Joint Statement By Co-Chairs of the U.S.-Kazakhstan Energy Partnership

The co-chairs of the U.S.-Kazakhstan Energy Partnership announced today the results of joint work in the areas of nuclear nonproliferation and security, civilian nuclear cooperation, energy efficiency, and carbon sequestration during the year 2015.

Significant progress was made on the conversion of the Institute of Nuclear Physics (INP) VVR-K research reactor from the use of highly enriched uranium (HEU) to low enriched uranium (LEU) fuel. The INP, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration, took delivery of new control and protection systems and unloaded all HEU from the reactor. The VVR-K reactor is expected to restart on LEU fuel early in 2016. At the same time, INP and DOE have down-blended the remaining fresh HEU fuel. The final removal of HEU spent fuel from INP is scheduled for 2017. In parallel, joint analysis and LEU fuel preparations continued for the planned conversion of the IVG1M Research Reactor and the IGR research reactor, if technically and economically feasible, at the National Nuclear Center of the Republic of Kazakhstan (NNC RK) from HEU to LEU fuel.

In addition, training seminars were held on nuclear reactor core design technologies and NNC RK scientists participated in a workshop at the Idaho National Laboratory to discuss areas of possible future cooperation on transient testing. The workshop resulted in an MOU that was signed in Kazakhstan in September of 2015 outlining several new areas for possible collaboration including an exchange of historical information on test reactors.

In addition to the major nonproliferation achievement of converting Kazakhstan's research reactors from HEU to LEU fuel, the sides worked together to enhance the country's proficiency in safeguards and nuclear and radiological material security. DOE conducted training courses for Kazakhstan's specialists in the areas of safeguards implementation and nuclear forensics, supported the installation of two customs crossing points with radiation detection systems, and provided associated training and other support for these systems in cooperation with Kazakhstan's Ministry of Finance.

Other significant accomplishments also include start of the construction of the Nuclear Security Training Center and the establishment of Kazakhstan's Transportation Control Center. Based at NNC RK, the Transportation Control

Center's goal is to ensure continuous monitoring of transportation of radiological materials at the operational and national levels. The co-chairs stated their continued support and cooperation in these vital areas of nuclear security and nonproliferation.

Joint work continues on modernization of the sodium processing facility at the BN-350 reactor. The co-chairs commend specialists from both countries for their work on the project, as it is an important step towards enhancing international nuclear security and nonproliferation.

With regard to energy efficiency and carbon sequestration, the co-chairs noted a constructive dialogue on energy efficiency best practices, including briefings from U.S. government and industry representatives on how energy service companies can achieve significant efficiency improvements. Joint work in carbon sequestration included dialogue on best practices and discussions on Kazakhstan's participation in the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum.

The co-chairs look forward to continued progress in 2016.

Signed in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, on April 6, 2016.

For the United States of America:

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For the Republic of Kazakhstan:

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