

REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GT MUTANDIRO TO THE 53-rd
REGULAR SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY
AGENCY (IAEA) GENERAL CONFERENCE, 14-17 SEPTEMBER
2009**

Madam President

The Director-General

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Zimbabwe, I extend our congratulations to you Madame President, on your election as President of the 53rd session of the General Conference. I also congratulate members of the Bureau on their election. I wish to assure you and members of your bureau, of my delegation's full support.

My delegation expresses its profound appreciation to Dr Mohammed El Baradei, for ably steering the Agency over the past 12 years, and for his dedication in strengthening the role of the Agency. We commend his steadfast impartiality and objectivity in acquitting his mandate and upholding the Agency's independence as enshrined in its Statute. We extend our best wishes to Dr ElBaradei in his future endeavours.

My delegation also takes this opportunity to extend warm congratulations to the incoming Director General, Mr Yukiya Amano. We believe that his invaluable diplomatic experience and deep understanding of the nuclear energy field will stand him in good stead as he assumes the responsibility of further promoting international cooperation in the peaceful application of nuclear energy whilst addressing the challenges of non-proliferation and nuclear safety and security. I wish to assure Mr Amano of Zimbabwe's full support in this regard.

I also wish to congratulate to the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Rwanda for joining the ranks of the Agency membership.

Madame President, the IAEA has been a partner in Zimbabwe's development through collaboration in the peaceful application of nuclear techniques. Under the framework of the country programme for 2005-2009, the main thrust of our cooperation has focussed on the sectors of human and livestock health, agriculture, industrial applications, radiation safety and hydrology. The projects undertaken to date have impacted positively on the socio-economic development of our people. I take this opportunity to register my government's sincere appreciation for the bilateral technical cooperation programme and the Secretariat's support. Zimbabwe has been following with keen interest the emerging nuclear renaissance and the opportunities it presents with the growing range of potential benefits of nuclear technologies. National authorities are thus looking forward to encompassing new strategic sectors in the next Country Programme Framework, and to developing the requisite capacity through further strengthening bilateral cooperation with the Agency.

Indeed the Agency's technical cooperation programme, which is one of the three pillars of its mandate, that seeks to promote sustainable socio-economic development through peaceful applications of nuclear energy, has played a critical role in facilitating the application of nuclear energy

for peaceful purposes especially in developing countries. . The impact of the programmes particularly in Africa on cancer therapy, the use of STI techniques to eradicate the scourge of tsetse fly which affects both human and livestock health, measures to ensure food security through improved water management and crop production, industrial applications as well as energy is better appreciated when viewed within the context of the noble goals that informed the endeavours to attain the now elusive MDG's. We note with satisfaction that the IAEA continues to place greater value in projects that enhance human health, agricultural productivity and environmental protection.

My delegation joins others in calling for sufficient, assured and predictable funding for technical cooperation. We are firmly convinced that technical cooperation activities should be funded through the regular budget of the Agency. This need is even more compelling given the increasing demand for technical cooperation from developing countries. Over the past decade, developing countries have expressed concern over the voluntary nature of the Technical Cooperation Fund. Technical cooperation and assistance must be given the same priority and importance as Safeguards, Nuclear Safety and Security. We therefore call for a paradigm shift in the technical cooperation funding

policy. The Agency's technical cooperation and assistance programme has been the principal conduit through which applications of nuclear technology have been transferred to developing countries. Our collective endeavour to attain sustainable global peace and security cannot be realised in a world full of abject poverty and deprivation.

Madame President,

Zimbabwe was privileged to chair early this year, the third Preparatory Committee Meeting for the 2010 NPT Review Conference. As we prepare for the forthcoming Review Conference, we urge Member States to be to be mindful of the compelling need to address realistic and achievable measures to advance the NPT's three pillars in a balanced manner. Similarly we also need to focus on measures to strengthen the Agency's technical cooperation programme including the funding mechanism to ensure predictable and assured resources.

The need for nuclear security and safety and strengthening the capacity of Member States becomes even more compelling with the increase in nuclear applications. My delegation commends the Agency's endeavours

to assist Member States prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive material. The Government of Zimbabwe is deeply appreciative of the support extended by the Agency in putting in place the necessary regulatory framework as well as training and equipment that enabled the establishment of the Radiation Protection Authority of Zimbabwe. We call upon the IAEA and other Member States to support our regulator in its infancy. To this end, Zimbabwe is grateful for the ongoing support being extended towards enhancing the efficacy and effectiveness of its national regulatory body in line with international best practices for nuclear safety and security.

Madame President,

Zimbabwe recognizes that nuclear security is the responsibility of the national government. In view of the dearth in developing countries human capacity and material resources, international collaboration to strengthen nuclear safety, radiation protection, and safe radiation waste management is critical. We thus welcome Zimbabwe's inclusion in the IAEA/EU Joint Action IV Strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The assistance that will be rendered under the IAEA/EU Joint Action IV will go a long way in strengthening our regulatory infrastructure and nuclear security measures.

Madame President,

Zimbabwe recognises that the NPT is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, and the Agency is the only institution with the mandate to verify compliance with non-proliferation obligations of State parties. We thus commend the Agency's objectivity, professionalism and impartiality in the implementation of safeguards as well as in its verification role. We also reaffirm the principle enshrined under article IV of the Treaty, that all States Parties to the NPT have an inalienable right to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes including in the field of the nuclear fuel cycle. The enjoyment of these rights under the Treaty also behoves State parties to also fully honour their attendant obligations. My delegation therefore urges member states to comply fully with the provisions of the Treaty and relevant IAEA safeguards agreements. We also urge them to collaborate closely with the Agency through constructive dialogue and negotiations. We believe that durable international peace and stability can only be predicated on the peaceful resolution of disputes and not through the use of force.

With respect to the nuclear fuel cycle and in view of the on- going discussions on the several proposals put forward on assurance of supplies, my delegation believes that a determination of this issue of great concern to all Member States should only be made on the basis of consensus.

Madam President

Zimbabwe commends the formation of the Forum for Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa (FNRBA) to which it is a member, launched in South Africa early this year. We are convinced that the Forum's objectives of providing a platform for the exchange of views on cooperation, know-how and best practices among regional regulatory bodies are worthy of the full support of Member States with the requisite capacity.

My delegation is closely following the deliberations of the open ended Working Group on the Future of the Agency. Zimbabwe lends its full support to efforts aimed at strengthening the role of the Agency in line with the objectives of the Agency Statute. Indeed we need to pay heed to Dr ElBaradei's appreciation, as outlined in his last statement to the General Conference, of the challenges facing the Agency as well as the

priorities that must be addressed to ensure a secure and developed world for all of us. In the light of the challenges facing the Agency, discussion on how they can be addressed is a critical issue for all Member States. Consequently, it should be all encompassing and conducted in an open and transparent manner with decisions taken by consensus, taking into account the views of all Member States.

I thank you.