



STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DELIVERED BY

DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENERGY, AMBASSADOR THEMBISILE MAJOLA, MP

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

**62ND SESSION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)**

GENERAL CONFERENCE

VIENNA

17 SEPTEMBER 2018

Madam President
Acting Director General
Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegation
Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the Government of South Africa, I congratulate you Madam President and your Bureau on your election to lead this Session of the General Conference. Please be assured of my delegation's support.

South Africa would also like to express its appreciation to the DG and his team for their diligence in preparing for this General Conference, and wish him a speedy recovery.

Madam President

Last week Friday in Accra, Ghana, one of Africa's finest sons and Statesmen, Mr Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, was laid to rest. Mr Annan was a tireless international servant, statesman and a champion for global peace. He passed on during the year that we celebrate the centenary of South Africa's first democratically elected President and global icon, Nelson Mandela as well as Mama Albertina Sisulu, a dedicated freedom fighter and a fearless advocate of the marginalised.

Madam President

Recent developments within the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation spheres have wielded divergent outcomes - with limited progress on some fronts, and disproportionate regression in others. On a positive note, a major achievement was the adoption in September 2017, in New York, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (also known as the Ban Treaty).

This Treaty is a historic achievement in global efforts to establish and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. The Ban Treaty, once it has entered into force, will be a legally binding instrument that outlaws nuclear weapons, ultimately ensuring that these weapons of mass destruction are never used again. Importantly, the Treaty complements relevant international instruments in this area, such as the Nuclear Non-

Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the various Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone treaties, and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which has yet to enter into force.

Madam President

The JCPoA between Iran and the EU3+3 is crucial to our non-proliferation efforts and to peace and security in the Middle East. We thus welcome the various IAEA reports which confirm Iran's compliance with its nuclear related obligations in terms of the Agreement. We urge all signatories to work tirelessly towards the preservation of this historic agreement.

The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula remains one of the key challenges facing us today. The resolution of this deadlock is an important matter that will go a long way not only towards enhancing peace and security in that region but also strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. In this regard, South Africa supports all diplomatic efforts and initiatives aimed at resolving this long outstanding issue.

Madam President

Access to affordable modern forms of energy is key to economic and human development. Nuclear is an integral part of the energy system to reduce carbon emissions. In our country, nuclear is part of the energy mix and provides base-load electricity. South Africa has recently released for public consultation the updated Integrated Resource Plan which reinforces our country's commitment to the energy transition.

Madam President

Through its Technical Cooperation Programme (TC) the IAEA plays an important role in supporting Member States to use nuclear science and technology to achieve their developmental goals. Accordingly, the IAEA TC programme resonates with Africa's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, for this programme to be sustainable, resources must be **sufficient, assured and predictable** (SAP). It is thus crucial that all Member States should pay their assessed contributions on time and in full.

Madam President

Zoonotic diseases such as Ebola, Dengue, Zika and Chikungunya pose a major threat to both animals and humans and are trans-boundary in nature. In Africa, these diseases constitute an impediment to economic growth by slowing down advances in health and agriculture, thereby constituting a major obstacle to poverty eradication efforts. Through the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VETLAB) Network project the IAEA continues to assist Member States to strengthen their capacities to detect, diagnose and characterise these diseases. This year the VETLAB project is commemorating six years of existence, and has been successfully extended to 44 countries in Africa and 19 in Asia. South Africa, Japan and the US have provided the necessary seed funding for this project, however more resources are needed in order to respond to the ever increasing demand for support from Member States.

Madam President

We welcome ongoing efforts to modernise and renovate the Nuclear Applications Laboratories in Seibersdorf. Through these Laboratories the Agency provides the transfer of nuclear related knowledge and complementary technologies that contribute significantly to human health, food and agriculture, water resources management and environmental protection. We look forward to the successful completion of this project which will transform these laboratories into cutting-edge world class facilities.

Madam President

The effective implementation of the IAEA's safeguards system is central to the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the enhancement of international peace and security. My country continues to work closely with the IAEA to implement its safeguards obligations under the Integrated Safeguards approach, which was introduced in July 2015. While we support the strengthening of the IAEA Safeguards system, it is important that the process is transparent and inclusive, in order to inspire the necessary confidence.

Madame President

South Africa is committed to attaining the highest standards of safety possible for its nuclear facilities. In this context, we continue to support the objectives of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS). Furthermore, South Africa welcomes efforts undertaken by the Agency in encouraging Member States to become Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and to actively promote the objectives thereof. We particularly welcome that since 2015, the number of contracting parties has increased.

Madam President

South Africa attaches great importance to Nuclear Security, and appreciates the important role played by the IAEA in supporting Member States, upon request, to develop national security plans as well as coordinate the global nuclear security efforts. We are pleased with the support of the Agency, plans are advanced to update our country's Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan as well as ratify the Amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

While we continue to intensify our efforts to strengthen nuclear security, we should be mindful that for the global nuclear security system to be truly effective, it needs to be comprehensive. Similarly, nuclear security should not hamper the right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Madam President

Finally, as we are all aware, in November this year, the IAEA is convening the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology. This important conference will afford us the opportunity to further appreciate the enormous strides being made in the utilization of nuclear science and technology towards human progress, particularly in enabling the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. South Africa fully supports the holding of this high-level conference and will participate at an appropriate level.

I thank you Madam President