

**STATEMENT OF GHANA BY HON. MS. SHERRY AYITTEY**  
**MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,**  
**OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA**  
**AT THE 53<sup>RD</sup> REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE IAEA**  
**VIENNA, AUSTRIA, 14<sup>TH</sup> - 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009**

Mr. President,  
Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, I wish to extend to you and to the General Conference, congratulations from H.E. Prof. John Evans Atta Mills, President of the Republic of Ghana, who conveys his best wishes for a successful conference. On behalf of the Ghana delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Regular Session of the General Conference and join earlier speakers in congratulating the other members of the Bureau on their election. My delegation would like to assure you and the Secretariat of its support and cooperation and is confident that under your leadership, the Conference will have fruitful deliberations.

Mr. President,

Ghana wishes to reaffirm the continued importance and relevance of the IAEA to our world today, for it is the only global agency committed to ensuring the requisite level of safety and security necessary to ensure that nuclear technology and its applications continue to be used for peaceful purposes for the benefit of mankind.

Mr. President,

My delegation welcomes the admission of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Rwanda as the latest members of the Agency, and we look forward to their contribution to the work of the Agency in ensuring the peaceful and safe utilization of atomic energy and nuclear technology.

Mr. President,

The 2008 Annual Report before us, provides highlights of the Agency's successes and challenges in the past year as well as a myriad of activities aimed at supporting Member States to maximize the utilisation of nuclear science and technology whilst ensuring safety and security for the peaceful purposes that are central to the economic and social development of our countries. Not only has the Agency focused in its technical remit of nuclear and related matters; it has also demonstrated a clear commitment to the promotion of international cooperation in its efforts to help maintain the level of global nuclear safety we need.

These activities have not been limited to the nuclear powers, but have covered all Member States both as individual nations and as members of the various regions of the world. This is commendable. Within the developing world, in particular, Ghana wishes to state the great importance it attaches to the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme and appreciates the Agency's role in partnering with the Member States of Africa to use nuclear science and technology to address their socio-economic needs in

the area of human health, nutrition, agriculture, energy, industry and the environment. We applaud the collaboration between the IAEA and AFRA - the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology, in the development and implementation of regional AFRA projects, and reiterate our support for AFRA's efforts to maximize the use of the available infrastructure and expertise in Africa, in the field of nuclear science and technology, for the efforts towards the achievement of regional self-sufficiency, and the development of strategies for concrete problem solving and thematic planning. To strengthen these efforts, we invite Member States with nuclear educational institutions to support the region's effort to establish an African Education Network in Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA-NEST) to promote, manage and preserve nuclear knowledge for the sustainability of nuclear technology in Africa.

Mr. President,

On the national front, my delegation is pleased to inform you that the research scientists of the four Institutions and five Centres under the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission, and other national research institutions and Universities are engaged in various research activities using nuclear and biotechnological techniques which are well aligned to the Country Programme Framework. Our nuclear capabilities are not only dedicated to research, education and training, but also to the promotion of commercialization aimed at achieving sustainability in our research activities. We believe that continued investment in research and development and the effective harnessing of technology in agriculture, health and infrastructural development are vital if the

Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved. It is our main objective, therefore, to ensure that nuclear and its related techniques continue to play a critical role in crop improvement, pest management, food preservation, medical sterilization, radiotherapy, nuclear medicine trouble-shooting and in the petrochemical and mining industries.

Mr. President,

With respect to human health, we are happy to note the considerable work being done by the Agency, specifically, in the treatment of cancer. Given the complex nature of the disease, early detection is crucial for effective treatment. However, such detection is almost impossible without the existence of the requisite equipment and trained personnel. For this reason, we are pleased with the Agency's efforts to address challenges in these areas, particularly, through the mobilization of resources for the establishment of the infrastructure necessary for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer. We are also happy to state that Ghana has been a beneficiary of such assistance. Indeed with the support of the Agency and specifically through the cooperation of the Director-General and the staff of the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT), Ghana was able to secure a loan of US\$13.5m from the OPEC Fund and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, for the upgrading and expansion of two radiotherapy Centres in Accra and Kumasi. There are plans to establish a third Centre in Tamale, to serve the northern part of Ghana and the neighbouring West African countries which do not have radio-therapy facilities. Our

profound gratitude go to Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, the Director-General and the staff of the IAEA's PACT Office for all their efforts.

