



**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
DELIVERED BY  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA  
AMBASSADOR TEBOGO SEKOLO  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
60<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)**

**VIENNA**

**27 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Director General,

Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegations,

Distinguished Delegates,

Mr President

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the 60th International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference. I am confident that under your leadership, this Conference will come to a successful conclusion and be rest assured of our support and cooperation in this regard.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Gambia for their new membership to the Agency.

Mr President

This year marks an important milestone in the history of the IAEA: the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Agency. Since its formation six decades ago, the IAEA has been at the forefront of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This significant development therefore presents a unique opportunity to collectively take stock and highlight the importance of the Agency's contribution towards nuclear science and technology for the betterment of humanity, in keeping with its founding objectives.

For South Africa, this anniversary is also important as it coincides with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of South Africa's accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the signing and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the IAEA. Similarly, this year, on the African Continent, we also celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty, known as the Treaty of Pelindaba.

Ironically, Pelindaba is the site where the erstwhile apartheid government in South Africa once developed its nuclear weapons programme, thus posing a threat not only to

the African Continent, but to all of humanity. Today Pelindaba is central to our continued efforts to use nuclear science and technology for the upliftment of our people and those of our Continent. In so doing, we have ensured that "the miraculous inventiveness" of humanity shall not be dedicated to death, but to the sanctity of life.

Mr President

In recent years the contribution of nuclear science and technology to socio economic development has become a central focus of the IAEA. The positive contribution by the Agency in shaping the new global development agenda, more specifically the Sustainable Development Goals is well appreciated by South Africa. Through its motto *Atoms for Peace and Development*, much has been achieved in enlarging the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.

Energy security is central to economic development across the globe and is regarded by all governments as vital to national interest. Nuclear power, along with other energy sources, provides a clean, reliable base load and sustainable energy supply. The IAEA publication *Energy, Electricity and Nuclear Power Estimates* serves as an authoritative reference for policymakers and planners on the future nuclear energy outlook. Accordingly, it is revealed in this report that the demand for nuclear power is on a positive trajectory and could grow by 68% in 2030.

Nuclear power is an integral part of South Africa's energy mix. Currently nuclear energy accounts for 5% of our total power supply. Our government has decided to add 9,600 MW to the national grid by 2030, thus increasing nuclear's contribution to 23%.

Mr President

Through its Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme, the IAEA continues to provide vital support to Member States, especially on the African continent in such areas as human health, food and agriculture and water resources management, in support of their regional and national development plans. However, for the TC Programme to be sustainable, it requires sufficient, assured and predictable funding. We must redouble our efforts to ensure a proper balance between the promotional and non-promotional

activities of the Agency in the allocation of the resources. We also want to call on Member States to pay their assessed contribution to the Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) in full and on time. In this regard, I am honoured to announce that my country will pledge the full recommended amount to the TCF for the year 2017.

Mr President

We appreciate the ongoing collaboration between the Agency and the African Union (AU) to support African Member States, including South Africa, to eradicate mosquito and tsetse flies in order to control the associated diseases in humans and in animals.

South Africa also welcomes the Agency's continued efforts through the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VETLAB) Network project, aimed at strengthening regional and national veterinary laboratories for the early detection of zoonotic diseases in wildlife and livestock. In 2012 South Africa allocated an amount of 1.5 million US dollars towards the VETLAB Project, with additional funding from the United States (US) and Japan respectively.

Distinguished delegates,

This is an important project because reducing or curtailing animal diseases has a direct bearing on human health. It is understood that 70% of human diseases directly emanate from animal diseases.

South Africa is pleased that the VETLAB Network is commemorating 4 years since its establishment in 2012 and has now been extended to 40 Member States in Africa and 17 Member States in Asia. Four of the laboratories in the network (Botswana, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia and Cameroon) serve as reference centres of excellence.

Given the success of the VETLAB Network, it is important for Member States to note that the funding for this project will come to an end this year. For the continuity and sustainability of this project, South Africa believes that it is essential that it be funded from the regular budget. In this regard, we would like thank the US and Japan for their pledged financial contributions to the project through the Peaceful Uses Initiative. We therefore invite other Member States to generously make a financial contribution.

Mr President

South Africa attaches great importance to the work done by the Agency's Nuclear Application Laboratories in Siebersdorf and welcome the initiative – ReNuAL – to renovate and modernize these laboratories. South Africa was pleased to co-chair together with Germany the resource mobilization for this project. We are grateful that through the contribution by Member States and AFRA, we managed to secure the €31 million required for the implementation of the first phase of this project. Whilst we celebrate, it is important to remember that we still need additional resources to implement the second phase, known as ReNuAL Plus. We thus appeal to Member States to continue to make contributions.

Mr President

South Africa supports the Agency's efforts to effectively implement the safeguards system in all Member States in accordance with their international legal obligations. Accordingly, South Africa continues to work closely with the IAEA with regard to safeguards implementation in our country under the Integrated Safeguards approach, which was introduced in July 2015. Significantly, South Africa continues to maintain its broader conclusion.

Following the implementation of Integrated Safeguards in all States with Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols in force, it is necessary for the Agency to make an assessment of the implementation of the Integrated Safeguards under the State Level Concept and share the lessons learned with all Member States in an open and transparent manner.

Mr President

South Africa believes that we should remain vigilant of the nuclear security risks inherent in the continued existence of nuclear weapons, in addition to those posed by nuclear terrorism, the illicit nuclear network and criminal acts, as well as the use of nuclear or other radioactive material for malicious acts. In addressing these risks, South

Africa remains committed to a multilateral approach, with the Agency playing a central and coordinating role. We therefore look forward to the International Nuclear Security Conference, which is scheduled to take place in December 2016. South Africa will participate at a high level. We further will contribute to the finalization of the Ministerial Declaration, which we hope will take into account the views and concerns of all Member States.

South Africa acknowledges the central role of the Agency to coordinate international efforts in respect of strengthening the nuclear security framework globally. We wish to commend the Secretariat's efforts to facilitate adherence to international instruments relating to nuclear security and welcome the entry-into-force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials. As a State Party to the Convention, we are pleased to report that we are at an advanced stage of the ratification process.

Mr President and Distinguished Delegates

Nuclear safety continues to be one of the key global concerns, especially in the light of the Fukushima Daiichi accident. As a Contracting Party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) South Africa continues to fulfil its obligations under the Convention by demonstrating a high level of nuclear safety. Preparations for the next review meeting in 2017 are well underway and it will provide an opportunity for South Africa to provide an update of our activities in compliance with the articles of the Convention.

As part of this process, South Africa has prioritised capacity building and skills developed in this area. To this end, we established a Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Safety and Security, which was launched earlier this month.

Similarly, South Africa is planning for a review of the effectiveness of its regulatory infrastructure for nuclear and radiation safety and will be hosting an IAEA Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission in December this year.

As I conclude Mr President, it is befitting for my delegation on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the IAEA to pay tribute to the dedicated staff of Agency, both past and present, without

whose valuable contribution and professional expertise, the IAEA would not have reached this milestone. We particularly want to thank Director General Amano for his leadership in bringing to the fore the contribution of nuclear science and technology to development, as epitomised in the motto *Atoms for Peace and Development*.

I thank you