

Amanullah Zewer;
Senior Counsellor
Deputy Head of Mission



Permanent Mission of
AFGHANISTAN
to the United Nations and
other *international* organizations
Vienna

lackierergasse 9, Top 9
1090 Vienna
Austria

Tel: +43-1-5247806
Mob: +43-676-9302363
Fax: +43-1-5247807
E: zeweri@embassYOfafghanistan.com



AFGHANISTAN

STATEMENT

H.E. DR. ZIA NEZAM

AMBASSADOR / RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE

PERMANENT MISSION OF AFGHANISTAN - VIENNA

AT THE 48th IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 20 -24, 2004

Mr. President

Director General

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me at the outset, Mr. President, congratulate you on your election as President of this important Conference. I am confident that under your guidance and able management, the Conference will succeed to accomplish its goals in the most satisfactory manner.

I would also like to thank the Director General and his staff in the Secretariat for preparing the excellent documentation and efficiently organizing the 48th Session, with its vast agenda to be tackled.

Our sincere appreciation goes also to the Austrian authorities for their kind assistance in making available all the necessary arrangements and requirements for holding the Conference in this beautiful city of Vienna.

My delegation is very pleased to see the republics of Chad, Mauritania and Togo as new members of the IAEA, and congratulates them for their newly achieved membership.

Mr. President,

The association of my country with the International Atomic Energy Agency goes back to early stage of the inception of IAEA as an international organization. Afghanistan was among the pioneer group of the Member States when it joined the IAEA in the year 1957.

During the early years of our membership, Afghanistan, through its National Commission of Atomic Energy, was actively involved in the initiation and implementation of joint programmes of technical cooperation.

Unfortunately, the years of civil conflicts and war, starting in the early 1980s, lead to interruption of mutual cooperation. A complete standstill in the interactions between IAEA and Afghanistan occurred in the dark era of Taliban, the most non-democratic and fundamentalist regime that ruled Afghanistan at the end of the last century.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan has endured hardship in the past two decades and paid the highest price in its fight against military occupation, terrorist take-over, foreign interferences and conflicts. The illicit cultivation and trafficking of opium poppy has enormously affected the agricultural sector and economic activities. As a result of all this, the basic institutions and physical infrastructure have been destroyed and the human resources vanished, mainly through brain drain and migration to foreign countries.

During the last three years, however, the interim and transitional governments of Afghanistan, supported by the international coalition and the vast majority of our friends around the globe, have been able to dismantle the backward regime of Taliban and reinstate its position in the political map of the world. Through the international conferences in Tokyo, Oslo, Brussels and finally in Berlin during the last two years, the international community confirmed their commitment to support Afghanistan in establishing peace, democracy and human rights in the country and, thereby, ensuring security in the region and the world.

While the country is still being threatened by hundreds of Taliban and other terrorists, infiltrating into Afghanistan to destabilize the democratization process and to endanger the lives of the people, Afghanistan is entering into a new era of political pluralism and economic reconstruction. The process for the first ever democratic election, supported by the international community including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), is moving ahead. The country's President is planned to be elected in less than three weeks. The Parliamentary election is planned for April 2005, with a view to enhancing the democratic institutions and thereby strengthening the basis for peace and security throughout the country.

Mr. President,

Against this background, I am honoured to speak today on behalf of my government, which is committed to respect its obligations and responsibilities vis-a-vis the international organizations and the international community.

It was in this spirit that my government agreed and signed a payment plan for settling the arrears of Afghanistan to the IAEA, which was occurred, as explained before, due to unfortunate circumstances, including war and civil conflicts. I am pleased to inform that the first installment was transferred early August this year to the IAEA accounts as appropriate.

My government, at the same time, has expressed hope that, through the signed agreement and payment of the first installment of its arrears and since Afghanistan is committed to respect its obligations on timely payment of its contributions in the years to come, the way is paved for restoring Afghanistan's voting right in various organs of the IAEA, including the General Conference. The government's request has been circulated under the document GC(48)/INF/12 for the attention of the General Conference. My delegation hopes that this request will find favourable consideration.

Mr. President,

My government recognizes that the technical cooperation of IAEA relating to the peaceful uses of atomic energy and its practical applications will substantially contribute to the reconstruction of our war-torn economy and help in improving the life of our people. The transfer of nuclear technology for increasing the agricultural productivity, improving the government's capability to ensure provision of health services and potable water to the urban and rural population, being urgently demanded all over the country, could help the

government to foster the achievement of a sustainable socio-economic development, throughout and after the post-conflict stage.

It is in this context that an Afghan delegation has been invited to visit Vienna at the end of October this year and meet with the concerned IAEA departments. The main objective of this mission would be to discuss the scope and modalities of IAEA's technical cooperation and to formulate a comprehensive technical assistance programme for consideration by concerned authorities.

Afghanistan is also following up, with great interest, the IAEA's training calendar, with a view to seeking opportunities for its capacity building programmes. A number of applications for training in various areas have already been submitted to IAEA for consideration.

While cognizant of the role of IAEA for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, my government is confident that enhancement of IAEA's technical cooperation will prepare the ground for Afghanistan to strengthen peace and prosperity in the country and thereby ensure security in the region.

Thank you Mr. President