2020 using virtual platforms instead of having been postponed or cancelled due to the travel restrictions. We note that virtual events resulted in a broader participation and helped bridging the gap between planned and implemented activities in an adequate manner.

Furthermore, global preparedness for future pandemics is of utmost importance. In this regard, my country fully supports the ZODIAC initiative. We have nominated our ZODIAC Country Coordinator and the national laboratory for zoonoses in order to actively collaborate with the Agency and all other countries interested in the interregional project.

*Madam Chairperson*,

With regard to our national projects in the current TC cycle, we are focusing on strengthening of regulatory capabilities, management of radioactive waste, human health, emergency response and water management. We plan to maintain this focus in the next TC cycle and have put forward similar project proposals.

In conclusion, *Madam Chair*, I am pleased to inform that regardless of the challenges posed by the pandemic, Slovenia has settled its 2021 TC Fund share and is committed to the same for the next TC cycle.

*Thank you, Madame Chairperson.*