Mr. President,

Still, with regard to the importance of appropriate personnel in the nuclear field, my delegation is of the view that the availability of talented and qualified human resource will ultimately ensure sustainability and growth in the use of both non-power and power applications of nuclear science and technology in Ghana and Africa. In line with this thinking, Ghana has sought to strengthen the relevant institutions in the country and I am pleased to inform you that the Graduate School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences of the University of Ghana, established in cooperation with the IAEA in 2006, was recently audited and favourably recommended for approval and recognition as an AFRA Regional Designated Centre for Professional and Higher Education.

Ghana remains grateful to the Agency for its assistance in the establishment of this postgraduate nuclear educational institution, for providing funds for some students to pursue PhD sandwich programmes, and for the supply of vital equipment for student laboratory exercises and research. By way of building on the Agency's assistance and to further strengthen institutional capacity to support research and human resource development, we have established a National Accelerator Facility to complement the use of the country's existing nuclear facilities. This, and other developments in Ghana's nuclear industry, would in the long term, require increased levels of manpower capacity

in our nuclear institutions. We are determined, in this regard, to see a growth in the number of women in the nuclear industry and are, therefore, encouraging our female students to pursue scientific courses and careers. I would, however, like to also use this opportunity to request the Agency to consider offering scholarships to Ghanaian and other African students, especially girls, to pursue post-graduate studies in nuclear science and technology, to complement our efforts, and help expand the resource pool of women in the nuclear field for our national and continental-wide development.

Mr. President,

Amid the challenges of climate change and energy insecurity, there is the need for urgent and decisive action to address the issues of food security, agricultural development, and the lack of potable water, particularly in African Member States, which often suffer the adverse effects of erratic rainfall patterns, resulting in long periods of drought and sometimes floods. In this regard, Ghana welcomes and supports the use of isotope hydrology technique, initiated by the Agency, to improve the management of water resources in many African counties which are facing drought and non-availability of water. We also convey Government's appreciation to the Agency for the development and use of the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT), for the suppression and eradication of tsetse flies, as well as the research and technology development of the technique for the elimination of the anopheles mosquito that cause malaria.

Mr. President,

As you are aware, sustainable development is unattainable without reliable access to energy. The non-availability or inadequate supply of electricity in many African countries, including Ghana, has been a major factor in the continent's slow development. For this reason, Ghana and some African countries are considering the introduction of nuclear electricity as part of their energy mix. This will facilitate the access by several rural and urban communities to uninterrupted electricity which would bring with it opportunities for communities to engage in more beneficial commercial enterprises to improve their standard of life.

While expressing our gratitude to the Agency for its concerted efforts to assist Member States to develop the requisite infrastructure for nuclear power for electricity generation, which we believe, would in the long term positively support the continent's development agenda, further assistance by the Agency for the establishment of new nuclear infrastructure and the expansion of existing ones would be needed. We look forward to greater collaboration in this regard.

Mr. President,

Ghana remains committed to the implementation of the relevant international instruments of nuclear safeguards, safety and security and, has in that connection, initiated the process of establishing an independent regulatory body to be named the Ghana Nuclear Regulatory Authority which will be responsible for enhancing the legal,

regulatory and radioactive waste management infrastructure to ensure an effective nuclear safety and security regime. Efforts are also being made to ensure early ratification of all international instruments. This, we believe, will strengthen international confidence in our country's nuclear programme. We, therefore, appreciate the Agency's continuous assistance and support for the establishment of our regulatory and legal infrastructures.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Ghana reaffirms its full support to the Agency in the performance of its statutory duties, and urges recommitment by Member States to its ideals and principles, and to the pursuit of nuclear activities for peaceful purposes for the benefit and progress of mankind. In this context, Ghana looks forward to enhanced cooperation and partnership with the Agency and its Member States.

Mr. President,

It would be remiss of me to end my statement without a word of commendation and appreciation to Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, who in a few weeks would be relinquishing his position as Director-General of the Agency. His tenure of Office has had its challenges, but we believe the successes have been greater, and we salute him for the able manner in which he directed the affairs of the Agency in the most difficult times. We wish him well in his retirement. We look forward to working with Dr. Yukiyo Amano, who takes over the helm of affairs at the Agency. The delegation of Ghana stands ready to support him fully in his new task. I am also confident that with the support and

cooperation of all Member States, the Agency would be further strengthened to carry out its mandate.

Thank you Mr. President.