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STATEMENT BY NIGERIA

DELIVERED BY

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## **Mr. President**

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, it is my pleasure to extend my warm congratulations to you on your well-deserved election. This is indeed, in recognition of your diplomatic skill and your country's positive attitude to the programmes of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Japan has always been in the fore-front of the use of atom for peace. Let me assure you of the full cooperation and support of the Nigerian delegation throughout the session. We also extend our courtesies to other members of the General Committee, as well as to our host, the Federal Republic of Austria.

Let me also extend our appreciation to the Director General and the Secretariat for the various reports. Under the able leadership of Dr. El-Baradei, the IAEA continues to fulfill its role as a developing partner to the developing countries. Nigeria sees IAEA as a catalyst for the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful uses especially in the area of application of nuclear techniques and radioisotopes to increase food production, fight diseases, manage water resources and protect the environment. The Agency should not rest on its oars but rather continue to expand the vistas of opportunities, which nuclear technology portends.

## **Mr. President**

Africa continues to benefit from the Agency's Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) for the eradication of pests and parasites. We thank the Agency for the use of TC funds and extra-budgetary contributions to the Pan-African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign (PATTEC). Africa has begun to take effective ownership of

this programme. Apart from having a PATTEC Coordinating Office (PCO) within the its Commission in Addis Ababa, the African Union at the meeting of its Ministers of Agriculture in Maputo last July, directed the member states to allocate adequate resources to the eradication of tsetse flies and other livestock diseases. The member states were also asked to identify national and regional focal points in order to ensure the successful implementation of PATTEC.

It is gratifying to note that the Agency and the PCO have agreed on modalities for incorporating PATTEC activities within the agenda of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Nigeria, as one of the leading initiators of NEPAD has identified water and human health as one of her priority areas. It is in this regard, that the Agency is being invited to assist in the development of Isotope Hydrology Laboratory, which will enhance the exploration and sustainable management of water resources not only in Nigeria but also in the entire West African sub-region. The Agency's TC programme can also work with NEPAD in the area of diagnosis and treatment of Cancer.

Please permit me to recall that Nigeria, together with the WHO, spearheaded the Roll-Back Malaria Programme. This is why Nigeria is happy at the inauguration of the SIT research project on eradication of malaria-causing mosquitoes. We are very grateful to the Agency and the donor countries especially the United States, Germany and France among others. Mr. Chairman, Malaria is the leading cause of death in Africa. This project must succeed and succeed quickly. We appeal to all countries, especially the rich counties, for the sake of humanity, to generously fund this research project.

Nigeria wishes to reaffirm its commitment to AFRA as a means of delivering the Agency's assistance to the African region. Within the framework of AFRA, Nigeria hosted a Regional Workshop for sub-Saharan Africa on Electricity Generation Expansion Planning Using the WASP Package. The Workshop drew 34 participants from fourteen countries of the sub-region. The Workshop was successfully concluded and has undoubtedly added to the usefulness of the project RAF0016-Sustainable Energy Development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Mr. President**

The Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA) was established in May 2001 and immediately started receiving technical assistance from the Agency through the Model Project for Upgrading Radiation Protection Infrastructure. This has greatly facilitated the take-off of the Authority. The Nigerian Government appreciates the support and effectiveness of the Model Project and therefore, calls for its extension by another biennium.

Between January 2002 and February 2003, the NNRA carried out an audit inspection for radiation protection in Radiotherapy Practice in the country. The result of the exercise provided a benchmark not only for radiation safety but also for the efficacy of radiotherapy practice in the country. The result of the exercise was later presented at a national workshop organized by the NNRA, the Federal Ministry of Health and the Agency on Radiation Protection in Medical Exposure for Senior Managers in Hospitals in February 2003. The audit Report is now being used by Government to develop a Work Plan for sustainable development of radiotherapy practice in the country.

Similarly, the NNRA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Petroleum Resources and IAEA organized a National Workshop on Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and Radiation Protection in the Petroleum Industry in June 2003.

