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**Statement by Hon. A.D. Champika Premadasa,
State Minister of Power and Renewable Energy of Sri Lanka
At the 63rd Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference,
Vienna, Austria on 16 September 2019**

Madam President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the delegation of Sri Lanka, it is a privilege and honor for me to congratulate H.E. Mrs. Alicia BUENROSTRO MASSIEU, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico on the assumption of the Presidency of the Sixty Third Regular Session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and on my own, I extend my heartfelt condolences on the passing away of Mr. Yukiya Amano, Director General of the IAEA. Mr. Amano will be remembered as an outstanding diplomat and principled supporter of strengthening international security and stability. During his decade-long tenure as the Director General of the IAEA, he has contributed greatly to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency.

Madam President,

Sri Lanka hosted the 41st National Representative Meeting of the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific (RCA) in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 26 to 29 March 2019. I would like to recall the visit by Mr. Dazu Yang, Deputy Director General of Technical Cooperation Department of the Agency to Sri Lanka in March 2019 and his participation at

the inauguration of the National RCA Representatives meeting. He also made visits to several other institutes where technical cooperation projects are being implemented. They had constructive engagements with the Minister of Power, Energy and Business Development and other respective government officials.

Sri Lanka considers nuclear security as a vital subject and appreciates the assistance given by the IAEA on security and safety matters to strengthen local infrastructure. We acknowledged the assistance provided by the IAEA Department of Nuclear Security to train Sri Lankan officials.

The Government of Sri Lanka decided to conclude the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement between Sri Lanka and the IAEA, and the same was endorsed by the Board of Governors Meeting held in August 2018.

The Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Regulatory Council as the regulatory authority in Sri Lanka has taken a number of steps to strengthen regulatory infrastructure with regard to safety, security and safeguards. The Regulatory Council also promulgated a regulation to nominate the high court in Colombo judicial zone as the high court for prosecution of offences that are to be heard in a high court under the Atomic Energy Act. The requirements stated in the Act together with provisions in the above rules and regulations have created an effective regulatory framework for licensing and inspection of sources and practices meeting international requirements. The Regulatory Council has also taken steps to draft Ionizing Radiation Protection Regulations and Source Security Regulations in line with IAEA model regulations and expected to promulgate these regulations in 2020.

Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Board has taken initial steps to establish Nuclear Security Support (NSSC) which is identified as the most feasible approach considering the status of the existing requirements, laboratory and technical capabilities. NSSC will operate as the main technical and scientific counterpart in the nuclear security regime in Sri Lanka.

Madam President,

Through the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme, four national projects have been approved in principle to be implemented under the technical cooperation project cycle 2020-2022.

The Agency's continued assistance to its Member States in producing radioisotopes and radiopharmaceuticals through capacity building and the dissemination and transfer of knowledge contributes to improve health care and sustainable industrial development. Sri Lanka looks forward to participate actively in the next technical assistance biennium programme commencing in 2020. The establishment of the Medical Cyclotron Facility for the production of radiopharmaceuticals which is required for molecular imaging techniques used in cancer patient management is one of the projects that has preliminary been approved to be implemented under the next TC programme which would be immensely beneficial to the country. Strengthening the regulatory infrastructure for radiation safety & source security in Sri Lanka is another important project approved by the Agency and it is to be implemented by the Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Regulatory Council.

The Northern Province has been developed with essential infrastructure. The project of "Establishing a Nuclear Medicine Unit 'Radioimmunoassay Laboratory' at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna" is one of the projects being implemented under the 2018/19 TC programme and it will be immensely beneficial for the people in that area. Sri Lanka also receives technical assistance through the project of "Enhancing Water Resource Management" which facilitates supply of clean drinking water for the communities those who have least accessibility to clean water in the dry zone of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka acknowledges this initiative with appreciation.

Madam President,

Sri Lanka is a world leading tea exporter. It is imperative to increase tea productivity and ensure the sustainability of livelihood which depends on tea. The tea industry needs new tea cultivars with high yield and resistance to blister blight disease that takes 20-25 years with conventional approaches. Hence, it is aimed to integrate radiation techniques to speed up the classical tea breeding programme to develop new cultivars and technical cooperation of the Agency which is to be received through the next cycle with a view to develop tea cultivation in the country.

Throughout 2018, the Agency, in collaboration with key partners and donors, continued to help low & middle-income Member States to improve the effectiveness of their radiation medicine services as part of a comprehensive cancer control framework. Activities focused on strengthening national cancer control capacities and mobilizing resources for the Agency's cancer control-related activities. The Agency has made arrangements to send a team of experts to Sri Lanka under the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) in October 2019.

Sri Lanka has drafted its Country Programme Framework for 2019-2025 with the support of the Agency and this Framework is planned to be signed during this General Conference. The assistance provided by the Agency to finalize this document is greatly acknowledged.

Madam President,

I thank the Acting Director General and the Secretariat of the IAEA for the excellent arrangements made for this conference and for the excellent cooperation with Sri Lanka in all aspects of the Agency's work. We look forward to work with the IAEA in a spirit of cooperation. Thank you