



Statement by  
His Excellency Ambassador António de Almeida Ribeiro  
Resident Representative of Portugal to the IAEA  
on the occasion of the 63<sup>rd</sup> General Conference  
Vienna, 16-20 September 2019

Madam President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Vice- Minister for Energy of Finland, on behalf of the EU. Additionally, I would like to make some remarks in my national capacity.

Allow me to begin by remembering the late Director-General, Yukiya Amano. In this difficult time, we express our deepest sympathy and solidarity to his Family and to the Agency. Portugal will remain committed to the values and principles embodied by DG Amano, unwavering promotor of international peace and security, as well as of the well-being of Humanity. To this effect, we pay tribute to his leadership and dedication serving the international community. Thanks to his vision, in the last decade, the motto “Atoms for Peace and Development” has never been more relevant.

We also thank Acting Director-General, Cornel Feruță, for his readiness to take on the daily affairs of the IAEA in this unprecedented time. We naturally extend our appreciation to the Secretariat and the Agency’s staff in this regard.

Further, we wish to congratulate the election of H.E. Ambassador Alicia Buenrostro Massieu to Chair the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the General Conference, assuring her of the full support of the Portuguese delegation.

Madam President,

The International Atomic Energy Agency is an indispensable pillar of multilateralism, in the domains of non-proliferation, nuclear energy, nuclear safety and security, and technical cooperation. We seize this opportunity to welcome the organization of some high-level events in the course of the next months, namely the *International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power* and the third *International Conference on Nuclear Security* (ICONS 2020).

As a founding member of this Organization, Portugal has maintained with the Agency a close relationship, recently reaffirmed with the late Director-General's visit to Lisbon in April of last year. In this context, I would like to recall the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, with special focus on technical cooperation. Such is an expression of the strengthening of our relationship and we sincerely acknowledge the Agency's long-lasting support.

Madam President,

My delegation would like to highlight some developments in our country which are of interest to this Assembly.

Portugal notes the recent changes to its national regulatory infrastructure, through the consolidation of its competences, which were previously attributed to different entities, in one single domain (Environment). We believe that, by doing so, we have now a more coherent structure, independent of promoters and users of radiation technologies, in line with the Safety Standards of the IAEA.

We also note the dismantling of the Portuguese Research Reactor, subsequent to the decision of the Portuguese authorities in this regard. Earlier this year, the reactor's low-enriched uranium was shipped to the United States, whose support we wish to thank. We count on the Agency's availability in assisting Portugal in this matter in the years to come.

My delegation would also like to thank the support provided to Portugal in the preparation of the first IRRS Mission, scheduled to take place next year.

Madam President,

Even though Portugal has never introduced nuclear power in its energy mix, a decision which remains valid, the nuclear field assumes relevance in our country. Indeed, radiation technologies have a significant role to play in the Portuguese society, in particular in the health and industry sectors, where they find several applications.

As cancer rises to worrying proportions, Portugal strives to invest in innovative therapies, making use of an advanced system for the treatment of oncologic diseases. To that end, in the framework of our next technical cooperation programme, we envisage to develop specific competences in the field of proton therapy. This project, which has been announced by our Minister of Science, aims to establish a centre for therapy, education and training which can benefit Portugal, as well as interested partners.

We take this opportunity to commend the organization of the Scientific Forum *A Decade of Action on Cancer Control, and the way forward*, held on the margins of this GC.

Allow me to briefly mention the granting of scholarships by Portuguese institutions, as established in the MoU signed with the Agency. From a total of 50, to be distributed over the next 5 years, around 10 have already been granted or are being finalized. Having in mind applicants from developing countries, we reassert our availability, and interest, in receiving candidates from Portuguese speaking countries, which can benefit from training in their own mother tongue.

We would also like to recall our intention to submit the candidature of the Institute for Nuclear Sciences Applied to Health, University of Coimbra, to become a Collaborating Centre of the Agency, in the area of radioisotope production and radiation technology. This partnership, when established, will greatly honour us.

Madam President,

In 2020, we will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, a fundamental instrument for the promotion of non-proliferation and disarmament. The next Review Conference will provide a new opportunity for the international community, as a whole, to

reaffirm and strengthen this principle, which is particularly relevant in today's international order.

With a view to reach the universalisation of this Treaty, we call upon all non-Signatory States to join the NPT.

Madam President,

Regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), we are witnessing worrisome developments. We urge Iran to comply with all its obligations under the nuclear deal and, in relation to its Safeguards Agreement and Additional Protocol, to cooperate fully and timely with the IAEA.

While reaffirming our continued support for the JCPOA, we deeply regret the withdrawal of the United States from the deal and the re-imposed sanctions.

On the DPRK, we remain strongly committed to the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. As such, Pyongyang must take concrete steps to that end and actively engage in negotiations with relevant stakeholders. We further believe that the Agency should be able to have a significant role on the ground.

Portugal also regrets that the Syrian Arab Republic continues to be in non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement. Many years have passed since this issue has been brought to the attention of the IAEA. We therefore urge Syria to extend its fullest cooperation to this Organization.

Madam President,

To conclude, we wish to pay tribute once again to the legacy of the late DG Amano. One of the several initiatives launched under his mandate is the modernization of the nuclear applications laboratories in Seibersdorf. Portugal considers remarkable the success achieved by ReNuAL, which we supported last year. As this project nears its conclusion, we encourage other Member-States, in a position to do so, to consider a contribution to this endeavour, associating their countries to deliverable results which will undoubtedly last for decades.

I thank you for your attention.