

Statement by Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad. Leader of the Pakistan Delegation
to the 44th IAEA General Conference. Vienna.
18 to 22 September 2000

Mr. President, Mr. Director General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me immense pleasure to felicitate you, Mr. President, on behalf of the Pakistan delegation on your election as President of the 44th regular session of the IAEA General Conference. Having worked with you in other Committees I admire your consummate skills in consensus building. I am confident that, with your wisdom and experience, you will steer this Conference with great distinction and success. I would also like to congratulate the Vice Presidents, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole and other members of the Bureau and assure them of our full cooperation and support. On behalf of my delegation, I welcome Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Central African Republic as new members of the Agency.

2. Let me, at the very outset, also commend the Agency and its Director General Mohamed ElBaradei for a highly productive turn-of-the-century year.

3. Mr. President, Pakistan is a peace-loving country and has always pursued the goals of non-proliferation and disarmament with sincerity. Pakistan will continue playing its positive role in this regard. The world is fully aware of the security compulsions that forced Pakistan to demonstrate its nuclear capability after the nuclear tests in our neighbourhood in 1998. We were left with no other option. Our tests were essential for peace and stability in South Asia. Nevertheless, Pakistan is determined not to enter into an arms race. We will act with utmost restraint and will maintain our nuclear deterrence at the minimum possible level. Pakistan has declared a unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests and is trying to build national consensus on

adherence to CTBT. We have already taken concrete measures regarding the export of sensitive nuclear technology.

4. Mr. President, this is the first General Conference of the new millennium and we may look back and learn from our triumphs and failures. The last century would be remembered for different reasons. It was a century which saw the liberation of vast areas of the globe from the shackles of colonialism, which saw the miseries of devastating wars, which saw tremendous strides in medical sciences leading to the eradication of many diseases. But, above all, the last century would be remembered for the gigantic progress in science and technology. Deep insight was achieved in the mystery of cell biology leading to the deciphering of human genome. Fabrication of the transistor gave birth to computers, integrated circuits and to a phenomenal growth of information technology. Venture into space and man's landing on the moon expanded our horizon. For us here at the IAEA, the most important event was the discovery of nuclear fission. It had a profound effect on human society, both for better and for worse. It gave rise to its use for peace and prosperity as well as death and devastation. It is our strong desire and fervent hope that the awesome power of the atom will never again be used for destruction.

5. Mr. President, the largest impact of nuclear technology on socioeconomic development is, of course, through nuclear power. This is, regrettably, an area which does not indicate a renaissance at the global level. Nonetheless, nuclear power continues to grow in Asia, and if the trend continues this continent will become the repository of nuclear power know-how in the future. There would have been even faster development of nuclear power in Asia if hurdles were not placed in the transfer of technology even in cases connected to the safety of installations and on facilities which are under the Agency's safeguards. The countries with low fossil fuel reserves have no alternative but to look to nuclear power for

meeting the needs of industrial development and growing population. In Pakistan, the 300 MW(e) Chashma Nuclear Power Plant, supplied by our great neighbour China under Agency's safeguards, has become operational and is operating at full power during its testing phase. Pakistan is grateful to the IAEA for its collaboration in assessing its safety features through pre-OSART and other missions.

6. One of the greatest difficulties in the way of nuclear power development is that of public perception regarding its safety and that of the technology of waste disposal. From this point of view, the Scientific Forum being held concurrently with this General Conference on Radioactive Waste Management is most relevant. Similarly, the Scientific Forum held last year on Nuclear Power highlighted many important issues as a result of which, I understand, a Task Force on Innovative Reactors and Fuel Cycles has been established at the IAEA. I hope this group will be made as broad based as possible with the association of more countries and it would strengthen the activities of the Agency in the nuclear energy sector.

