



STATEMENT

by

**THE HONORABLE ZANE LIGHTBOURNE, M.P.
MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS**

on the occasion of the

**MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND
APPLICATION
AND THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM**

**INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)
VIENNA, AUSTRIA
25 - 29 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Mr. President,
Mr. Director General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Good morning,

I extend warm greetings on behalf of the Government and People of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. I am delighted to participate in this Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology, and Application, as well as the Technical Cooperation Program.

The Bahamas is an archipelagic nation spanning over 200,000 square miles, with a population of approximately 400,000 spread across 18 of our major islands. Although we are a small nation, we recognize the transformative potential of nuclear science and technology across a wide range of applications.

Currently the radiological concerns in The Bahamas are primarily centered in the medical community, and to a lesser extent, the construction industry. The medical applications include imaging and diagnostic procedures such

as X-rays, computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), nuclear medicine, positron emission tomography (PET), and ultrasounds.

While the Government of The Bahamas acknowledges the benefits of radiological technologies in health, agriculture, environmental protection, water management, energy, and industry, we remain vigilant in ensuring that necessary safeguards and security measures are in place and upheld. These measures include maintaining a complete and comprehensive inventory of nuclear-related materials, conducting regular inspections and calibrations of equipment, ensuring the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) for emergency response, and implementing protocols for the safe disposal of radiological materials, particularly following replacement or damage.

Additionally, my Government is focused on advancing the review and enactment of draft legislation designed to address radiation concerns related to human health. This legislation will ensure that operators and users of radioactive equipment are properly trained, and that individuals receiving treatment are appropriately protected.

Our nation is also prioritizing the establishment of protocols to manage the transshipment of radioactive materials. As The Bahamas is home to one of the world's largest ship registries, this step is crucial in safeguarding the movement of radioactive materials, aligning with global best practices in this area and contributing to our national development strategy.

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

The continued support of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been invaluable in helping The Bahamas develop in-country technical capacity through training initiatives that promote the safe and peaceful use of radioactive sources and nuclear materials. We are actively implementing recommendations from the Agency's Technical Team following their 2022 visit under the Technical Cooperation Project (BHA5002).

Looking ahead, our goal over the next year is to build on past successes and seek critical training and technical support, especially to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels for energy generation. As a small island developing state The Bahamas is deeply committed to combatting climate change and

being responsible global partner. Expanding our use of cleaner energy sources is central to this effort.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

In closing, I want to reaffirm that The Bahamas remains steadfast in its commitment to the IAEA's mandate to safeguard human health and promote the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. We must continue to innovate responsibly and champion the vision of "Atoms for Peace" ensuring that our pursuit of technological advancement never outpaces our commitment to humanity.

Thank you, and may God bless and guide our deliberations.

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