



BANGLADESH

Statement by
H.E. Mr. TAPAN CHOWDHURY,
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at the 51st Session of General Conference of IAEA
Vienna, 17 September 2007

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Government of Bangladesh and my Delegation, may I extend our heartiest congratulations on your being elected as the President of the present session of General Conference of the IAEA. I also take this opportunity to congratulate all other elected officials. I would like to assure you of our full support and cooperation in effectively conducting the business of this Conference.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to His Excellency Mohammad El-Baradei, Director General of IAEA, who has been playing a significant role in helping its Member States to establish a focused synergy between nuclear techniques and their respective national development endeavors.

I also take this opportunity to extend our heartiest congratulations to the new members of IAEA: Bahrain, Burundi, Republic of Congo, Nepal and Republic of Cape Verde. We are confident that the new Members of IAEA family will contribute significantly in the coming days in achieving our target of atom for peace.

The present anniversary Session of the General Conference of the IAEA bears important historical significance and we can safely conclude that this august organization has successfully resolved many global crises and through its evolutionary process it will bring peace and prosperity for mankind. My delegation recalls the enormous strides that have been taken in other fields of nuclear science and technology in the last 50 years. Great improvements have been made in the use of radioisotopes and radiation-emitting machines in medical diagnostics and cancer treatment, in basic scientific research, and in industry and agriculture. We can expect this growth to continue more rapidly in the coming years.

**Mr. President, Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen**

In this new millennium, the poorest countries in the globe are facing hunger and chronic poverty, killer diseases, lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation, lack of access to modern energy and combating under-nutrition. Moreover, like Bangladesh, many other developing countries in Asia and Africa have the most vulnerable economies, characterized by extremely high population density, low resource base and high incidence of natural disasters that have adverse implications for long-term savings, investment and economic growth of these countries.

This millennium marks a pivotal moment to fight extreme poverty and other dimensions of poverty. Presently, Bangladesh draws attention to the new challenges that the nation has to confront in the context of globalization as well as new problems that arise from the present phase of domestic development. The present strategy of the Government embraces a comprehensive approach that highlights poverty reduction and social development. Reliable supply of energy and electricity is a crucial factor for overall socioeconomic developments and improving the basic qualities of life.

Mr. President,

The ongoing global energy crisis is already having a telling effect on the development endeavors of developed and developing nations, especially in countries that have scarcity of indigenous energy resources and are rapidly depleting their resources.

The developing nations representing a vast majority of global population have very low energy consumption on per capita basis. Even a modest growth in this respect will subject the dwindling global reserves of fossil fuels to unprecedented pressure. This will most certainly impact both availability and price. Access to fuel will consequently become far more difficult. Our country has limited indigenous energy resources and consumption of energy and electricity in per capita term is one of the lowest in the world. Bangladesh urgently needs to reduce demands on its indigenous fossil fuel and nuclear power can be a practical solution for meeting her incremental energy demand. Like Bangladesh, the implementation of nuclear power programme in many other developing countries continues to be an enigma. The "clean" nuclear power can be a great boom and this matured technology vastly diminishes the threat to the environment. This is thus the response to our needs for energy security.

We call upon the IAEA to play a more proactive role in helping developing countries in introducing nuclear power in their respective generation-mix.

Mr. President,

The human resource development (HRD) is essential for successful nuclear R & D and its non-power as well as power sectors. Qualified human resources are

essential for the safety, security, reliability, and successful implementation of a nuclear power project. Currently a core team of dedicated scientists, engineers and technical staff are being maintained at Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission. A further systematic expansion of the human resource is an important prerequisite to the revitalization of the nuclear power plant program. Innovative approach for HRD is required due to small GDP and budget constraints.

Another major challenge to the building of NPPs in the developing countries, including LDCs, is financing. The Agency may also think to find out a solution to the high capital 'intensity' of NPP. A project for the building of capital-intensive NPPs requires the use of Innovative Financing Schemes for Bangladesh. Financing through foreign-aid programs or grants or soft loans from World Bank may be an option. Recently, the World Bank, UNDP and many other international organizations have been spending significant amount of money in many developing and least developed countries to set up Sustainable Energy Development Program for promotion of the energy sector through a project entitled, "Sustainable Environment Management Project". Since nuclear is a clean energy, so we would like to propose the IAEA to take meaningful steps in convincing these bodies to include nuclear in the Sustainable Environment Management Project. We also expect that the IAEA activity on "Innovative Financing Options" will play a significant role in expanding NPP in the developing countries. The other innovative financing options such as Build-Own-Operate, Build-Operate-Transfer and partial financing by supplier through supplier's credit is also a suitable financial methodology in implementing nuclear power project in Bangladesh. We request the Agency to make a greater effort necessary to minimize all barriers in implementing NPP in developing countries.