7. Mr. President, we are becoming more and more concerned about the degradation of environment in its various forms. One of the factors which could have far reaching effects is the increasing emission of greenhouse gases. The atmospheric content of carbon dioxide has risen by 30% since the industrial revolution, of which the last 30 years alone have seen an alarming increase of 10 percent. The global mean surface temperature over the last century or so has risen by about half a degree centigrade. If the present trend continues, this is expected to increase by another 2 to 4 degrees by the year 2100. It does not need much imagination to foresee how adversely this would affect the coming generations. The recent evidence for the melting of the arctic ice, unusually high temperatures in areas as far apart as Texas and Alaska in the USA, Eastern Russia, Brazil, Southern Europe and Australia, as well as continuing droughts and forest fires in many parts of the world, could be the initial manifestations of global climate change.

8. Mr. President, with the climate change threat becoming a reality, nuclear is the only existing power technology which could replace coal in the base load. In addition, the large reactor operation experience over the world, increased stability and safety and new economic designs make nuclear power a viable, competitive and climate friendly source of energy. Despite these facts, this important source remains out of the Clean Development Mechanism. As the IAEA is the only inter-governmental organization dedicated to nuclear science and technology, it shoulders a heavy responsibility for developing consensus among Member States for emphasizing the due place of nuclear power in the climate change scenario.

9. The promotion of nuclear power is undoubtedly linked closely to the safety and security of nuclear technology. IAEA has made sterling contribution in creating safety culture amongst the nuclear community of the world. Now that the Convention on Nuclear Safety has been widely ratified the parties to the Convention should receive greater cooperation and information for the safety of power reactors.

10. Pakistan also endorses the activities of the Agency in the field of safeguards and looks forward to an efficient and cost-effective integrated safeguards system. Agency's safeguards at our facilities are working to the entire satisfaction of the IAEA and we have recently agreed to several Agency proposals for further improvements. We have also acceded to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials.

11. Mr. President, as I had stressed last year, one of the greatest challenges of the new century is expected to be the adequate supply of fresh water. It will become an increasingly scarce commodity during this century due to increasing population and industrialization. I would, therefore, like to urge the Agency to increase its efforts in the promotion of suitable nuclear techniques for the development as well as management of water resources for potable, agricultural and industrial use.

12. The Agency also deserves to be complimented for promoting methodologies for enhancing food security through the use of specialized isotopic and radiation techniques. The use of these techniques has had a marked socio-economic impact in Pakistan by way of increased production of cotton and the surplus production of wheat.

13. Mr. President, the technical cooperation activities of the Agency are of crucial importance for the developing countries. We fully support the Agency in this area. I congratulate the TC Department on the consistently high implementation rate achieved over successive years. We are glad that a number of recommendations made by SAGTAC have been accepted by the Agency in further enhancing the efficiency and usefulness of its TC activities. Pakistan has greatly benefited from these activities of the Agency. At the same time, we also contribute in a modest way by giving training to IAEA fellows and by providing expert services to others. We have also offered some of our advanced institutions as Regional Resource Centres of the IAEA. We are actively participating in the effort for transforming RCA from an IAEA owned organisation to a Member State owned agreement. We welcome the initiation of a dialogue for sub-contracting some projects to the centres of excellence in the region. Pakistan looks forward to an active collaboration in this endeavour.

14. Mr. President, the endorsement of the overall technical programme of the Agency by the Member States is a testimony to the importance and usefulness of the activities of the Agency. For the continuation of these activities, which we all support, adequate resources must be provided to the Agency. Unfortunately, for nearly two decades the priorities of the Agency have been inverted and the technical programme made subservient to the artificial constraints of zero real growth in the budget. We seek the support of fellow delegates for fresh thinking for evolving a programme driven budget.

15. I urge the members of the IAEA, whether developed or developing, to fully meet their financial obligations. Pakistan has always paid its contribution, both to the regular budget and to the TCF, in full and on time. On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, I once again pledge our full share of the contribution to the Technical Cooperation Fund for the year 2001. We are gratified that the Member States, particularly the developed countries, have agreed to achieve enhanced rates of attainment for the Technical Cooperation Fund. We expect that this objective will be realized resulting in concrete acceleration in the Agency's T.C. activities.

