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# BANGLADESH

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Statement by

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Secretary

Ministry of Science and Information & Communication Technology of Bangladesh  
at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of General Conference of IAEA  
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**Madam President,**

On behalf of my delegation, may I extend our heartiest congratulations on your being elected as the President of the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Conference of the IAEA. I would like to assure you of our full support and cooperation in effectively conducting the business of this Conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the IAEA Director General His Excellency Mohamed ElBaradei for his outstanding support and contributions to the Member States in establishing a focused synergy between their respective national development policies and the overall objectives of the organization..

We would like to congratulate Ambassador Yukiya Amano on his election as the IAEA's next Director General. We wish him every success in his new assignment. We are confident that under his leadership IAEA will continue to make important contributions to our national development efforts to attain food security and energy security as well as the nuclear non-proliferation objectives that we subscribe to.

We also welcome the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Rwanda as the newest members of IAEA. We look forward to working with them to promote in particular the interest of the Least Developed Countries in the context of the IAEA.

**Madam President, Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen**

We are meeting here in the backdrop of the worst financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. This crisis has been aggravated by the global food and fuel crisis last year and the growing adverse impact of climate change. Like Bangladesh, many developing countries in Asia and Africa have been the most exposed to the shocks of these crises for no fault of their own. The specific vulnerabilities of these countries underline the need for enhancing their capacity, both nationally and regionally, to use relevant technologies to find sustainable solutions to the challenges facing them.

**Madam President,**

Bangladesh is a developing country. Since its inception, Bangladesh is striving hard to come out of the vicious cycle of poverty. We are making sustained efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals through various innovative and home-grown development initiatives. The present government has declared the Vision 2021 to build a "Digital Bangladesh" with the aim of transforming Bangladesh into a modern, technologically advanced and prosperous country by 2021, the 50th anniversary of our independence. In order to reach our goals of poverty alleviation and sustainable development, we need to build a strong science and technology base underpinned by adequate and affordable supply of energy and electricity. The efficient and increased use of science and technology and an enhanced role of nuclear energy in various development initiatives have been identified as key instruments for realizing the Vision 2021.

**Madam President,**

Bangladesh has limited indigenous energy resources. Our consumption of energy and electricity in per capita terms is one of the lowest in the world. Presently, energy crisis is a national issue. The present government has outlined specific targets and strategies for increasing power generation. As in many developing countries, the peaceful use of nuclear energy is being seriously considered as part of the overall energy supply mix. The implementation of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project features as one of the key commitments of the Government.

The Government of Bangladesh requested the IAEA to provide technical support for implementing the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project. Accordingly, a Self-Evaluation Report on the *Status of National Infrastructure for Implementation of ROOPUR Nuclear Power Plant Project* dealing with the 19 items of NG-T-3.2 focusing on Milestone -1 and Milestone – 2 was prepared for consideration of the Agency. The Agency conducted a mission during 17 - 20 November 2008 to review the existing nuclear infrastructure based on the results of the integrated infrastructure evaluation conducted by Bangladesh and made recommendations for Bangladesh based on the IAEA document: NG-T-3.2. We would like to express our appreciation for approving a Technical Co-operation (TC) Project titled "Establishing Nuclear Power" during the 2009 – 2011 cycle and the assistance provided through the project.

The availability of trained professionals based on systematic expansion of human resource is a key parameter for the planning and implementation of nuclear power programme. Since there is limited scope for training for pre-implementation phase activities through a TC project; the IAEA can provide such training by organizing regular regional training courses.

Financing remains a critical challenge for developing countries, especially LDCs, in setting up nuclear power plants. We would like to urge the IAEA to meaningfully engage with the international financial institutions to assist newcomers to the nuclear energy club to build their civilian nuclear power facilities.. We would like to urge the Agency to make greater efforts to eliminate barriers in setting up nuclear power plants in developing countries.