### **Mr. President**

In December 2002, it was reported that two Americium-Beryllium sources were lost/stolen in a nuclear well-logging company in the petroleum industry. The Agency was duly informed and it promptly sent an Emergency Response Team to Nigeria in February 2003. Nigeria appreciates the support of the Agency and its useful recommendations. We have received reports that the sources have been found, and this information has been confirmed by the Agency.

The NNRA has benefited tremendously from the Model Project in form of expert service, training and equipment. In June 2003, a Peer Review Mission visited the NNRA. The Mission is timely in that three major nuclear application facilities are about to be commissioned in the country. These are: (a) Miniature Neutron Source Reactor (MNSR) supplied under the Agency's TC project, (b) a Multipurpose Gamma Irradiation Facility (GIF) and (c) a Tandem Linear Accelerator. Nigeria exclusively developed the latter two projects. We are waiting for the reports and recommendations of the June 2003 Mission by the Agency.

Also, as part of its assistance, the Agency will hold a Regional Training Course on Radiation Protection and Management of Radioactive Waste in Oil and Gas Industry in Nigeria from 1-5 December 2003 for the African Region. No doubt, this training should further improve national

awareness in radiation protection and safety in the country.

**Mr. President**

The research reactor project at the Center for Research and Development (CERD) started with the signing of a contract in 1996 for the delivery and installation of a Miniature Neutron Source Reactor (MNSR) by the China Nuclear Energy Industry Corporation (CNEIC). The construction of the necessary infrastructure and the installation of the reactor equipment were completed by March 1999. However, the IAEA did not permit the shipment of the nuclear fuel at the time due to the absence of a sufficient nuclear regulatory framework in Nigeria.

In August 2002, an Assessment Mission from the Agency found that the NNRA was functioning normally and that the necessary regulatory framework was indeed in place. The Agency therefore, authorized the shipment of the fuel to Nigeria in October 2002. Since then, some problems, which seem difficult to explain, have delayed the actual shipment. We urge the Agency to put all necessary pressure on the suppliers to fulfill their contractual obligations and ship the fuel to Nigeria so that the research reactor can be commissioned before the end of this year.

**Mr. President**

At every opportunity, Nigeria has always expressed its appreciation to the excellent work and Technical Assistance provided by the Agency. However, we cannot but observe that at a time of economic difficulty for Nigeria, our assessed contribution to the Agency is

increasing, but surprisingly, the level of TC for Nigeria has been on the downward trend in real terms since 1998. We believe that the Agency must reverse this trend by increasing the level of its TC with Nigeria.

Nevertheless, in view of our commitment to and appreciation of the works of the Agency, Nigeria wishes to pledge to the TC Fund, a sum equal to its full assessment for the year 2004.

We have also observed the increase in the Agency's budget. This means that the Agency would be able to serve the international community better. It was difficult to get an agreement on the budget but my delegation wishes to thank all those who worked hard to ensure consensus on the budget. Nigeria will like to see an even distribution of funds to the three pillars of the Agency's activity, mindful of the fact that a greater number of the member states of the IAEA are developing countries.

### **Mr. President**

During the course of the year, the international community witnessed major conferences in the area of peaceful application of nuclear technology, among them are International Conference on the Safety of Radioactive Sources, International Conference on the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Materials and International Conference on National Infrastructures for Radiation Safety: Towards Effective and Sustainable Systems. We wish to thank the IAEA and all the co-sponsors of these conferences. It is the hope of my delegation that the findings and recommendations of these conferences would be translated into action.

## **Mr. President**

In concluding this statement, let me recall that a cardinal function of the IAEA is to prevent the diversion of atomic energy to uses other than for peaceful purposes and to help to maintain the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The main pillar of the non-proliferation regime is the NPT. The Nigeria delegation is of the firm belief that nuclear non-proliferation can only be meaningfully sustained if the nuclear weapon states would fulfill their legally-binding obligations especially under Article VI of the NPT, as well as the fulfillment of their commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, whether vertical or horizontal, which they voluntarily undertook at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The rest of the world is waiting for that.

I thank you, Mr. President.