



Statement by H.E. Debora Lepre, Permanent Representative of Italy

IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme

Vienna, 26 - 28 November 2024

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellencies, distinguished Delegates,

Italy fully aligns to the statement delivered by Hungary (*the President of the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority*) on behalf of the EU. I wish to add some remarks in my national capacity.

We are **grateful to the Agency for organizing** this conference that puts in the spotlight the wide spectrum of fields where the **peaceful use of atomic energy contributes to improve life quality**, responding to global challenges and providing essential tools to address them.

Italy, a pioneer in the study of nuclear physics, is today in the frontline to widen the scope of nuclear applications, sharing our know-how and good practice. Accordingly, Italy commends the role of IAEA in promoting – with its **technical cooperation program and flagship initiatives** – the use of radiation and nuclear technology, to the benefit of all: we thank once again **DG Grossi for his leadership** in this regard.

Enhancing public awareness and understanding of the benefits of nuclear science, technology and applications is undoubtedly an achievement on its own. The **six sessions** of this Ministerial Conference, gathering stakeholders from all over the world, are going to provide food for thought on a number of cross-cutting issues concerning the planet and the well-being of its population.

Out of the several themes this conference is tackling, let me underline that **food security is a core priority in Italy's agenda**, reflected in our *Mattei Plan for Africa*, our **G7 Presidency with the Apulia Food Systems Initiative**, our commitment to the **G20 Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty** and the **UN Food Systems Summit** convened last year in collaboration with the Rome-based UN Agencies. In the same vein, we **co-chair the recently-launched Group of Friends of Food Security in Vienna**.

In line with these efforts, we reiterate our support for the **IAEA's Atoms4Food project**, leveraging nuclear technology to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability. While celebrating on this occasion the long-lasting partnership between the Agency and the FAO, I'd like to reaffirm the engagement of my country in initiatives aimed at finding synergies and pooling resources – including among international organizations and International Financial Institutions – to reach common objectives.

Nuclear science and technologies applied to health and medicine have yet to be made available to billions of potential beneficiaries. We heard yesterday the alarming numbers of people dying of cancer and the need to act, not only react. In this regard, Italy acknowledges the importance of initiatives launched in this sector, first and foremost **Rays of Hope**, expanding access to oncological treatment and diagnostic capabilities in underserved regions.

The Master program in medical physics of the **Abdus Salam International Centre of Theoretical Physics in Trieste**, designed for professionals from low-income countries, has proved to be invaluable in this regard. We are currently exploring further training opportunities offered by the ICTP and – more broadly – contributions to IAEA's TC health programmes, both financially and in-kind.

The IAEA's active participation in the last CoP-29 has once again showcased the critical role of nuclear science to cope with climate change, while the **Atoms4NetZero initiative** is instrumental for exploring the impact of nuclear in advancing a more secure energy transition. My government, by **co-hosting earlier this month – together with the Agency – the inaugural meeting of the World Fusion Energy Group**, has clearly flagged the intention of strengthening its efforts in the multilateral cooperation on this ambitious frontier for research.

We underscore the relevance of **gender equality in all sectors**. Promoting women's participation in nuclear science is essential to realize our fullest potential as a community. We are therefore supportive of the relevant IAEA's initiatives (*Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellowship and Lise Meitner Programmes*) and of **gender mainstreaming in technical cooperation activities**.

With an equal horizontal perspective, Italy reaffirms its strong support for the **safety and security TC projects** carried out globally by the IAEA, and in particular where it is more needed: we are proud to generously support the Agency's actions.

Along this line, Italy confirms **its commitment in sustaining the research activities conducted by the IAEA in its own facilities in Vienna, Seibersdorf and Monaco**. We are aiming at enlarging the spectrum of cooperation that our Academia and applied research Institutes can offer: the four **Italian Collaborating Centres** and our **various innovation poles and technology incubators** testify the ability and willingness to assist the Agency in its programmatic activities, by sharing resources, knowledge and expertise.

In closing, while expressing our **deepest gratitude to Finland and Ghana** for their skillful negotiations, leading to the consensual text of the Ministerial Declaration adopted yesterday, let me reaffirm Italy's unwavering support to international cooperation under the IAEA's guidance. As repeated yesterday with a meaningful motto, **let's do more with less** (meaning let's do it better) and in order to better plan the future, let's co-create it!

I thank you for your attention.