16. Mr. President, the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics at Trieste must be congratulated for promoting the growth of scientific knowledge in the developing countries on a meagre budget. We would urge the Agency to continue its support to the ASICTP and revive its interest in the management of the Centre.

17. Mr. President, a landmark achievement during the previous General Conference had been an agreement on amendment to Article VI of the Statute, presenting a prospect for greater representativity in the Board of Governors. During negotiations, Pakistan played its modest role in the formulation of the agreed mechanism for this purpose. We have already deposited our instrument of ratification and hope that the other countries will also do so at the earliest.

18. Mr. President let me now say a few words about some of the other activities of Pakistan in the peaceful applications of nuclear technology. Apart from successful commissioning of Chashma Nuclear Power Plant, our engineers are determined to ensure safe operation of the aging Karachi Nuclear Power Plant.

19. In the agriculture sector, our research institutes have successfully evolved and released 35 varieties of cash crops through radiation mutations for different regions of the country. Curl Leaf Virus resistant, high yielding cotton strains developed in Pakistan have been highly successful. Biological control of salinity is another area where we are active. The Agency has acknowledged our research achievements in this field and PAEC is providing assistance to seven other developing countries through IAEA in this area.

20. Quality control is of prime importance in any industrial venture based on high technology. Due to the enforcement of ISO standards and globalization of world trade, quality control has assumed greater importance. PAEC is active in promoting quality consciousness in the local industry.

21. PAEC has established an Isotope Hydrology Laboratory which is involved in a number of investigations related to the identification of underground water resources, causes of water logging, estimation of seepage from unlined canals as well as from dams.

22. PAEC has been providing specialized health services in the field of Nuclear Medicine, Radiotherapy, Oncology and Radioimmunoassay. So far the Commission has set up 12 medical centres in all the four provinces. More than a quarter of a million patients are treated every year in these centres.

23. Mr. President, information technology and the computational power has been doubling every 18 months over the last thirty years, while there has been increased sophistication and flexibility in the new software. Internet and e-mail have made the world a global village. Pakistan is giving great importance to this area of technology and would like to cooperate in its application to nuclear technology with the IAEA. Pakistan has also been keeping abreast of

the developments in genetics and the Nuclear Institute for Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering in Pakistan has adequate experience and manpower for furthering our knowledge in this field.

24. Mr. President, I appreciate the efforts of the Director General for a continuing evaluation of the technical programme of the Agency. The Senior Expert Group assessed the overall programme of the Agency and gave useful recommendations. SAGTAC flourished for a brief period of four years during which it held a limited number of meetings regarding important issues of technical cooperation although this is an area which has utmost relevance for the developing countries. We welcome the formation of the Standing Advisory Groups on Nuclear Applications and Nuclear Energy, even though the recommendations of the previous Groups have not been fully implemented, nor the impact of the proposed strategies fully analyzed. Furthermore, the mandate of the new groups seems to overlap with that of the other groups.

25. Mr. President, here we would like to record our deep appreciation for the valuable advice and cooperation Pakistan received from various Departments of the Agency. We would like to thank the Director General, Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, the Deputy Directors General and the Agency Secretariat for the activities and the initiatives undertaken last year.

26. Mr. President, in the beginning of my statement, some of the most important triumphs and failures of the twentieth century were enumerated. Allow me to conclude by a wish list for the twenty-first. Let us hope and pray that poverty, hunger and disease will be eradicated from the surface of the earth. That the people all over the world will have equal access to the basic amenities of life. That there will be better understanding and tolerance among individuals, as well as amongst nations. That a just, equitable and non-discriminatory world

order will emerge. That the benefits of scientific and technological advancements will be shared by all and that the world will be enabled to benefit from the peaceful uses of the atom universally and without discrimination. Mr. President, let us all make this Agency a model technical organisation and let it contribute its share to the wish list.

God bless us all and thank you very much.