

Statement of Ethiopia

by

**H.E. Mr. Mulugeta Amha, Commissioner of the
Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission**

to the

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General Conference of the IAEA**

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Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and my Delegation, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you, the president, upon your unanimous election to the presidency of the 49th Regular Session of the General Conference of the IAEA. We are more than confident that the conference will conclude successfully under your competent leadership. I would also like to congratulate all those elected to the Bureau to steer the Conference to a fruitful completion.

Mr. President,

The Ethiopian delegation wishes to take this opportunity to warmly welcome the State of **Belize** to the family of the International Atomic Energy Agency member states. My sincere congratulations also go to Dr. Mohammed El Baradei upon his reappointment as the Director General of the IAEA for the third four-year term of office by consensus. My Government pays tribute to his competent leadership and trustworthiness

demonstrated in his last two terms of office, which were of considerable challenges. I would also like to assure the Director General that my country will fully cooperate and support his efforts towards achieving the objectives of the Agency to Promote and transfer nuclear technologies for safe and peaceful applications.

Mr. President,

My country has been engaged in a number of national and regional projects that apply nuclear techniques to address various socio-economic development problems in the areas of Agriculture (crop breeding, animal productivity and health); human health (nuclear medicine, radiotherapy, drug resistance in TB & Malaria and HIV/AIDS); water resources management, Non-destructive Testing, energy planning, nuclear Instrumentation and radiation protection. It is a pleasure for me to mention that it is not that the number of active national projects increased from three in 2003/2004 to five in 2005/2006, but also the content and depth of the projects has shown remarkable transformation. As a rule, in the technical cooperation with the Agency, my country pursued a focussed approach on areas of high relevance for the socioeconomic development objectives. Thanks to the relentless efforts of the IAEA staff who worked hard to this positive development in the technical cooperation between my

country and the Agency, we are confident to score rewarding results in the few collaborative areas selected pragmatically.

Mr. President,

I would like to say few words regarding the Ethio-IAEA technical cooperation project that is aimed at eradicating tsetse fly from the Southern Rift Valley of Ethiopia using an area wide integrated pest management approach through wide community participation and the technical support of the Agency. This project was initiated in 1997 with serious commitments from both the Ethiopian Government and the IAEA. The two major components of the project include establishment of a centrally operated sterile insect production plant and actual field operation of fly population control followed by ultimate eradication. Although the commitment from both sides has been enormous, due to the fact that the project is a pilot and learning project, the implementation challenges have always been daunting. The problems we have faced have in fact increased our resolution to make the project a reality. In this connection, I would like to mention that the Ethiopian Government has concluded a loan and grant agreement of over 14 million USD with the African Development Bank for the next six years. I believe this measure shows that the

technical cooperation between my country and the Agency is addressing a problem that is accorded the highest priority.

Mr. President,

The technical co-operation activities my country has with the Agency are also being implemented in the areas of human health and water resources management. We have managed to build a modest infrastructure for nuclear medicine and radiotherapy services through our collaboration with the Agency. However, the fact that we have only one reconditioned gamma camera that has served us for nearly twenty years and an old Co-60 machine for more than 71 million population reveals that we have yet a long way to go.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

You all may be aware of the fact that my country is identified as the water tower of Northeastern Africa. It is paradoxical, however, that the country is suffering from recurrent drought and famine caused mainly by water scarcity. The lowlands that constitute a substantial part of the country to a large extent depend on groundwater resources for their domestic and even

agricultural water supply. The fact that the groundwater resource potential has not been well studied and documented has challenged the economic and sustainable exploitation of the groundwater resource though in some dry areas it is the only viable option for meeting the growing demand of potable water. Our technical cooperation with the Agency to apply isotope techniques in managing groundwater resources has enabled to build basic capacities and to generate useful isotopic data. I would like to mention here the establishment of an isotope hydrology laboratory at the Addis Ababa University, establishment of a national groundwater database with standardized data collection forms and field methods as well as training of personnel as the major success stories. The support from the Agency in the form of equipment, experts, fellowships and data analyses is highly appreciated by the Ethiopian Government.

Mr. President,

We are also beneficiaries of the Regional Projects supported by the Agency. The following are the areas where useful data are being generated and encouraging results are being registered:

- Mutation breeding of indigenous crops,
- Improvement of milk and meat production,

- Equitable use of common Nile basin water,
- Energy planning
- Non-destructive-testing
- Molecular detection of drug resistance in malaria and TB,
- Study of nutritional interventions on HIV/AIDS patients.

The activities being carried out under the various projects addressing these areas resulted not only in acquisition of the appropriate techniques, but also have initiated the relevant institutions to commit themselves to address the problems on the ground.

Mr. President,

At this Juncture, I would like to underline the role being played by the regional initiative AFRA in streamlining and coordinating activities on various applications of nuclear techniques from inception of projects to ensuring sustainability of the results. I believe that the efforts being made by AFRA to strengthen TC-DC between member states, to develop national and regional strategies for human resources development in nuclear science and technology, and integration of nuclear related activities with the flagship programs of NEPAD deserve to be noted and supported by the member states. My country is convinced that such

initiatives play a vital role in mobilizing resources and expertise from within the region to solve African problems.

Mr. President,

I would like to mention that Ethiopia was one of the member states whose country co-operation programmes have been evaluated by the Office of the Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of the Agency during the first half of 2005. We are very pleased to learn that the preliminary findings of the evaluation team indicate that the overall IAEA country programme in Ethiopia was respectful of and responsive to a number of needs and priorities of the Government. The evaluation confirmed that a major part of the Agency assistance targeted areas and sectors with high socio-economic impact and critical importance for further economic development, stability and poverty reduction and has therefore been in line with the most important national strategies and plans of actions.

As we have been engaged in transferring relevant nuclear technologies for peaceful applications, we are now on the process of consolidating the capacities built through our cooperation with the Agency. We are strongly convinced that the only way to ensure sustainable application of the acquired technologies is ensuring continuous supply of trained scientists

and technicians. Building national capability to train the required manpower locally can best achieve this objective. The Ethiopian Government is currently undertaking a massive vertical and horizontal expansion of higher education throughout the nation. We are therefore trying to seize this opportunity to include training in nuclear applications both at undergraduate and graduate levels. Courses in isotope hydrology, nuclear medicine, and radio-pharmacy are being offered at various faculties of the Addis Ababa University. Preparations are also being finalized to open new short-term and postgraduate training programs in these areas including radiation protection and waste management. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Agency for approving a national project for human resources development and nuclear technology support under the 2005/2006 technical cooperation program.

Mr. President,

As one of the founding members of the Agency, my country is cognizant of its international responsibilities for global and regional security in control of radioactive and other nuclear materials in addition to promoting peaceful nuclear applications. The Government has therefore submitted official letter to the IAEA expressing its commitment to the code of conduct on safety and security of radioactive sources. I would also like to mention that

the Government has already allocated the required budget for the design and construction of a central waste management facility that is currently lacking. Moreover, I am also pleased to inform that my country is currently in the process of ratifying the comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT) based on its long-standing commitment for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and ultimately for nuclear threat free world.

Finally, my Delegation wishes to thank once again all the staff members of the Agency for their dedication to strengthen technical cooperation activities between the Agency and Ethiopia. I would also reaffirm my Government's commitment to fully support the activities of the Agency to promote safe and peaceful applications of nuclear technologies. In this regard, I pledge our full share to the Technical Cooperation Fund. My country, inspite of its financial difficulties, has recently continued to pay its annual dues to the TCF in recognition of the value of the Agency's Technical Cooperation to our development aspirations.

Thank you very much for your attention.