



**STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE
TO THE 62nd GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

**DELIVERED BY
HIS EXCELLENCY
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SECRETARY FOR THE HOLY SEE'S RELATIONS WITH STATES**

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Madam President,

I have the great honour of conveying to you and to all the distinguished participants at this 62nd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the best wishes and cordial greetings of His Holiness Pope Francis.

Madam President, on behalf of the Delegation of the Holy See, I congratulate you and the members of the General Committee on your election by this distinguished Conference. I would also like to take the opportunity to express our appreciation and gratitude to Director General Yukiya Amano and to the Secretariat for their dedicated work for the benefit of the whole IAEA family.

On this occasion, the Holy See, along with various states, welcomes and congratulates Grenada on becoming a member of the IAEA.

Madam President,

The Holy See commends and supports the many activities of the IAEA that have strengthened international cooperation and contributed in a significant way to the prevention of nuclear proliferation and to the promotion of nuclear disarmament. Such activities, in fact, also help to foster integral human development, by promoting technical cooperation in the nuclear sciences and their applications, and by advancing the peaceful use of nuclear technologies.

I wish now to address briefly some of the relevant aspects of IAEA's fundamental work.

The nuclear non-proliferation regime is strongly supported by IAEA safeguards, which are focused on strengthening its effectiveness and improving its efficiency. For example, the IAEA's participation in the verification and monitoring of Iran's commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) provides an indispensable component for assessing whether all nuclear material is being used for peaceful purposes, and thus contributes to greater peace and security in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the Holy See supports the continued and patient efforts of the international community to revive negotiations around the nuclear programme of the DPRK, which threatens the integrity of the non-proliferation regime. There is no military solution to this threat. IAEA safeguards, reflecting the Agency's critical role in nuclear verification in the region, represent an essential contribution to promoting peace and security and help to build up a climate of confidence in place of mutual recriminations. The use of IAEA safeguards constitutes an important tool in moving towards the goal of denuclearization.

The non-proliferation regime must work as tirelessly for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban as it does for nuclear disarmament. For that reason the Holy See signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons with the

aim of moving beyond nuclear deterrence to a world entirely free of nuclear weapons.¹

Nuclear tests involve the substantial and uncontrolled release of radioactive materials directly into the environment. They have resulted in the largest cumulative dose of man-made radiation unleashed thus far upon populations and the global environment². As Pope Francis has said “the natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone. If we make something our own, it is only to administer it for the good of all. If we do not, we burden our consciences with the weight of having denied the existence of others”³. Therefore we affirm that nuclear weapons are arms of mass and environmental destruction.

Pope Francis has also noted that “the escalation of the arms race continues unabated and the price of modernizing and developing weaponry, not only nuclear weapons, represents a considerable expense for nations. As a result, the real priorities facing our human family, such as the fight against poverty, the promotion of peace, the undertaking of educational, ecological and healthcare projects, and the development of human rights, are relegated to second place”⁴.

The Holy See recognizes the important contribution of the IAEA to creating a world free of nuclear weapons. This role is characterized by the effective combination of those measures available under comprehensive safeguards agreements (CSAs) together with various additional protocols (APs). Furthermore, efforts to ensure nuclear safety and security, as well as to foster a culture of safety have been greatly improved due to IAEA’s strategies of strengthening global, regional, and national networks and forums, and by expanding capability and capacity in nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety, and also in emergency preparedness and response. The broader goals of nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament, and the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, each depend upon these crucial IAEA strategies.

The Holy See welcomes and commends the Agency's efforts in establishing an “Inter-departmental task force on Climate Change”, and in organizing this year’s IAEA Scientific Forum focused on “Nuclear Technology for Climate: Mitigation, Monitoring and Adaptation”. The role of science, technology and innovation within the framework of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be supported by various nuclear technologies and their applications as outlined in IAEA developmental protocols, and thus promote integral development, enhancing our stewardship of God’s creation. Indeed, IAEA technical cooperation projects in the fields of human health, water and environment, climate change, food security and smart

¹ Cf. Pope Francis, Message to the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination. 23 March 2017.

² Cf., UNSCEAR 2000 Report to the General Assembly, Exposures to the public from man-made sources of radiation. Volume I, Annex C, pagg. 158-180. United Nations, New York, 2000.

³ Cf. Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*, §95. 24 May 2015.

⁴ Cf., Pope Francis, Message to the International Symposium on the Prospects for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons and for Integral Disarmament. 10 November 2017.

agriculture, among others, have already contributed significantly to the alleviation of poverty and the ability of countries to meet their development goals in a sustainable way.

The Agency plays a proactive role at all levels in developing strategies for the *Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy* (PACT), and in establishing and enhancing radiotherapy programmes. In this regard, the Holy See expresses its gratitude and appreciation to the Agency for helping low and middle income Member States to improve the effectiveness of their radiation medicine services as part of a comprehensive cancer control strategy, for supporting the training of health professionals, and for engaging in fundraising to boost cancer control programmes and activities.

On this occasion, the Holy See recalls the urgent need for a modern global ethic of responsibility, solidarity, and cooperative security, that must replace the old ways of thinking that have so often been driven by self-interest and distrust. We must recognize that our own peace and security depend ultimately on the peace and security of others.

Therefore, the Holy See appeals to all leaders and nations to work towards the common goals of promoting nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the peaceful development and use of nuclear technologies, and a sustainable integral human development, particularly for the poorest countries. The pursuit of such goals will contribute in no small way to a true and lasting global peace.

Madam President,

In conclusion, the Holy See reiterates its sincere gratitude and affirms its unwavering support for the IAEA's many contributions to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as to the safe, secure, and peaceful, development and operation of nuclear technologies.

Thank you.