

**Statement by Dr. the Honourable Andrew Wheatley
Minister of Science, Energy and Technology of Jamaica**

**60th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference
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Mr. President,

I wish to congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of this 60th regular Session and thank you and your team for the able manner in which you have steered the work of this Committee.

As the first English speaking country in the Caribbean to join the IAEA over 50 years ago, it is with great pleasure that I welcome fellow member of the Caribbean Community, St. Lucia, as a Member State of the IAEA. My delegation is heartened that for the past three (3) regular sessions of the General Conference, the IAEA has welcomed a Caribbean country to its fold. We are assured that the IAEA will play an important role in assisting these new members from our region in their efforts to safely and peacefully harness nuclear energy for sustainable development.

At the 70th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly, a few days ago, the Prime Minister of Jamaica reaffirmed the commitment to the attainment of the sustainable development goals and highlighted the necessity of global partnerships, in complementing national efforts. As one of our valued partners, we believe that the IAEA has a critical role to play in this regard. Having adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development last year, it is important that the international community sharpen its focus on the effective implementation of those goals. To this end, the IAEA's role in using nuclear and isotopic techniques to support countries in achieving the sustainable development goals must be recognized..

In this context, I am pleased to have been afforded the opportunity to participate in the 2016 Scientific Forum where I will share Jamaica's

experience in utilizing nuclear technology for the sustainable development of our country.

Mr. President,

Since Jamaica's presentation to this body at last year's session, the Hazardous Substances Regulatory Authority has been established to regulate activities, practices and facilities involving ionizing radiation and nuclear technology, for the protection of people, property and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation.

The Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology and the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences in Jamaica are closely liaising with the IAEA to strengthen the regulatory infrastructure in the region to provide for effective "cradle to the grave" control of radioactive sources.

I am particularly pleased that the IAEA Director-General, Mr. Yukiya Amano was able to attend the first coordination meeting of the project, which was held in Kingston in April of this year. This attests to the longstanding and fruitful relationship that the Government of Jamaica has with the IAEA since becoming a Member State in 1965.

Mr. President,

Jamaica has benefitted significantly from the Agency's technical cooperation activities. We maintain a strong interest in IAEA programmes and support the thrust by the Agency to synergise national development priorities and IAEA assistance within the broader UN Development Assistance Frameworks.

We remain appreciative of the ongoing projects on, *inter alia*, re-establishing nuclear medicine capacity, optimizing irrigating water management to improve crop output and water quality control as well as building capacity in drinking water and quality monitoring and management. We also welcome the continued focus by the IAEA on technology transfer and peaceful uses of nuclear energy for development in areas such as food and agriculture, human health and water resource management.

The continued support to the only research reactor in the Caribbean, housed at the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences in Kingston, provides an opportunity to accommodate additional research needs from the region. This is particularly important considering the increase in IAEA membership from the Caribbean.

At the regional level,, the critical role of the Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARCAL) cannot be over-emphasised. Jamaica sees ARCAL as an important mechanism for technical cooperation in the region and to this end, we remain committed to finalising the domestic process to facilitate our accession to the First Extension of the Agreement.

Mr. President,

As a State Party to the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Jamaica attaches high priority to the three pillars of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We continue to encourage States, which have not yet done so, to accede to legally-binding international conventions and to commit in earnest to negotiations geared towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Jamaica, as a member of the Latin American and Caribbean region, continues to adhere to the terms of the Treaty of Tlatelolco that established the region as a nuclear weapon free zone. We look forward to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty in 2017.

Our commitment to international peace and security has been reaffirmed in the Declaration made by Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in, January 2016 in Quito, Ecuador where our status as a nuclear weapons free zone was emphasised. CELAC also reaffirmed our commitment to consolidate the Latin America and Caribbean region as a Zone of Peace, as formally proclaimed during the 2nd CELAC Summit in 2014. With these commitments in mind,Jamaica supports the convening of a

conference next year to begin negotiations of a universal legally binding instrument proscribing nuclear weapons.

We encourage other regions to pursue this goal in keeping with the global commitment to international peace and security.

In closing, Mr. President, please allow me to commend the Agency for the role that it has been playing to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity. I take the opportunity to reaffirm Jamaica's commitment to the goal of the safe and effective use of this technology for the global good. You can be assured of our full cooperation and support for the work of the Agency in collaboration with other members and partners, towards the fulfillment of its mandate.

I thank you.