STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE HOLY SEE

AT THE IAEA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:
ADDRESSING CURRENT AND EMERGING DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

28 – 30 November 2018

Mister President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor of delivering this Statement in the name of His Excellency, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for the Holy See's Relations with States. At the outset, allow me to express my gratitude to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for their organization of this notable Conference dedicated to the issue of nuclear science and technology: addressing current and emerging development challenges.

The Holy See wishes to offer the following general considerations on "the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world"[1], recognizing the inalienable right of States "to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination"[2].

Science and technology should contribute to the progress and development of humanity, reflecting the service they offer to our societies. Pope St. John Paul II highlighted this when he said that "science and technology find their justification in the service that they render to man and to humanity"[3].

Building on this idea, Pope Francis has noted that "the scientific community, through interdisciplinary dialogue, has been able to research and demonstrate our planet's crisis, so too today that same community is called to offer a leadership that provides general and specific solutions [...] a normative system that includes inviolable limits and ensures the protection of ecosystems, before the new forms of power deriving from the techno-economic model causes irreversible harm not only to the environment, but also to our societies, to democracy, to justice and freedom."[4]

Applying such principles to considerations on nuclear science and technology, the international community should remember the fundamental obligations that every age has towards future generations, including a care for improving quality of life, clean water, and healthy nourishment.

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[1] Cf. Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, art. II.
[2] Cf. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, art. IV.1.
[3] Cf. Pope John Paul II, Address to Scientists and Representatives of the United Nations University, 25 February 1981.
[4] Cf. Pope Francis, Address of Pope Francis to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 25 November 2016.

Pope Benedict XVI affirmed the Holy See's general commitment "to support the use of peaceful and safe nuclear technology for authentic development"[5], and "the urgent need for continued dialogue and cooperation between the worlds of science and of faith in building a culture of respect for man, for human dignity and freedom, for the future of our human family, and for the long-term sustainable development of our planet"[6]. At the same time, the Holy See firmly believes that nuclear power cannot be isolated from larger global considerations. As Pope Francis has rightly stated, our immense technological and scientific advances and development have not always been "accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience"[7].

Therefore, the benefits of nuclear technology must be accompanied by a fundamental recognition that any effort to see social advancement, any effort to promote the common good, must be based on a desire to ensure the integral development of every man and woman. As affirmed by the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development of 1986: "The human person is the central subject of development"[8].

The Holy See commends and supports the many activities of the IAEA that have strengthened international cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear technologies. Such activities, in fact, also help to foster integral human development, by promoting technical cooperation in the nuclear sciences and their applications. The 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 role of science and technology 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 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.[9]

In conclusion, my Delegation thanks once more the organizers of this Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology, and extends its gratitude to all the participants for their valuable contributions to our discussions. Furthermore, I am pleased to assure all present of the Holy See's continued engagement with our joint efforts, and affirm its unwavering support for the work of the IAEA, in

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[5] Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, Greeting to the faithful at the recitation of the Sunday Angelus, 29 June 2007.
[6] Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, Statement to Member of The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 8 November 2012.
[7] Cf. Pope Francis, Laudato si', n. 104-105.
[8] Cf. United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development, art. 2.1.
[9] Cf. Statement of the Holy See to the 62nd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, 17 September 2018.

advancing the safe, secure, and peaceful, development and operation of nuclear technologies.

Thank you for your kind attention.