

**ZAMBIA'S STATEMENT  
TO THE FORTY-FOURTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY GENERAL CONFERENCE**

Mr. President

I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election to the presidency of the forty-fourth (44<sup>th</sup>) regular session of the general conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). I am confident that your leadership will be able to steer this important conference to a successful conclusion.

Mr. President

The Zambian delegation wishes to take this opportunity to warmly welcome the republics of Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and the Central African republic that have joined the growing membership of the international atomic energy agency.

It is our conviction that the new member states will benefit from the global experiences and developments, in the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology, for sustainable development.

My delegation continues to monitor with great interest the measures that the agency has been taking to strengthen the technical co-operation activities. These activities are very important, especially for developing countries, of which Zambia is a part.

We have also noted the initiatives that have been undertaken in the last three years to strengthen international co-operation in nuclear medicine radiation protection, and in safety measures being recommended, with regard to the disposal of radio-active waste. The issue of safety of radiation and radioactive waste is crucial to building public confidence in the use of nuclear science and technology. Otherwise, any deviation or misapplication of radiation sources and radioactive material could be extremely harmful to humanity and to life in general.

In Zambia, measures have been initiated towards addressing the illicit trafficking of nuclear materials and radioactive sources. We have done this through sensitisation workshops that have involved stakeholders such as the radiation protection board, the Zambia waste management association, the cargo clearing and forwarding companies, air and road transporters, police and customs authorities.

Mr. President,

We are happy with the focus of the agency's programme and budget for the year 2001. We believe that the budget will enable the continuation and strengthening of the IAEA technical co-operation programmes, which have so far proved to be of great benefit to its member states.

In this regard, I wish to report that Zambia continues to build on the achievements gained from the increased use of infrastructure which was set up, over the past few years, through IAEA's technical co-operation programme. Since the last general conference, we have recorded some notable developments, including production of sterilised tissue grafts sterilised by means of gamma-radiation.

This project is jointly executed by our national institute for scientific and industrial research, and the university teaching hospital in Lusaka.

Another project worthy of mention is the plant tissue culture facility, which has made a major contribution to the local supply of the potato seed, for the Zambia seed industry. During the upcoming agricultural season, this facility will supply sixteen thousand (16,000) potato minituber seeds. I also need to mention that Zambian research on the use of radiation-induced plant mutations has resulted in selection of two (2) improved bean varieties, with acceptable colour and size. As you may be aware sir, common beans are an important protein and food security crop in many parts of Zambia and other parts of Africa.

Similar research on pumpkins, managed through a research contract, has registered satisfactory progress at the university of Zambia.

Again, with the agency's support, capacity has been established in Zambia, to initiate measurements of industrial aerosols and radon, in work places in underground mining operations. This activity will ensure that workers in the mines are protected from hazardous levels of industrial aerosols and radon.

Mr. President

My delegation reiterates its support to the existing and future technical co-operation arrangements, within the framework of the Africa Regional Research Agreement on nuclear science and technology, related to development, research and training (or AFRA). My delegation is especially interested in the participation by Zambia in projects aimed at control of tsetse fly and malaria carrying mosquito, through sit. The successful control of these pests would make considerable and very significant contributions to our sustainable economic development. We believe that unless the benefits of such projects are regional in their impact, any approach that targets only a few countries within one and the same region cannot be sustained and may therefore be doomed to failure. In this vein, AFRA should be congratulated for bringing into operation the unique arrangements of having specialised teams in the fields of radiotherapy, dam leakage, nuclear medicine and other fields, using expertise and capacity available within the entire African region.

Since the last general conference, Zambia has received AFRA missions in instrumentation and conditioning of radium sources. Zambian professionals have attended twelve (12) AFRA meetings, AFRA-courses, and AFRA-sponsored meetings on the problems of research co-ordination.

It is our appeal to co-operating partners that they will continue to support AFRA with financial resources in order to help operationalize the projects that have been designed for the years 2001 and 2002.

Mr. President

In concluding my address, I wish, on behalf of my country, to pledge to contribute our full share of the assessed voluntary contributions, to the technical co-operation fund for the year 2001.

Thank you for the attention.