

**STATEMENT**  
**H.E. AMBASSADOR MARIA CLEOFE RAYOS NATIVIDAD**  
**Temporary President of the 62<sup>nd</sup> General Conference of the IAEA**  
**17 September 2018**

---

Excellencies

Honorable Acting Director General Mary Hayward

Distinguished Delegates and Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Having just presented my credentials to Director General Yukiya Amano early this year, it is my honor to stand before you today and welcome the representatives of the 170-strong – and growing – Member States of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The presence of so many ministers, high-ranking officials, scientists and advisers converging here at the annual General Conference attests to the value of the Agency's work and the high regard that Member States continue to place in its mandate.

Indeed, every year, the community of nations has the opportunity to revisit and interpret anew the Agency's mandate to **'accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health, and prosperity throughout the world'**. In this way, every General Conference is a chance for us to collectively ensure the continuing relevance of the Agency's work for its increasing number of Member States.

I hope that the **Vienna spirit**, which permeated the Philippine presidency of the Conference last year, will continue to animate this year as Member States work together to discuss key elements of the Agency's major priorities in its work and come up with solutions, through nuclear science and technology, to address the critical challenges of our time.

In my region, *Supertyphoon Mangkhut* or *Ompong*, as it was called by the locals, ravaged the northern Philippines, battered Hong Kong SAR and parts of mainland China, claiming lives and property in its wake. This increasing frequency and intensity of typhoons is no doubt climate change-related. In my view, the focus of the Scientific Forum at the sidelines of this year's Conference – on the promotion of nuclear science in combatting the adverse effects of **climate change** – is both timely and necessary.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

We have come a long way since the IAEA was established more than sixty years ago. There is much to celebrate about how Member States have given – and continue to give meaning – to the Agency's evolving mandate.

Last year, an international conference on the Agency's Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme was held for the first time in its sixty years of its existence. Over a thousand participants took part in this conversation on the impact of TC Programme's work in the frontline of human development.

This year, in November, Member States will take this conversation to the next level as we lead the process for the first ever '*Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology: Addressing Current and Emerging Development Challenges*' – a high-level dialogue on nuclear science and technology and its applications, their delivery through the Agency's TC Programme, and their contribution to sustainable development. The inauguration of the new Seibersdorf laboratories, at the same time, marks another milestone.

Expectations are high and demands are growing on the Agency's TC Programme, which contributes to the attainment of Member States' development goals through the assistance in health and nutrition, food and agriculture, nuclear knowledge development, water and environment, energy, and industrial applications. Hence, the call for **sufficient, assured, and predictable resources for the TC Programme** resonates even more in these times. Thus, this Conference is a welcome opportunity to continue the conversation on ensuring sufficient resources for the TC Programme to meet the growing demand for the

Agency's services – also in light of the scale of resources available for non-promotional activities.

### **Distinguished Delegates,**

As we promote the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, we must continue to bear in mind important concerns regarding safety and security.

As nuclear power is expected to play a key role in the world's low-carbon energy mix, the demand for the Agency's services in the conduct of Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR) Missions, as well as peer review and advisory services increases accordingly. Further, there is a growing interest on the development of small modular reactors (MSRs) and on the work of the IAEA in the maintenance and management of 30-year old nuclear power reactors.

Hence, we look forward to the forthcoming '*International Conference on Security of Radioactive Material*' next year and the *IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security* in 2020 which will take place at the ministerial level. As well, the past discussions on the Nuclear Security Plan for 2018-2021, which we took note of last year, could provide insights on how we can move forward together in addressing security issues.

In the past months, the IAEA's critical work on safeguards gained even more prominence. Developments have taken place, further underlining the pressures brought to bear on the Agency in this field. These include those relating to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the further development of the DPRK's nuclear programme.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the expertise and dedication of the members of the IAEA Secretariat, under the excellent leadership of Director General Yukiya Amano and his Deputy Directors General. We laud their commitment to fulfil the IAEA's noble tasks under the banner of *Atoms for Peace and Development*.

I convey my deepest gratitude to my colleagues in the Far East Group for supporting the Presidency of the Philippines last year. My sincere appreciation also goes to last year's Vice Presidents - Australia, Bulgaria, Finland, Ghana, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico, Mongolia, and the United States of America for the excellent assistance they provided. I commend Switzerland for the successful chairmanship of the Committee of the Whole.

I also express my sincere thanks to the Secretary to the Conference, **Ambassador Aruni Wijewardene** and to her excellent team for their support to the Philippines. I also acknowledge the job well done in the preparations for this year.

In closing, allow me to convey my warmest thanks to you all. I look forward to joining everyone towards a fruitful General Conference.

\* \* \* \* \*