

Statement

By

Dr. Zerihun Kebede
Director General
Ethiopian Science and Technology Agency

At the

52nd Regular Session of the General Conference of the IAEA
29 September – 4 October 2008

3 October 2008

Vienna

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,**

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, Mr. President, for your unanimous election to preside over the 52nd Regular session of the General Conference of the Agency. My delegation is confident that with your competent leadership and vast experience the conference would enable to conclude the heavy task successfully. I wish to take this opportunity to assure you that my delegation is ready to co-operate with your Bureau to make this regular session fruitful. My Felicitations also go to the members of the Bureau.

Mr. President,

The Ethiopian delegation warmly welcomes the Sultanate of Oman, the Independent State of Papua New Guinea and the Kingdom of Lesotho, to the family of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It gives me pleasure to congratulate the Director General Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei and his team, for their impartial and competent work to make our world a safe planet to live in.

Mr. President,

I have the honour to inform you that my country finalized last year preparation of its second Country Programme Framework for the period 2007-2012 with a strong technical support from the IAEA. This document identifies the Government's priority areas in which nuclear science and technology can make significant contributions. My government is also reviewing the institutional framework as part of the effort to transform public organizations throughout the country. The opportunity will be seized to create the required institutional capacity to strengthen our technical cooperation with the Agency and to adequately fulfill our international obligations to ensure peaceful, safe and secured application of nuclear energy. The transformation process is, therefore, envisaged to strengthen the institutional framework for the state system of accounting for and control of nuclear materials, promotion of peaceful application of nuclear energy and regulatory services.

Mr. President,

Ethiopia is engaged in a number of national and regional technical cooperation projects in the areas of animal health and productivity, human health, water resources management, non-destructive testing, energy planning, nuclear instrumentation and radiation protection. Our biggest

and highest priority technical cooperation project, however, remains to be the Southern Tsetse Eradication Project. This project is aimed at eradicating tsetse fly from 25,000 Km² land in the Southern Rift Valley of Ethiopia by means of Sterile Insect Technique (SIT). The major components of the project includes suppression of the existing fly population, establishment of a centrally operated sterile insect production plant and actual field operation of fly population control and eradication using the SIT technology.

Mr. President,

I would like to inform the General Conference that the Tsetse Eradication Model project is moving towards achieving its objectives gradually, and it has now reached at a decisive stage for which cooperation and assistance of all our partners is more crucial than ever. The most urgent need for the project is acquisition of additional equipment and materials required for the intensification of tsetse population suppression, which is an essential step to be taken before SIT can be used. Moreover, as it is approaching the operational phase, the project requires high technology and, skilled and well experienced manpower that has to be made available through the cooperation with the IAEA.

On its part, the Ethiopian Government is taking important steps required at this stage. They include the establishment of an autonomous and more flexible project management structure and purchase of an industrial irradiator for the Tsetse rearing and sterilization center. My Government has already planned to provide local short and long term training courses for professional and technical staff to upgrade their knowledge & skill with special emphasis on Tsetse fly. I, therefore, call upon all our development partners to intensify their support towards the successful implementation of this model project since its outcomes will have significant implication to the remaining 36 African nations suffering from the effects of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis problems.

My delegation will not let this opportunity pass by without extending its sincere appreciation to the IAEA and the Governments of the USA, China and Japan as well as the OPEC Fund for International Development and the African Development Bank for their generous technical and financial assistance to the Project.

Mr. President,

The technical co-operation of my country with the Agency in the areas of human health and water resource management is also progressing well. I would, however, like to underline that

we have still a single radiotherapy center with a single cobalt machine to serve more than 75 million people. Some preliminary data indicate that only about 400 cancer patients are annually treated by radiotherapy despite an estimated 115,000 new cancer cases per annum. This sad state of affair needs immediate action and my government is committed to change this picture as a matter of priority in collaboration with the IAEA and other development partners.

Ethiopia is also participating in the regional projects supported by the Agency. In connection to the regional cooperation programs, I would like to commend the initiative taken by the regional AFRA framework to review the relevance, achievements and effectiveness of its policies, strategies and procedures of operation. The AFRA policy review seminar that was hosted by the government of Egypt in November 2007 has come out with outputs that would lead to strong ownership of the program by its member States. Nevertheless, my delegation still believes that the support from the IAEA needs to be continued.

Mr. President,

We have completed formulation of Technical Cooperation Projects for the 2009-2011 period through the interactive internet based process of Project Cycle Management

Framework (PCMF). We are convinced that PCMF is an important tool that enables Member States to work more closely and effectively with the IAEA in the design, formulation, approval and implementation of technical cooperation projects. The assistance that has been provided by the program management and technical officers of the Agency throughout the entire process indeed deserves great appreciation. We also believe that short term training courses on the PCMF by the Agency could enable our counterparts and management officers to make the maximum use of the tool.

Mr. President,

I am pleased to inform the General Conference that Ethiopia has ratified the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty) in conformity with its long-standing commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Unfortunately, it has not yet entered into force for the lack of required number of ratifications. I, therefore, would like to call upon fellow African countries to ratify the pelindeba Treaty as soon as possible.

Mr. President,

My delegation is well aware of the growing expectations from the IAEA by its member States primarily due to the ever

increasing opportunities and challenges in using nuclear energy. It is my fervent belief that adequate and predictable resources for the programmes of the Agency must be made available. We are also of the view that a balance needs to be maintained in resources allocated to its safeguards, nuclear safety as well as technical cooperation activities. My delegation also feels the urgency of upgrading the Agency's laboratory and computation facilities and to enhance its management information system.

Mr. President,

I would like to conclude my statement by emphasizing that the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Technique in Food and Agriculture has been instrumental in creating synergy between the two organizations. My delegation joins the requests of several member States to FAO to retain and reinforce the current partnership and cooperation between the two organizations.

Finally, my delegation wishes to thank all officials and staff members of the IAEA for their dedication and hard work to make the cooperation between the Agency and Ethiopia more relevant, efficient and effective. I also reaffirm my Government's commitment to fully cooperate with the Agency in its activities to promote peaceful and safe applications of nuclear energy.

Thank you Mr. President.