

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HONOURABLE M.MUDYIWA DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENERGY AND POWER DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE: 63RD REGULAR SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY GENERAL CONFERENCE: VIENNA, AUSTRIA: SEPTEMBER 2019.**

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**Madam President,**

Zimbabwe welcomes this opportunity to address the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference and to share its national perspective and experiences on issues before the Conference.

Let me, at the outset, congratulate you Madam President, on your election to steer the work of this session. I wish to pledge my delegation's full support and cooperation towards the successful discharge of your mandate.

**Madam President**

We heard with great sadness the passing on of Mr. Yukiya Amano, the Director General of the Agency. Mr. Amano served the Agency with distinction for two terms as its Director General, and was re-elected for a record third term because of his able stewardship of the organization, and the respect which he commanded among the Member States. On behalf of my delegation, I wish to express our deepest condolences to the Amano family, the Government and the people of Japan.

**Madam President**

Zimbabwe attaches great importance to the mandate and work of the IAEA, in particular the assistance and support that the Agency continues to render to my country. In this regard, let me touch on a few of these areas of cooperation. Nuclear technologies remain important in the fight against the increasing cancer burden in our country. Government continues to invest in infrastructure and building of competences to ensure safe and quality delivery of radiology and oncology services. To that end, progress has been made in nuclear medicine where one centre has been resuscitated and is now fully operational in the second largest city of Bulawayo. Further, training has been initiated to strengthen our medical physics capabilities by introducing a Master of Science in Medical Physics programme which is producing the second

cohort of graduates this November, among them foreign students from the region. Our thrust is to become a centre of excellence for the region and get Regional Designated Centre status in various fields of expertise.

Zimbabwe hosted a Regional Meeting on Developing Diagnostic Reference Levels (DRLs) for Adult Computed Tomography (CT) in June 2019 to equip participants with knowledge on establishing national DRLs to ensure dose optimisation for patients' protection. We are very grateful to the Agency for the support they have given us through the technical cooperation programme.

**Madam President**

To combat the effects of droughts that have adversely affected food security in the Southern African Region, the Government of Zimbabwe has enhanced efforts to develop and promote the adoption of drought resistant seeds with the support of the Agency. Maize is our main staple food and we are experimenting with new seed varieties that are resistant to drought and diseases. To this effect, at least 200 mutant lines have been screened under fall armyworm infestation and advanced to M4 generation.

Further, the collaboration with the Agency has started to bear fruits with one mutant cowpea variety already registered and will be available to farmers this coming season. The variety is expected to produce a yield at least 30% better than other local varieties.

Additionally, we have developed national capabilities and expertise in using radiotracers for assessing soil erosion in agricultural and forested areas. Important improvements have been noted and international stakeholders among them researchers and developmental partners have shown interest to learn and share our experience to manage land degradation across African landscapes.

**Madam President**

The safe use of radiation technologies is paramount to adopting the use of nuclear technology for peaceful uses. A strong radiation body will perform such duties and our own Zimbabwe Radiation Protection Agency is up to task on this. The Authority continues to fly up high and is now recognised as one of the best in Africa.

We are constructing an Interim Disused Radioactive Sources Management Facility wholly funded by the Government of Zimbabwe. We are grateful to the IAEA for the continued advice on the technical designs and their commitment to assist in the security design after completion of construction works as well as competence building for the staff that will manage the facility. In 2019, the IAEA was helpful in organizing an expert mission that led to the successful conditioning of some disused sources and provided technical equipment to ensure their safe interim storage while arrangements for repatriation to country of origin are being made. The Division of Security continues to support the country's efforts in enhancing nuclear security through the implementation of the Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan (INSSP).

Zimbabwe reaffirms its commitment to global nuclear safety and security and during this year the following has been initiated; Revision of the Radiation Protection Act to accommodate all obligations and strengthen safety, safeguards and security provisions. The process is expected to be completed in 2020.

I am glad to inform the Conference that we are in the process of ratifying important conventions and agreements and these are now before Parliament. These are; Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and Safety of Radioactive Waste Management; and Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement between the IAEA and Government of Zimbabwe.

### **Madam President**

The IAEA and the Government of Zimbabwe through the University of Zimbabwe (Counterpart Institution) in partnership with the Zimbabwe National Water Authority and the Zimbabwe Environmental Management Agency are assessing ground water sources in order to better manage its use. The project aims to determine and assess sources of groundwater for improved and sustainable water use in Zimbabwe. Study sites in Harare and the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe have been established for the project. In Harare the objective is to monitor the sustainability of groundwater abstraction in an urban area and in the Eastern Highlands, the objective is to establish groundwater and surface water interaction for improved rural livelihood. Water samples collected from the respective study sites are being analysed at the University of Zimbabwe and Environmental Management Authority laboratories for

physical and chemical parameters and will be sent to countries with capacity for further isotope analysis through the help of IAEA.

**Madam President**

Let me conclude by saying that, as the current President of the Conference on Disarmament, Zimbabwe notes with regret the erosion of multilateral disarmament architecture, and the retreat from commitments made in this area. The collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the EU plus 3 have worsened the international security situation. In this respect, we call for cooperation, dialogue and peaceful co-existence in the conduct of relations between and among nations.

**Madam President**

I Thank You