

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT

BY

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**MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
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Madam President
Director-General
Distinguished Delegates

Madam President

Allow me to join the speakers before me in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the fifty-third regular session of the IAEA General Conference. My delegation is confident that under your able leadership, you will steer this Conference to a successful conclusion. To this end I pledge the support and cooperation of my delegation. Namibia welcomes the admission of the Republic of Rwanda and the Kingdom of Cambodia to the IAEA.

My delegation pays tribute to Dr Mohammed El Baradei, outgoing Director –General of the IAEA, and acknowledges with satisfaction the immense contribution that he has made towards safeguarding world peace and enhancing nuclear technologies for sustainable development. We congratulate Ambassador Yukiya Amano, the incoming Director-General of the IAEA and we are confident that, he will equally make a meaningful contribution to the vision of this important organisation.

Madam President

This year marks the start of the new technical cooperation programme cycle and I am very pleased to note that the Board of Governors has approved four national projects for my country, bringing the total number of national projects under implementation to seven. In addition, we participate in a number of regional projects covering a wide spectrum of nuclear technology, which address some of our national developmental goals. As a developing country we seek nuclear technology to help attain our national developmental goals such as energy security, food security and public health to mention but a few.

In the area of public health, we have initiated a response to prepare for a coherent and coordinated approach to manage cancer by establishing a National Committee on cancer control. We are confident that with the assistance of both the IAEA and WHO, Namibia will develop a comprehensive National Cancer Control Programme that responds effectively to preventative, diagnostic, curative and palliative measures. We commend and acknowledge the assistance of the IAEA to Member States in building their capability and capacity for cancer management. We are also aware of the IAEA's concerted efforts to make a meaningful contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria. Along with cancer these are some of the major diseases that most of the developing countries are grappling with and Namibia is no exception. For this reason we call upon the Agency to continue to strengthen the technical cooperation activities in these crucial areas of public health.

The Agriculture sector is a major area of development that defines the well being and prosperity of our nation. We are faced with challenges in the areas of water, livestock and crop production. The IAEA-supported projects play a complementary role in assisting us to employ optimal methodologies for food security and water resources management. For example, the use of radioisotopes helps us to understand the recharge and flow mechanism of under-ground water and thereby improve our management practices of these important

resource. Nuclear applications also play a key role in assisting us to effectively diagnose animal diseases which is very important if we are to sustain and expand access to the international markets for our meat and mart products. . Nuclear technology also assists us in the modification of various crops to make it drought resistant or improve yield and thereby improve food security. Given the arid climate conditions of Namibia cooperation in these areas need to be enhanced

Madam President

Namibia is endowed with uranium resources and plays a significant role in the uranium mining industry. There is increasing activity of Uranium Mining and Milling in Namibia and indeed on the African Continent. As such we are pleased that the Agency has started initiatives to assist Member States to respond to the challenges that are associated with uranium mining and processing, especially with regard to the policy and regulatory framework. The objective of Government is that our natural resources are exploited for economic benefit of all our people without undue health and environmental risk on the current and future generations.

Not only do we aspire to draw economic benefit from our uranium resources, but also to see that Namibia generates electricity from nuclear energy powered by its natural resources. This is an ambitious ideal, but we believe it is within our reach. In this regard the efforts of the Agency in assisting Member States to develop their national nuclear power programmes are commendable. We shall continue to engage the IAEA to initiate a nuclear power programme for electricity generation. Within the context of the IAEA recommendations we undertake to develop the core human resources capacity in preparation for a potential nuclear power capability.

Madam President

We are fully aware that the ingredients for a successful technical cooperation programme are well defined projects supported by the necessary coordination and technical skills to implement the programme. The availability of qualified and skilled personnel is central to optimal performance of technical cooperation projects. In this regard we call upon the IAEA to assist Namibia and other developing countries by reviewing its policy on requirements relating to qualification for IAEA fellowships.

Madam President

We are mindful of the risks associated with the use of nuclear technology and we are committed to play our role to promote safety and security, both within national and international context. This demands a responsive regulatory framework that is effective and efficient to guarantee that we make full use of nuclear technology without unduly causing harmful consequences. In this respect Namibia has inaugurated its first Atomic Energy Board and approved the Regulatory Authority to develop and implement the regulatory infrastructure commensurate with the extent of its nuclear applications. The legislative foundation has now been laid for an effective and efficient regulatory regime that will ensure controlled and monitored use of nuclear related technologies; safety and security of radioactive and nuclear material; safety of patients exposed to radiation; safety of workers involved with radiation related activities; safety and secure management of radioactive waste as well as capability to respond to nuclear or radiological emergency situations. Our Board

will work closely with the Agency to ensure that our regulatory system is appropriate and operate within internationally approved standards

Madam President

Next year we shall convene the third NPT Review Conference. The work of the IAEA have direct bearing on the NPT and Namibia will work with other State parties for an outcome which will further enhance and strengthen the implementation of all the three pillars of the NPT regime. We all cherish a world of peace where nations and peoples can cohabitate in harmony and peace, a world free from the threats of nuclear weapons. In this respect Namibia welcomes the entry into force on 15 July 2009 of the *African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty*. We regard this milestone as an important step for regional peace and security. Namibia has signed the Pelindaba Treaty and will soon ratify it.

The slogan Atoms for Peace is not an empty call. On the one hand, it serves as a constant reminder to humanity of the on-going human suffering in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On the other hand it is a call to apply nuclear technology to create a world of prosperity and free from want. No country should be denied its inalienable right to develop its nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. At the same time, comprehensive safeguards should not be an option to any country. Non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament is an obligation to us all. Only adherence to universal standards will guarantee the safety and security of our planet from the dire consequences of nuclear weapons..

I thank you Madam President