



AFGHANISTAN

STATEMENT

Delivered by Dr. Tahir Shaaran, Director General of Afghanistan
Atomic Energy High Commission

Head of Delegation

IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE

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Dear President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of the delegation of Afghanistan, I would like to congratulate you, your Excellency, on your election as President of the 64th General Conference. Our delegation will fully support your leadership and we are certain that under your leadership the output of this conference will be very fruitful.

My appreciation also goes to the highly professional and dedicated team of the Agency's Secretariat for the efforts undertaken to prepare for this important conference.

Let me take this opportunity to also extend a special thanks to Director-General H.E. Rafael Mariano Grossi for his efforts in supporting the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the other Member States during the COVID-19 related emergency by supporting us through inter-regional technical cooperation in providing personal protective equipment and diagnostic kits.

With the current situation on the ground, Afghanistan requests the IAEA to continue its support during the second wave of the pandemic.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Despite the huge challenges that have emerged due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year the Afghanistan National Nuclear Regulatory Authority, with the support of IAEA, has managed to finalize three regulations on licensing, transportation and nuclear waste. These three regulations are about to be submitted to the Afghan cabinet for approval by the Ministry of Justice.

From a nuclear regulatory point of view, with the existence of Afghanistan's Nuclear Energy Act, radiation protection regulation, and the approval of these regulations and drafted guidelines, the path for the safe and secure use of nuclear technology for sustainable development will be paved.

Furthermore, the Afghanistan Nuclear Energy Agency, the main implementing partner in Afghanistan, along with other relevant agencies in the country, has started the implementation of the projects defined in the Country Programme Framework, which was signed at the margins of the IAEA's 63rd General Conference last year. The projects within the Country Programme Framework will last until 2023 and are mainly on Radiation Safety Infrastructure, Food and Agriculture, Human Health and Nutrition and Human Capital Development.

To ensure effective policies around the peaceful use of nuclear activities in the country, the Executive and Technical Board of Afghanistan Atomic Energy High Commission became an independent organisation under the name of

Afghanistan Nuclear Energy Agency and the General Director of this Agency is now the General Secretary of the Commission. Although the Afghanistan Nuclear Energy Agency is among the youngest governmental bodies in the country with a low annual budget, this year the annual budget almost doubled, and its technical staff increased by 20 per cent.

Dear President,

Due to the invasion of the country by the Soviet Union and a long civil war, most of the radioactive sources used in military equipment or used for medical diagnostic and therapeutic purposes are missing. To protect the environment and human safety, Afghanistan Nuclear Energy Agency has conducted a survey in Kabul to recover and find these sources. During the survey, our team found a number of radioactive materials among Military Scrap Metal with very high radiation doses. Therefore, to ensure the safety of people and the environment, we need to extend our survey across the country and need the full support of IAEA and its Member States.

Ladies and Gentleman,

The people of Afghanistan and its government have removed the final obstacle for peace negotiations with the Taliban movement. The recent developments in the peace process have given us new hope to end the bloodshed and establish long-lasting peace in the country.

In these peace negotiations, the main goal of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is to preserve the republic system and the achievements of the last 20 years in human rights, women rights, ethnic and religious rights and freedom of speech, for reaching permanent and sustainable peace in the country.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Being a state party to the Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement and the NPT, Afghanistan strongly supports the establishment of a Nuclear- Weapons-Free-Zone in the Middle East, as a positive and complementary step towards achieving the United Nations 'Nuclear- Weapons-Free-World objectives.

I wish to conclude by expressing once again my most sincere appreciation to the International Atomic Energy Agency for their cooperation and support. We continue to request from IAEA, in particular, the regional members, to pay special attention to Afghanistan and to continue supporting us in areas of capacity building and training our scientists.

Thank you.