

STATEMENT

by

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the Nigerian Delegation, it is my pleasure to extend warm congratulations on your election. It is the expectation of my delegation that your rich experience and outstanding skills would serve us in good stead in achieving a successful outcome that will further the course of human development. May I assure you of the full cooperation of the Nigerian Delegation in this endeavour. I would also like to extend the courtesies of my delegation to other members of the General Committee as well as our host, the Federal Republic of Austria.

At the same time, my Delegation would like to welcome the Republic of Tajikistan, the Azerbaijan Republic and the Central Africa Republic as new members joining this unique organisation.

Mr. President,

Let me also express my deep appreciation to the Director-General for his reassuring statement outlining the activities of the Agency and to the Secretariat for the dedicated service they have rendered to member states, including the excellent arrangement for this conference. I especially wish to highlight the Agency's work in three core areas, which also represent the main pillars enshrined in the Medium Term Strategy (MTS), namely Technology, Safeguards and Safety.

Mr. President,

My Delegation attaches great importance to the peaceful uses of nuclear science and its applications. It has served as a veritable instrument for the furtherance of sustainable development, especially among developing member states. Its attraction also stems from the direct relevance of its application to address a wide range of activities covering areas such as agriculture, human health, water resources development and management and the environment. All these activities serve to complement our national development efforts. Some of the ongoing projects in Nigeria include those in the area of health care delivery system, radiotherapy and oncology, nuclear activation analysis, neonatal hydrothyroidism screening, monitoring of pesticide residues in foodstuffs, cross breeding of indigenous cattle for milk production and monitoring workers' exposure to environmental hazards.

Mr. President,

Despite the various options open to us as an oil producing state in fashioning out an energy policy, we acknowledge the positive sides of nuclear energy and would keep the option open. It is in appreciation of the ultimate socio-economic benefit which nuclear application portends for us in maximizing our scientific and technological development that the Miniature Neutron Source Reactor (MNSR) project was initiated with the assistance of the Agency. Unfortunately the commissioning has been stalled due to a number of administrative

and technical reasons which, hopefully would be resolved in due course. In this regard, we would like to express our profound appreciation to the Agency for its valuable assistance on the project. We equally acknowledge the training programme offered to two Nigerians by the Agency in the Energy and Power Evaluation Programme, (ENPEP) in our pursuit of the development of an Energy Master Plan for Nigeria. We hope to request for more of such assistance in this field towards achieving the best mix in our energy policy.

Mr. President,

Let me assure you that all these programmes have assisted us in no small measure. As a token of our commitment and support, it is my pleasure to announce on behalf of the Nigerian Government, a pledge of the sum of US\$ 23,360.00 (Twenty-three thousand, three hundred and sixty United States dollars) being the full share of our contribution to the TCF.

Mr. President,

The Agency's Safeguards System is Central to global non-proliferation and to global peace and security. It is in this regard that we commend the final document of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty where, for the first time, the Nuclear Weapon States made an 'Unequivocal Commitment' to nuclear disarmament. It is the conviction of my delegation that what is required of them is more of action than words to implement in reality, the ideals which they have pronounced. It is also the expectation of my delegation that some fundamental issues, which remain unresolved in this areas and constitute a major concern to the international community would be given the attention they deserve, to ensure the effectiveness of the international Safeguards systems. These include the existence of over 30,000 nuclear warheads, the lack of a timetable for disarmament, the escalation of the arms race in the Outer Space as well as the slow pace of progress on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

Mr. President,

On our part, Nigeria has further demonstrate its commitment to the ideals of International Peace and Security when it recently signed among others the Africa Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and is in the process of their ratification. Early in June this year, she also concluded the Additional Protocol to the existing Safeguards Agreement with the Agency. It however a matter of regret to note that the number of such agreements so far concluded with the Agency falls far below our expectation, especially when viewed from the perspective that an effective integrated Safeguards System requires universal adherence. We therefore call on those yet to conclude the additional Protocol to do so. In this regard, let me assure you that the current administration in Nigeria is committed to reviewing all the disarmament treaties not yet signed or ratified with a view to activating them.

Mr. President,

The ability to control the harmful effects of ionizing radiation continues to receive global attraction. The Agency's long standing objective in this regard is to create international standard for radiation protection. Nigeria is firmly committed to these principles. However, we realize that we still have a lot of grounds to cover in this area, especially as we are yet to have a Nuclear Regulatory Authority Regulatory Authority. We therefore welcome the Agency's proposal to start a new model project for upgrading radiation protection infrastructure. Arrangements are underway for us to take advantage of yet another unique opportunity provided by the Agency.

Mr. President,

Over the past six months the two most contentious issues that have been hotly debated in the corridors of the Board are the financing of Technical Cooperation (TC) and that of financing of Safeguards. Valuable time and energy were expended on consultations on both issues, which generated creative tensions. But happily, Member State were able to narrow down their differences and found common ground to build a consensus. However, it must be borne in mind that the political commitment to end shielding was reached at a high cost of political sacrifice on the part of developing member states, who have to double the share of their payment to the safeguards components of the Regular Budget. On the other hand, the burden of the financing of Technical Cooperation (TC) still poses the problem of uncertainty, due to its voluntary nature.

Mr. President,

What is therefore required from both sides of the divide is the need to maintain at all times, the spirit of fairness, honesty and transparency and that the delicate balance between these two equally important programmes of the Agency is given the attention it deserves. We therefore urge all Member States to protect and build on the areas where consensus have been reached. One crucial point worthy of note which the debate has brought to the fore is the close relationship that exists between the two issues. It is on this note that my Delegation calls on all Member States to continue to fulfil their legal obligation in their contribution to the financing of Safeguards and their moral and political commitment to the TCF, irrespective of its voluntary nature. As regards the cash flow problem confronting the Agency, we must all join hands to find a collective way to stem this unfavourable development so that the Agency's programmes would be implemented efficiently and effectively.

Mr. President,

Before I conclude, I would also like to share with you some fundamental development problems affecting my country, the Africa region, the tropical environment in general and indeed the developing member states. They include the problem of the malaria scourge, the solid cancer trauma and land de-mining issue. We believe that nuclear application could help

provide solution to these problems. It is in this regard that we have always advocated the need to expand the frontiers which nuclear applications could play in addressing human needs. We particularly recognize the success of Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) in the eradication of tse-tse fly and other insects of economic importance. We therefore urge the Agency to initiate research and development activities that would lead to possible application of the SIT for the control or eradication of mosquitoes. We further note that with the increase in life expectancy in developing countries, the incidence of solid cancer affecting the elderly would rise. We therefore call on the Agency to strengthen indigenous capabilities of member states in radiation therapy to alleviate the debilitating effect of solid cancer. We equally request the Agency's assistance in using nuclear techniques in locating the over 60 million abandoned land mines presently buried in 62 countries and responsible for the killing and maiming about 26000 individuals annually, 80% of whom are civilians, mainly children, women and farmers.

Mr. President,

In concluding this statement, let me once again renew the commitment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to continue to live up to its political commitment and financial obligation to the Agency so as to be better placed to collectively promote the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

I thank you for your attention.