



**STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE  
TO THE 63<sup>rd</sup> GENERAL CONFERENCE  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

**DELIVERED BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY  
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SECRETARY FOR THE HOLY SEE'S RELATIONS WITH STATES**

Vienna  
16 September 2019

Madam President,

I have the great honour of conveying to you and to all the distinguished participants at this 63<sup>rd</sup> General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the best wishes and cordial greetings of His Holiness Pope Francis.

Madam President, on behalf of the Delegation of the Holy See, I congratulate you and the members of the Board on your election by this distinguished Conference. I would also like to take the opportunity to express our appreciation and gratitude to IAEA Acting Director General, Cornel Feruta, and to the Secretariat for their dedicated work for the benefit of the whole IAEA family.

Allow me to express as well the Holy See's deep sadness at the passing of Director General Yukiya Amano and extend to Dr. Amano's family, friends, IAEA staff and all who mourn his passing, the heartfelt condolences of the Holy See. Director General Amano's tireless commitment to the noble goal of the Agency – "Atoms for Peace and Development" – will be sorely missed. May the soul of Dr. Amano rest in peace.

On this occasion, the Holy See, along with other State Members, welcomes and congratulates Saint Lucia on becoming a member of the IAEA.

Madam President,

The Holy See commends and supports the many activities of the IAEA that have strengthened international cooperation and contributed in a significant way to the prevention of nuclear proliferation and to the promotion of nuclear disarmament. Such activities also help to foster integral human development, by promoting technical cooperation in the nuclear sciences and their applications, and by advancing the peaceful use of nuclear technologies. The efforts to ensure nuclear safety and security, as well as to foster a culture of safety, have been greatly improved due to the 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, in addition to 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. Furthermore, their applications, as outlined in the IAEA developmental protocols, may promote integral development, thus 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 have contributed significantly to the alleviation of poverty and the ability of countries to meet their development goals in a sustainable way.<sup>1</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Statement of the Holy See to the 62nd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, 17 September 2018.

these efforts, Science and Technology play a key role. Pope Francis has rightly stated 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”.<sup>2</sup>

All positive consequences of nuclear technology must, however, be accompanied with the more 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”.<sup>3</sup>

In 2012, Pope Benedict XVI notably affirmed the Holy See’s general commitment “to support the use of peaceful and safe nuclear technology for authentic development”, and underscored “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”.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the Holy See is convinced that the use of nuclear power as a source of energy with a small CO<sub>2</sub>-footprint and as part of basic energy supply has to be decided upon by every State according to its needs and possibilities, while taking into account, at the same time, 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”.<sup>5</sup>

Madam President,

The Holy See recognizes the important contribution of the IAEA to creating a world free of nuclear weapons. This role is characterized by the effective combination of those measures available under the comprehensive safeguards agreements (CSAs) together with various additional protocols (APs).

The Holy See signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons with the aim of moving beyond nuclear deterrence to a world entirely free of nuclear weapons, and affirmed that nuclear weapons are arms of mass and environmental destruction.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the Holy See supports the IAEA’s participation in the verification and monitoring of Iran’s commitments under the Joint

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Pope Francis, Address of Pope Francis to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 25 November 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development, art. 2.1.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, Statement to Member of The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 8 November 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, n. 104-105.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Statement of the Holy See to the 62nd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, 17 September 2018.

Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA), and the continued and patient efforts of the international community to revive negotiations around the nuclear programme of the DPRK, which threatens the integrity of the non-proliferation regime. IAEA safeguards, reflecting the Agency's critical role in nuclear verification in the region, represent an essential contribution to promoting peace and security and help to build a climate of confidence in place of mutual recriminations. The use of IAEA safeguards constitutes an important tool in moving towards the goal of denuclearization.

The Holy See expresses its gratitude and appreciation to the Agency in developing strategies for the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT), in establishing and enhancing radiotherapy programmes, and for helping low and middle income Member States improve the effectiveness of their radiation medicine services as part of a comprehensive cancer control strategy, as well as for supporting the training of health professionals and for engaging in fundraising to boost cancer control programmes and activities.

Madam President,

In conclusion, the Holy See reiterates its sincere gratitude and affirms its unwavering support for the IAEA's many contributions to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as to the safe, secure, and peaceful, development and operation of nuclear technologies.

Thank you.