The Treaties, Convention and various Protocols implemented by the Agency ensure the peaceful application of the atomic energy to bring qualitative changes in human life that would secure the world for our future generations.

Mr. President,

One of the world's poorest region is fighting against cancer, a killer disease. The scarcity of facilities and trained personnel are causing sufferings to the cancer patients. The IAEA can make a significant contribution in combating cancer in developing countries. Bangladesh gladly recognize the Agency's Technical Cooperation in setting up nuclear medicine and low-dose rate therapy system for diagnosis and cancer treatment, but like many other developing countries, Bangladesh has a lack of access to radiotherapy and nuclear medicine both for diagnosis and treatment.

A PET-CT facility is being established by the Government of Bangladesh (GOB), for that reflects the commitment of the government to fight cancer. In this regard, Bangladesh seeks the Agency's technical assistance in responding to the need for safe, effective, and sustained implementation of the country's radiotherapy facilities.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh is now facing acute problems caused by contamination of ground water with arsenic. This new problem is making it difficult for us to achieve one of the important tasks to ensure access to clean drinking water. We are using isotope hydrology techniques in assessing and characterizing underground water aquifers. This technology significantly contributed to meet the goal of sustainable supply of clean water in both urban and rural locations. I must acknowledge the commendable support of IAEA in this effort.

This rising global population and an adverse climate are also likely to compound the growing shortages of adequate drinking water in most regions; the nuclear technology has potential to address this issue.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh is fully committed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Its nuclear energy program is very transparent. Bangladesh has signed all the international treaties, agreements and protocol prevailing in the nuclear non-proliferation and verification regime such as, NPT, Safeguards Agreements, Additional Protocol, CTBT, Safety Convention, Convention on Early Notification, etc.

Bangladesh Government acceded to the philosophy and the principles of the nuclear safety oriented culture, to protect the member of the public and the environment from radiation exposure. We have intensified activities in nuclear safety and radiation control since the enactment of the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Act in 1993. The Nuclear Safety and Radiation Control Rules have been notified in 1997. BAEC has been performing its nuclear regulatory activities in accordance with Nuclear Safety Policy and the "Nuclear Safety Charter (the Philosophy of a Nuclear Safety Culture)". For successful implementation and expansion of nuclear power in Bangladesh, the GOB is working to establish an effective independent regulatory body and the country needs assistance in a wider area from the Agency in this regard.

Mr. President,

We would like to record our sincere appreciation for the assistance being provided continuously by the IAEA in its various R & D programs on peaceful uses of atomic energy. Human resource development and project oriented technical assistance need special reference in this context. In keeping with our overall objectives, we are making endeavours to use the results of identified and successful R & D programs in different sectors of economy as well as in commercial scales. We hope that such support from IAEA would continue to be given in the future and indeed grow stronger and more varied with the passage of time.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh is actively involved in various projects of RCA including the identified collaborative research programs. RCA programs offer opportunities to share

experience common to a region, thereby making such programs very effective. As such we strongly feel that RCA activities should not only continue, but their activities should be expanded. Programs in application of nuclear techniques in industrial, medical, agriculture and other sectors of economy are expected to enhance capabilities of the RCA countries in facing the challenges of this century. The scope of the project on energy and nuclear power should also be enhanced enabling these countries to successfully meet the challenges of their respective energy development programs.

Mr. President,

We all share a common understanding that peaceful use of atom is the most important issue for every one living in the 21st century. Killer diseases like Cancer, HIV, Energy and Food Security, global warming from green house gases are problems we must overcome unitedly to achieve sustainable development and to protect this planet and this civilization from the imminent danger of elimination.

I, on behalf my Delegation, wish the success of the present Session of the General Conference of the IAEA and hope that its outcome would greatly facilitate in shaping the future program of the Agency in such a way that the Member States may be benefited by peaceful uses of atomic energy.

Based on the successes and experiences of first 50 years, a vision for the second fifty years should be formulated, to help in bringing the parity between rich and poor, developed and developing nations, North and South, as well as West and East.

I thank you for your kind attention.