



REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR

**STATEMENT OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ECUADOR,
AMBASSADOR ROBERTO BETANCOURT-RUALES**

63 IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE

Vienna, 18 September 2019

Madam President:

Ecuador would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Your Excellency Ambassador of Mexico, Alicia Buenrostro, on your election as President of the 63rd session of the IAEA General Conference; we are aware of your talent and experience, and we are especially pleased that you are the first Latin-American woman to hold this important position.

Madam President:

My country wishes to remember the valuable legacy of Yukiya Amano, where his strong commitment to the use of nuclear energy for peace and development stands out. The concrete results of his efforts have made it possible to improve the life of many people, and this means a contribution to making the world a better place.

Ecuador remembers the constructive cooperation with the IAEA in the difficult time my country faced after the earthquake in 2016. DG Amano visited the disaster area in order to better understand our needs and to decisively arrange the provision of equipment for the destroyed hospitals, as well as capacity building for non-destructive test technique.

He also fell in love with the Galapagos Islands, an exceptional natural laboratory. He understood that this world heritage site represented an opportunity to show how nuclear technologies can contribute to the preservation of unique species in the world, making the concept of atoms for peace and development a reality.

Madam President:

We believe that it is indispensable to strengthen the Technical Cooperation Program and to provide it with sufficient resources to support the priorities identified by the developing countries with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The projects implemented by Ecuador through the Technical Cooperation Program have contributed to staff capacity building both in the field of nuclear safety and security and in the field of nuclear applications in agriculture, health, environment and industry. This has been possible through coordination of the Department of Technical Cooperation for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The participation of our regulatory authority in projects in the fields of radiation protection, nuclear safety and security, as well as in the use of ionizing radiation, has contributed to improve the regulatory aspects and to advance the ratification processes of various international instruments.

In the framework of this General Conference, Ecuador deposited the ratification instruments of the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.

Madam President:

52 years after the entry into force of the Tlatelolco Treaty and the establishment of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, we reaffirm that the only effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination and prohibition.

Ecuador reiterates its firm position on the urgent need to fully implement the three pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We highlight our concern about the reversal in the implementation of the obligations under Article VI of this instrument.

My country remains firmly committed to the promotion and support of all actions aimed at strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

In this context, Ecuador is pleased to have participated in the negotiation and adoption of the Treaty of Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and has the honor to announce that on 25 September, in the framework of the 74th General Assembly of the United Nations, Ecuador will deposit the instrument of ratification of this treaty.

My country reiterates that the Treaty of Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in no way conflicts with the regime created by the NPT. On the contrary, it reinforces the NPT by marking clearly that these weapons are prohibited under a legally binding international instrument.

Ecuador also considers that the Treaty of Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) strengthens the IAEA safeguards system. It reaffirms the rule enshrined in Article III and obliges the states that already have a high level of safeguards to maintain them, while it encourages all Parties to further increase their level of commitment regarding safeguards.

Madam President:

My delegation is convinced that the efficient application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East will contribute to generating confidence between the states of the region and that it is the necessary step towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

We highlight the importance of Resolution 73/546 of the United Nations General Assembly on convening a conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We encourage all countries of the region and the other Member States of the United Nations to actively participate in this conference and to negotiate in good faith with a view to concluding a legally binding treaty.

Madam President:

For Ecuador, international law constitutes the code of conduct that obliges us to refrain from performing unilateral actions that threaten peace. Dialogue strengthens international coexistence.

For this reason, we deplore the questioning of the multilateral system and the unilateral actions putting at risk the commitments undertaken and the international security system as a whole.

Ecuador reaffirms the validity and forcefulness of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as a fundamental instrument in the non-proliferation regime, because it has established the strictest safeguards system and because it was the result of a long negotiation in which all actors abandoned individual interests for the benefit of general interest.

It should be highlighted that the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2231(2015) that endorsed the JCPOA, and that the United Nations member states, irrespective of whether they are part of the JCPOA or not, are obliged under Article 25 of the Charter, to accept and to comply with all decisions of this Council.

We therefore deplore the withdrawal of the United States from the agreement and the re-imposition of sanctions, as well as the decision of Iran to circumvent the agreement. We encourage them to refrain from implementing new actions that do not contribute to the solution of disputes.

My country reiterates its conviction in the fundamental and independent work of the IAEA to verify safeguards compliance and the full implementation of this instrument. Ecuador is convinced that the experience and preparation of the staff of the Agency guarantee the compliance with the agreements.

Thank you.