

**Opening statement to the
63rd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy
Agency
by Ambassador Alice Buenrostro Massieu, in her capacity as
President**

Vienna, 16 September 2019

I express my sincere gratitude to you all for placing your trust in Mexico by electing me to lead the discussions and negotiations of the 63rd IAEA General Conference. I am particularly grateful for the support of my colleagues from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Distinguished delegates,

Mr Cornel Feruta, Acting Director General of the IAEA,

I undertake to bring the decisions adopted by this great assembly to a successful conclusion with a view to: ensuring the Agency's good functioning and maximum effectiveness; promoting the development and peaceful use of nuclear science and technology to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda; supporting the safe use of nuclear energy and other nuclear applications throughout their cycle; and bolstering compliance with the Agency's mandate to contribute to international peace and security with a solid and properly funded safeguards system to which Member States are

committed.

We should all congratulate ourselves on the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology, held for the first time last year, and make sure we continue giving this valuable pillar of our house the attention it deserves. In recent years, there has been significant progress in the peaceful uses of nuclear science and applications in many areas, including clean energy generation, health care, pest control, improvements in agriculture and human nutrition, the tackling of environmental problems, climate change action and the development of tools and techniques for better water resources management.

I would like to make special mention of the Agency's valuable technical cooperation programme. I hope that the decisions taken this week will contribute even further to strengthening this programme and funding it accordingly. I particularly call for due attention to the cross-cutting and comprehensive programme on cancer treatment, making the most of our institution's capacities in various areas and working in close collaboration with the World Health Organization and other relevant partners. We must consolidate this initiative as one of the greatest legacies of Director General Yukiya Amano.

The IAEA has the fundamental task of ensuring that nuclear applications are undertaken in a responsible and safe way, with respect for the environment and human health. There is, therefore, a pressing need to recognize that the nuclear sector must make greater efforts to communicate the benefits [of these applications] and the constant action it is taking to reduce their risks. Decision-makers also need to make a stronger commitment to transparency, so that the public might shape its views based on better information and scientific evidence. I believe that the International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power

to be held next month is an opportunity for the IAEA to convince the environmental and economic sectors of the contributions it can make towards tackling climate change — one of the most serious and pressing global challenges to protecting the life and viability of our planet.

The work of this Conference should be a prime example of the merits of multilateralism and international cooperation in seeking joint solutions to the problems facing humanity, based on the mandate and capacities of the IAEA. Our current international setting is complex; worryingly, we are seeing a questioning of the fundamental standards of the United Nations which were developed with aspirations for a better world, following the painful lessons learned from the Second World War. The optimism that came from the end of the Cold War proved to be short lived, and our international environment today is becoming ever more tense, with a concerning growth in expenditure on increasingly lethal armaments, and even the abandonment of agreements that were painstakingly negotiated to promote peace and a nuclear-weapon-free world.

It is in this spirit that Mexico assumes the Presidency of the 63rd General Conference, with the hope that this week's work will contribute to a better and safer world. Mexico has been committed to nuclear disarmament for many decades. We will continue to promote the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons under strict international monitoring and in conformity with the principles of irreversibility, verification and transparency. Moreover, Mexico will continue working to strengthen and complement the regime established by the Tlatelolco Treaty, which made Latin America and the Caribbean the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world. I would also like to highlight the importance of complying with the obligations set out in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons (NPT). Against this backdrop, we will carry on promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy, which is an opportunity for, and sovereign right of, Member States.

Today — 16 September — is an auspicious day for me, as it is the 209th anniversary of Mexico's independence.

Honourable audience,

With these words, I declare the 63rd Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency open.