**Madam President,**

The growing threat of non-communicable diseases like cancer, especially in the developing world, is becoming a serious public health concern. Presently, Bangladesh is actively considering strengthening nuclear medicine and diagnostic techniques for cancer treatment, with the short-term objective to establish a cyclotron and positron emission tomography centre. In this regard, Bangladesh seeks the Agency's technical cooperation.

We are pleased to note that the IAEA has started projects in several countries to strengthen nuclear medicine capabilities to detect complications related to diabetes. In 2007, the International Diabetes Federation estimated that 3.8 million or 4.8% of the population of Bangladesh would suffer from diabetes. By 2025, that number is expected to grow to 7.4 million or 6.1% of the population. This explosion in diabetes prevalence would place Bangladesh among the top ten countries in terms of the number of people living with diabetes in 2025. By that time, 80% of all diabetes cases would be found in low-and-middle income countries. More attention should be devoted to this problem before these countries get overwhelmed by the diabetes epidemic. Bangladesh is considering strengthening capabilities in nuclear medicine to detect and prevent complications related to diabetes, and seeks the assistance of the Agency.

**Madam President,**

The recent increase in global food prices is putting enormous pressure on poor people's incomes around the world. The rising global population and the adverse impacts of climate change are also likely to compound the growing shortages of food in most regions.

Bangladesh is able to grow about 90% of its needs for rice in a typical year, making the country the world's 4th largest importer of the grain. The present government is pursuing food security in Bangladesh as one of its key development priorities. The use of nuclear technology on a wider scale will enhance agricultural production as well as the quality and variety of foods. The Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission is working on plant breeding and genetics programmes using nuclear technology to produce better varieties

of food and industrial crops. We look forward to further engaging with the IAEA to achieve our objectives.

We appreciate the IAEA's specialized work in using nuclear techniques for water resources management. We are benefiting from the IAEA's technical cooperation in applying isotope techniques in improving our freshwater and coastal water management. Our Government is committed to ensure safe drinking water for all by 2011. We look forward to the IAEA's continued cooperation to achieve and sustain our goal.

**Madam President,**

Bangladesh firmly adheres to the principles of nuclear safety to protect our people and 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. A draft Nuclear Law has been prepared to ensure the successful application of nuclear technologies and facilitate the implementation of the country's nuclear power programme. It has been decided that the draft law would be sent to the IAEA for necessary review before submission for final approval by the Government. The Government is also working on establishing an effective and independent nuclear regulatory body, and looks forward to using the IAEA's expertise and assistance in this regard.

Bangladesh is fully committed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Our nuclear energy program is very transparent. We have signed (all) the international treaties, agreements and protocols prevailing in the nuclear non-proliferation and verification regime such as, NPT, Safeguards Agreements, Additional Protocol, CTBT, Safety Convention, Convention on Early Notification, etc. The present government is in the process of endorsing the following international instruments: (1) The Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and (2) The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and of the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

**Madam President,**

We would like to put on record our appreciation for the IAEA's assistance through its various R&D programmes on peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Human resource development and project-based technical assistance deserve special mention in this context. In keeping with our overall development objectives, we are making efforts to use the results of successful R&D programmes in different sectors of the economy as well as in commercial ventures. We hope that the IAEA's support in strengthening our R&D capacity will continue to grow stronger and more diversified with the passage of time.

**Madam President,**

Bangladesh is actively involved in various projects of RCA, including the collaborative research programmes. RCA programs offer opportunities to share experiences common to a region, thereby making such programmes highly effective. We, therefore, strongly recommend that the breadth and scope of RCA activities be further expanded. Nuclear technology application programmes in industrial, medical, agriculture and other sectors of the economy are expected to enhance capabilities of the RCA countries in facing the challenges of this century.

**Madam President,**

I, on behalf of my delegation, wish the 53rd Session of the IAEA General Conference all success and hope that its outcome would help shape the future programme of the Agency for the benefit of Member States in peaceful uses of atomic energy. We hope that the Agency would continue to do its utmost in the service of humanity within its specific role and mandate.

I thank you for your kind attention.

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