**Remarks of President of Russia Vladimir Putin at the ceremony marking the delivery of nuclear fuel to Akkuyu NPP**

**Vladimir Putin, President of Russia :**

Mr President, Mr Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, my dear friends.

I would like to sincerely welcome you, everyone here at this nuclear fuel delivery ceremony at the Akkuyu NPP. I would like to congratulate you on a new, important stage in the implementation of one of the largest joint projects in the history of Russian-Turkish relations, as it was just called – the construction of Turkiye’s first nuclear power plant.

I would like to emphasise that this is a flagship project. It brings mutual economic benefits to both partners and certainly promotes our versatile bilateral cooperation that rests of the principles of friendship, mutual respect and consideration for each other’s interests.

This is exactly what I discussed with President Erdogan during our detailed telephone conversation, which just ended. Naturally, in addition to cooperation in peaceful nuclear energy, we also discussed other current issues in the development of the entire range of bilateral relations. A number of fundamentally important agreements have been reached.

The main thing – I will not go into detail – is that we agreed to further strengthen cooperation in the economy and trade, to encourage the progressive growth of bilateral trade, which exceeded $62 billion in 2022, and also to encourage the inflow of reciprocal investment, and to help the business structures of the two countries enter each other’s markets.

Russia will certainly continue to reliably provide Turkiye with energy resources, primarily natural gas. By the way, once Akkuyu is operating at full capacity, we will, of course, probably supply less natural gas to Turkiye. This is an expensive commodity today, and prices will only go up, but Turkey will enjoy the advantage of a country with its own nuclear energy, and as is well-known, nuclear energy is one of the least expensive sources of energy.

Moreover, we are determined to increase cooperation in supplying this type of fuel – again, I mean gas – to third countries. This is also what the proposal to create a regional gas hub in Turkiye to supply natural gas to interested foreign buyers at market prices is aimed at.

The president of Turkiye and I have agreed to expand cooperation in agriculture, establish mutual trade in agricultural products and coordinate efforts on international food security.

Mr Erdogan’s initiative on the free shipment of flour to the countries that need it most is also being worked out. The flour will be produced by the Turkish flour milling industry from grain supplied by the Russian side.

Both sides expressed interest in further developing tourism. As you know, Turkish resorts are very popular among Russians, and last year over 5 million Russians visited Turkiye. Of course, it is important to create favourable conditions for travel between the two countries, so we have agreed to increase the number of bilateral flights.

I would also like to reiterate our heartfelt sympathies to Turkiye over the major earthquake in February that caused many deaths and destruction – we talked about this on the phone. We are aware of the difficult tasks the government and the President of Turkiye have to resolve in rebuilding infrastructure, housing, and social facilities, and we are ready to continue to provide our Turkish partners with the necessary assistance and support.

In particular, we have decided to deliver a large shipment of Russian building materials to Turkiye in the near future. Of course, Turkiye's construction sector is very well developed, and so is its building materials industry, but this situation is special.

I would remind you that Russia was one of the first to send rescue teams and medical personnel to Turkiye, and has deployed a mobile multidisciplinary hospital in one of the most affected regions, where over 13,000 people have already been treated. And this help, I assure you, is absolutely sincere and disinterested: we are always ready to extend a hand of friendly support to our Turkish partners.

Dear Friends!

Returning to the main topic of today's event, which is dedicated to the supply of nuclear fuel to Akkuyu Unit 1, I would like to note that in a few minutes our Turkish colleagues will be receiving the relevant certificate. With this, Turkiye's first nuclear power plant will be officially designated as a nuclear facility, and the flag of the peaceful atom will be raised over the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant.

It is symbolic that Turkiye is joining the club of industrially and technologically developed countries that have a nuclear power industry, and it is in 2023 – as you suggested, Mr. President – that Turkiye is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Turkiye.

I would like to remind you that Rosatom began building this nuclear power plant in the Turkish province of Mersin on the Mediterranean Sea exactly five years ago, in April 2018. Mr Erdogan and I took part in a ceremony to mark that event, and we have been personally monitoring the Akkuyu project ever since.

Of course, without the support of the President of Turkiye, I think this would not have been possible, especially since, as you know, there are always some administrative difficulties in such large-scale projects, the need to overcome certain procedures, but all this was done through a cooperative effort.

I would like to emphasise that Russian and Turkish nuclear specialists – engineers and technicians – are cooperating in a smooth and friendly way, which results in power plant construction that is in full compliance with the approved schedule. Importantly, as mentioned earlier, they are simultaneously building all four generation III+ power units, with an aggregate capacity of 4,800 megawatts.

I would like to emphasise that today this is the biggest nuclear power plant construction site in the world. Over 20,000 people work here every day. In fact, it is now approaching 30,000 people and two thirds are Turkish citizens, which should also be noted. And these are only some of the jobs being created by the Akkuyu project. This means jobs, salaries, support for families and the like. This is practical work.

Many Turkish contractors are taking part in this project. They are involved in the construction, and in supplying materials and components, plus transport and other services. And much of the equipment for this new nuclear power plant is domestically sourced in Turkiye. I would like to note that the overall cost of these contracts is $4.2 billion dollars. These are the products that Turkish industrial companies have already manufactured for the Akkuyu project. The aggregate total for domestic sourcing is estimated at $6.5 billion.

I would like to emphasise that as a recognised leader in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, Rosatom is using the latest engineering designs and technology in building nuclear power plants. They are based on the highest standards of physical safety, sanitary and environmental requirements.

The construction of this nuclear power plant and the preparations for operation are in full compliance with the IAEA’s rules and recommendations. Mr Grossi, who is attending our ceremony, has just said that the Akkuyu NPP’s multi-level security system is one of the most sophisticated and reliable in the world.