



*65th session of the General Conference of the
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)*

Statement by HE Ambassador Azzeddine
Farhane, President of the 64th session of the
IAEA General Conference, at the opening
session of the 65th session of the IAEA General
Conference

20 September 2021



Excellencies,
Your Excellency Mr Director General,
distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all Member States of the Agency for their contributions to the success of the 64th session of the IAEA General Conference, which took place amidst the difficult circumstances and unprecedented challenges which the world was facing then, and which it is facing still, and the **extraordinary international situation** due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced the international community to **reassess its programmes, redefine its priorities and reformulate its goals.**

Allow me also to express my appreciation to His Excellency the Director General for the effort he put into the logistical and organizational arrangements that ensured the success of the previous General Conference, which was a **critical juncture** in the Agency's work. Since His Excellency the Director General assumed his position, the Agency has faced **unprecedented and unparalleled challenges** posed by



the lockdown and changes to the traditional ways of working brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these extraordinary conditions, His Excellency the Director General has used his **alertness of mind, clarity of vision and managerial skills** to carry out the Agency's mandate in line with its motto “Atoms for Peace and Development”. To achieve this, the Agency has mobilized new technology platforms such as webinars, videoconferences and virtual events.

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The presidency of Morocco on behalf of the African Group was marked by the adoption by consensus of the following new resolutions:

- The **resolution on the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action initiative** (ZODIAC), which is aimed at mitigating future epidemics through the use of nuclear-derived techniques. Under this initiative, the Agency is assisting Member States in achieving the United Nations



Sustainable Development Goals, including Good Health and Well-being (Goal 3), Life on Land (Goal 15) and Partnerships (Goal 17).

This initiative has been actively embraced and financially supported by Member States. The Kingdom of Morocco is among the Member States that have provided financial support for this laudable initiative.

- The **resolution on the International Atomic Energy Agency and the COVID-19 pandemic**. Here I would like to commend the proactive measures taken under the Agency's largest ever practical initiative to provide support to over 125 countries all over the world. Under this initiative one-third of the African Member States of the Agency received valuable assistance with the use of nuclear-derived technology, technical know-how and nuclear and radiological equipment for the early detection and prevention of COVID-19.
- The resolution on the **project for the renovation of the Agency's nuclear applications laboratories at Seibersdorf (ReNuAL+)**. This is an important project that focuses on the need to modernize the



nuclear applications laboratories in order to keep pace with increasingly rapid technological developments. It is worth mentioning the leading international role played by these laboratories in establishing global networks of laboratories, such as the networks for combating animal diseases supported through the Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI), the African Renaissance and International Co-operation Fund (ARF) initiative, and many other initiatives. In the current global context, it is important to highlight the role of these laboratories in supporting the efforts of Member States in combating transboundary animal and zoonotic diseases. The Kingdom of Morocco is also among the Member States that have provided financial support for this important project.

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During its presidency, the Kingdom of Morocco ensured that the topic of the role of nuclear technologies in the fight against cervical



cancer was included on the agenda of the General Conference by organizing a high-level virtual panel discussion, immediately following the first plenary meeting of the 64th General Conference, on **the Role of Nuclear Technologies in the Fight against Cervical Cancer in Africa: Past Experiences and the Way Forward**. In its records, the 64th General Conference welcomed the results of this meeting, which highlighted the importance of raising awareness of cervical cancer in Africa with a view to learning lessons, exchanging best practices and creating mechanisms to achieve greater synergy, dynamism and integration among all stakeholders in order to combat this disease, now and in the future.

Regarding cooperation between Africa and the Agency, the Kingdom of Morocco considers the African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training in Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) to be one example of successful regional African cooperation with the Agency. It provides a framework for African Member States to consolidate regional cooperation by strengthening the



region's sustainability and self-reliance through cooperation with regional institutions and centres of excellence in Africa.

The Agency's contributions to building national capacities on the African continent are therefore commendable. In this regard, the Agency is providing support through technical cooperation projects to **45 African countries**. This includes support for the implementation of national and regional projects in areas such as food and agriculture, health and nutrition, energy, nuclear knowledge development, safety, water and the environment, industrial applications and radiation technology.

Through ongoing cooperation between the Agency and the African continent the Kingdom of Morocco has been the recipient of two distinctions:

- The National Centre for Nuclear Energy, Sciences and Technology (CNESTEN) on 26 January 2021 was named the **first IAEA Collaborating Centre on the African continent** for the use



of nuclear techniques in water resources management, environmental protection and industrial applications.

- The Moroccan Nuclear and Radiation Safety and Security Agency (AMSSNuR) on 16 July 2021 was **named the first IAEA Collaborating Centre** in Africa in the field of nuclear security.

I would also like to note that the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa (FNRBA), which is headed by the Moroccan Nuclear and Radiation Safety and Security Agency (AMSSNuR), received observer status, following the adoption of its charter in 2019, when the Board of Governors, in June, approved the FNRBA's observer status, allowing it to be represented at this year's General Conference and thereby strengthening the role of African regulators in nuclear security and safety.

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Morocco stresses the need to strengthen and intensify efforts to review the composition of the Board of Governors as a key step towards strengthening governance within the Agency, as set forth in the amendment to Article VI of the Agency's Statute that was adopted 21 years ago at the 43rd session of the IAEA General Conference.

Given that this amendment has been accepted to date by only 62 out of the 116 Member States required for it to enter into force, the Kingdom of Morocco worked during its presidency to raise States' awareness of the importance of bringing the amendment to Article VI into force. To that end, the presidency sent an official communication (contained in document GC65/9, dated 21 June 2021) asking all Member States to work together to bring this amendment into force, especially since this session of the General Conference would be discussing the Director General's report, under item 22 of the agenda, on the progress made towards entry into force of the amendment to Article VI.



I thank you for your kind attention and I wish the new president every possible success.