



Republic of Botswana

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF TERTIARY  
EDUCATION, RESEARCH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS LETSHOLATHEBE**

**TO THE 65th REGULAR SESSION OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)  
GENERAL CONFERENCE IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA-VIRTUAL**

**20-24 September 2021**

- ***President of the 65th General Conference, Ambassador Sadiq Marafi, Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the IAEA***
- ***Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi***
- ***Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies, Heads of Missions and International Organizations***
- ***Distinguished Delegates***

I am honoured to be addressing the 65<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference on behalf of the Republic of Botswana.

**Mr. President,**

Let me congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the 65th IAEA General Conference. My delegation and I will offer you our full support and cooperation. Allow me to also congratulate the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis upon assumption of membership of the Agency.

**Mr. President,**

Let me also thank the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi and his staff for successfully leading the organization during these unprecedented times.

**Mr. President,**

Countries and international organizations have learned huge lessons from the Covid 19 pandemic. One of them is that the world at large should be prepared for future similar outbreaks. The initiative taken by IAEA on Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC), which aims at strengthening the preparedness and capabilities of Member States to respond to the threats of Zoonotic diseases, is a very welcome development. My country is in full support of this initiative and is ready to be part of this global readiness. This year's scientific Forum will accord the experts including ours to share and learn from their research and experiences in this area.

**Mr. President,**

We are also pleased with the progress of the Technical Cooperation Programme in my country. We continue in our

quest to exploit the use of nuclear technology in areas of animal health and production, food safety, and human health and nutrition to improve the lives and livelihoods of our people.

Let me assure the IAEA that Botswana will continue to honour its contribution to the Working Capital Fund, Regular Budget and to the Technical Cooperation Fund to support IAEA activities.

**Mr. President**

Botswana is committed to fulfilling its obligations towards legally binding international instruments related to peaceful use of atomic energy. We are currently reviewing the Radiation Protection Act with the aim of having a comprehensive nuclear law that also addresses nuclear security. Let me convey my sincere gratitude to the IAEA Office of Legal Affairs for supporting my country in this exercise.

**Mr. President**

Initiatives such as The Marie Curie Fellowship Programme (MSCFP) and the AFRA PhD sandwich are very much appreciated as they are in line with our objective of transforming our economy to a knowledge based economy. We will keep motivating our young female professionals to make use of this opportunity.

**Mr. President**

Botswana continues to build capacity on various sectors of the economy through the AFRA programme. I am pleased to announce that the instrument to accede to the revised AFRA Agreement is ready to be deposited, and we commit to supporting all the efforts including payment to the AFRA fund to ensure successful implementation of the programme. We urge other countries to accede to the revised programme for smooth implementation of the programme.

Let me conclude by reiterating our appreciation to the IAEA for supporting Botswana in its endeavour to leverage on nuclear technology to improve the lives of its citizens. I wish you all fruitful deliberations and interactions.

I thank you