Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Agency it is my great pleasure to welcome you back to Vienna for the 42nd meeting of the Radiation Safety Standards Committee (RASSC) and the 43rd meeting of the Waste Safety Standards Committee (WASSC). Both Committees have a strong history of working in close cooperation and you have a very full and interesting agenda to work today and tomorrow afternoon. I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to a number of past and future events that are of interest to both Committees, as well as to highlight some important issues for the Joint Session.

Regarding items to be discussed at this meeting, I would like in particular to emphasize the importance of agreeing how to proceed in relation to revising the Safety Guide Application of the Concepts of Exclusion, Exemption and Clearance (RS-G-1.7). While the Committees approved the DPPs – one dealing with clearance, and the other dealing with exemption – at their last meetings in November, there were a number of important issues raised that the Secretariat felt required further consideration. A Consultants’ Meeting held just two weeks ago has made a clear recommendation on how to proceed.

In November last year, the three Safety Guides DS427, DS432 and DS442, providing state-of-the-art recommendations on regulatory approaches for protection of public and the environment, including explicitly the flora and the fauna, have been endorsed by Commission on Safety Standards and are in the process for publication, The Secretariat is now working intensively in developing practical methodologies applicable to specific facilities and activities. An important issue in this regard is the need to develop guidance on the regulation and use of radionuclides for industrial applications and in environmental
studies. We have two presentations on this topic this morning and I look forward to receiving your advice on the best way to progress on this issue.

Although it is not specifically on the agenda for this meeting, I would like to refer to the RASSC opinion on the implications of the UNSCEAR report *Attributing Health Effects to Ionizing Radiation Exposure and Inferring Risks* for the development of IAEA safety standards. RASSC concluded that the UNSCEAR report has no direct and immediate implications for the IAEA safety standards and, as such, it reinforces the appropriateness of, and sound scientific basis for, these standards. There is a division of opinion on this topic among members of the Commission on Safety Standards and a Working Group to discuss this matter further is to be established. I cannot predict the outcome of these discussions, but I will ensure that both RASSC and WASSC are kept fully informed of the thinking of the CSS and any decisions reached.

I would like to take the opportunity to remind you of the upcoming *International Conference on Radiation Protection in Medicine* which will be held at the Agency’s headquarters in Vienna from 11 to 15 December this year. This is a follow-up to the very successful preceding conference on the same topic held in Bonn in December 2012. This conference will provide the radiation protection community with the opportunity to evaluate progress in implementation of the “Bonn Call for Action” as well as identifying new challenges from the increasing and varied applications of ionizing radiation in medical diagnosis and treatment.

I would also like to highlight that, a few weeks ago, the Contracting Parties of the Joint Convention have held their Third Extraordinary Meeting as well as their Organizational Meeting for the Sixth Review Meeting in May 2018. Both meetings were attended by approximately 270 delegates, representing 57 Contracting Parties. At the Organizational Meeting for the Sixth Review Meeting, the Contracting Parties

- Elected the President and the two Vice-Presidents for the 6th Review Meeting;
- Established the Country Groups for the 6th Review Meeting;
- Elected the Country Group Officers; and
- Decided on a provisional agenda and timetable for the 6th Review Meeting.
Significant progress has been made with regard to ARTEMIS – the Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation. The Agency is implementing the first missions to take place – a review of the decommissioning programme in Italy in July this year and the first reviews requested according to the obligations of Article 14 of the European Waste Directive – Poland in October this year and France in January 2018. We have also recently received the official request from Bulgaria for the year 2018.

In conclusion, I wish you a productive Joint Session and fruitful discussions, and wish you all an enjoyable stay here in Vienna. I would now like to pass you back to your Chairpersons for this Joint Session, Mr Gustavo Massera and Mr Geoff Williams.

END