



*Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale*

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

**Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology:
Addressing Current and Emerging Development Challenges**

Vienna, 28–30 November 2018

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to express my Country's appreciation for the opportunity offered by this Ministerial Conference with a view not only to elaborating on, but also to emphasizing the role that nuclear science and technology may play in furthering sustainable development and addressing development challenges.

As explicitly highlighted also by Article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, research, production and use of nuclear energy, technologies and applications for peaceful purposes are, in fact, important development drivers. Italy strongly values the IAEA's mandate to expand their contribution for peace, health and prosperity throughout the world, thus also contributing to the attainment of the goals set by the UN 2030 Agenda.

We continue supporting the Agency's efforts in this respect, both from a political viewpoint, also in our present capacity as a member of the Board of Governors, and from a financial perspective, as the seventh contributor to the regular budget and through our contribution to the Technical Cooperation Fund, with a share of over 3 million Euros.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Considering the advances achieved in recent years in peaceful nuclear applications, nuclear science and technology can offer tailored solutions for many challenges we face, and in a variety of areas.

Let me start by mentioning the healthcare sector, where nuclear medicine stands as one of the finest examples of peaceful use of nuclear applications. We are proud of contributing to its constant development through various initiatives, such as, recently, the project for the production of technetium isotopes for diagnostic purposes at the ENEA TRIGA reactor in Rome and the program of studies on Boron Neutron Capture Therapy (BNCT) and on copper isotope production for theranostics applications at the LENA TRIGA Reactor of Pavia University.

The National Institute for Nuclear Physics (INFN), an Italian centre of excellence, is focusing on state-of-the-art nuclear applications, such as radiotherapy with beams of protons and heavier nuclei and Accelerator-based alternatives to Uranium-based production of radioisotopes of medical interest.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Also in the field of agriculture, animal health and food safety and security, nuclear techniques provide effective answers to the existing challenges to sustainable development. Isotopes and radiation techniques have proved their efficacy in combatting pests and diseases, increasing crop production, protecting and managing land and water resources, ensuring food safety, traceability and authenticity, and improving livestock production.

Italy is committed to giving a significant contribution to international research and development activities also in these fields.

The Centre Agricoltura Ambiente “G. Nicoli” in Bologna has been collaborating for years with the IAEA in the design and implementation of a Sterile Insect Technique package for Aedes Mosquitoes suppression.

We have also granted voluntary contributions to joint IAEA/FAO projects centered on specific needs of Least Developed Countries with the objective of improving the productivity of the entire food chain in a substantial manner. In this same vein, we are providing the joint IAEA/FAO division with an Associate Immunology Officer for a period of two years starting next January.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Our commitment towards technical assistance and peaceful uses is also confirmed by the large number of scholarships and training programs that we offer for citizens of developing countries.

I would like to recall, in particular, the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, which operates under a tripartite agreement between the Italian Government, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and which has the specific mission of advancing scientific expertise in the developing world. For more than 50 years, the ICTP has been a driving force to educate alumni who have consequently served in their home countries in nuclear-related sectors. As a concrete example, let me recall the two-year Master of Advanced Studies in Medical Physics jointly run by the ICTP and the University of Trieste, which enables young graduates to become clinical medical physicists.

Additionally, every year Italy hosts several foreign researchers in its laboratories, universities and medical centers in the framework of fellowships and scientific visits financed under the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme.

Along with this approach, we would like to reaffirm our support for empowering the participation of women in nuclear science and technology and establishing tools for broadening their participation in this field.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Let me finish by recalling my Country's full commitment to the achievement of a safer and more secure use of nuclear applications and technologies worldwide.

We are firmly convinced that pursuing high levels of nuclear safety and security is a shared interest of the international community, which should not be seen as an obstacle, but rather as a contribution to further improve nuclear technologies and applications for peaceful purposes and sustainable development.

In this context, let me mention the great support provided by the Agency through the ARTEMIS program in evaluating the Italian program of decommissioning of nuclear installations and giving valuable recommendations to our national operator (SOGIN) for sustainable solutions.

In more general terms, we are convinced that any project involving nuclear technologies or the use of nuclear or other radioactive material (for instance sources used for medical, agricultural, epidemic-related purposes) should include integrated elements of safety, security and emergency preparedness and response. Only such synergies can grant a long-lasting sustainable approach, as well as the actual well-being and protection of both the population and the environment.

To reach this goal, my country is therefore actively engaged in advancing research on fusion and innovative nuclear systems and on methods and technologies to strengthen safety and security. In particular, we are proud to announce the Divertor Tokamak Test Facility (DTT), the international centre of excellence for nuclear fusion research to be built by ENEA in collaboration with European and International partners, which aims at meeting some of the greatest challenges posed by fusion.,

Moreover, in the context of our efforts for promoting a nuclear security culture throughout the world, we continue financing the International School on Nuclear Security, jointly run by the IAEA and the ICTP in Trieste. The aim is to train young professionals from developing and emerging countries, thus enhancing institutional capacity in the field of nuclear security.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Allow me to express my gratitude and appreciation for your hard work over the past year in preparing this conference and in leading the negotiations towards a consensual Ministerial Declaration. Please, rest assured of my delegation's full commitment throughout these three days. I wish us all a productive and successful conference.

Thank you.