

Statement Delivered by Mr. Bishwo Babu Pudasaini, Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Nepal to the IAEA at the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme

Vienna, 26-28 November 2024

Mr. Co-Chairs,

I would like to begin by extending my sincere congratulations to the co-chairs on your election as the Co-Chairs of the Ministerial Conference.

I would like to thank the Director General and the Secretariat of the Agency for excellent preparation of this important conference.

Nepal appreciates the efforts and achievements made by IAEA towards the realization of safe, secure, and peaceful application of nuclear science and technology contributing to international peace and security.

In an era defined by rapid technological progress and complex global challenges, nuclear science and technology stand out as transformative tools. They are critical to support sustainable growth and achievement of the SDGs. They have a unique potential to address pressing issues such as food insecurity, climate change, public health crises, and sustainable energy needs.

We deeply value the technical support and collaborative contributions provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) since our partnership was established in 2012 through the signing of the Technical Cooperation Agreement. After successfully completing two Country Programme Framework (CPF) cycles, we have now signed and initiated the third cycle for the period 2024–2029. Through

this framework, Nepal is advancing projects in key areas such as water management, strengthening radiation infrastructure, healthcare, agriculture, and the animal sector.

Following the establishment of the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology in 2017, Nepal has greatly benefitted in promoting peaceful applications of Nuclear Science and technology in various sectors.

I believe through the implementation of TC projects under the CPF, Nepal will benefit in enhancing the current state of knowledge and capacities in nuclear science application for peaceful use. Many of the projects proposed for the year 2024-25, such as, ‘Enhancing Climate Resilient Field Crops Production Systems for Food Security by using Nuclear and Molecular’; ‘Enhancing Animal Productivity through Integrated Management of Nutrition, Reproduction and Health using Nuclear and Molecular Techniques’; and Understanding the Groundwater Recharge to the Bhabar Zone and Deep Aquifer Replenishment Scenario in Banke and Bardiya Districts in the Terai’ directly impact the well-being of the Nepali population and are closely aligned with the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These and other projects proposed are prioritized according to our needs based on the SDG declaration and the 15th national planning document of Nepal.

In order to improve institutional capability, Nepal has promulgated the Radioactive Substances (Utilization and Regulation) Act, 2020 and Rules, 2022. Likewise Radiation Safety Directives, 2024, Standards for Diagnostic Radiology and Standards for Nuclear medicine services are in implementation. Currently, we are preparing to Standards for use of equipment and services for Radiotherapy and Industrial Radiography. In addition, we have drafted the standards for Transport safety and security of radioactive materials and Disused and Radiological Waste

management. In line with these legal documents, the Government has planned to establish a Regulatory Body, which can deal with all the radiation-related issues including licensing, monitoring, implementing and other related activities for its peaceful and sustainable use.

Our partnership with the IAEA reflects a mutual dedication to leveraging nuclear science and technology for the progress of our nation. The technical cooperation and expertise provided by the IAEA have played an instrumental role in enhancing various sectors critical to our national development.

These efforts have contributed significantly to improving the safety and effectiveness of our healthcare systems, including the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. The utilization of nuclear techniques in agriculture has boosted food security, increased crop yields, and facilitated sustainable agricultural practices. Furthermore, our collaboration in radiation safety and nuclear security has fortified our commitment to ensuring the safe and secure use of nuclear materials and technology within our borders.

Mr. Co-Chairs,

As we move forward, we must collectively enhance accessibility to nuclear technologies, ensuring no nation is left behind, while investing in capacity-building initiatives to empower developing countries in applying nuclear science effectively.

In conclusion, let us reaffirm our collective commitment to fostering innovation, solidarity, and cooperation in harnessing nuclear science and technology for a sustainable and prosperous future. We hope that the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Conference will certainly strengthen the Agency's role in promoting

applications of atomic energy for peaceful uses including through their delivery to member states through the Agency's TC programme.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.