

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**NATIONAL STATEMENT DELIVERED BY
HON. DR KALUMBI SHANGULA
MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE IAEA GENERAL
CONFERENCE
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Mr President,

I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the 65th Session of the General Conference. We also commend the Director General and his dedicated team for continuing to successfully implement the Agency's programme and activities, despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Agency's TC Programme remains vital and continues to contribute meaningfully to national and sustainable development goals. The TC Programme is indispensable in building capacity through the acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge in the area of nuclear science and technology and thereby facilitating technology transfer. We reiterate our request to the Agency regarding the importance of developing affordable nuclear technology and its transfer to sustain and enhance the scientific and technological capabilities in order to expand and promote the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in developing countries.

The availability of adequate water resources is essential for sustainable development. Namibia as a semi-arid country, is continually challenged with inadequate supply of quality water for social and economic development, especially during drought periods. Therefore, we welcome the current collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, the Agency and the German Institute of Geosciences and Resources who are conducting investigations by mapping water resources, and groundwater vulnerability through the use of isotope and nuclear techniques for water resources development and management in the Karas and Erongo Regions.

It is evident that the Covid-19 pandemic caused and continues to cause devastating effects globally, affecting all sectors, including people's livelihoods and economies. I would like to take this opportunity to express our profound gratitude for the swift action taken, upon request, in evaluating the request for assistance and facilitation of the procurement of additional diagnostic kits of nuclear-derived techniques and equipment to assist our efforts in mitigating the spread of Covid-19 pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic can only be controlled effectively and sustainably through global solidarity to protect the health of all citizens to ensure equitable access to quality essential

health services. We therefore welcome this Year's Scientific Forum under the theme: ***Preparing for Zoonotic Outbreaks: the Role of Nuclear Science*** being the key focus area during this Conference. We look forward to concrete outcomes, lessons learned and recommendations that will strengthen our global response to Covid-19 and other zoonotic outbreaks.

Marine plastic pollution is an enormous threat to marine life and ecosystems, food safety, and human health and ultimately threatens progress towards attaining the SDGs. Therefore, we welcome the recently launched *Nutec Plastic Initiative*, which will complement nuclear solutions that offer Member States an appropriate platform for cross learning, using radiation technology in recycling and marine monitoring through the use of isotopic tracing techniques.

Cancer still remains one of the world's common contributor health problems and leading cause of death, mainly due to limited access to timely diagnosis and treatment programmes. The need to upgrade and expand radiotherapy services for Namibia remains urgent, both due to the growing numbers of cancer patients , aging and worn out equipments, shortage of health professionals and need to capacitate staff working in radiotherapy. Therefore, we reiterate our call on the Agency to intensify their efforts through the IAEA Technical Cooperation programme to increase support for the enhancement of radiotherapy services, capacity as well as resource mobilisation to fund large scale cancer projects.

Namibia remains committed to compliance with treaties, conventions and agreements that promote the successful implementation of the Agency's mandate in the area of safeguards, verification, safety and security and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. We have in recent years ratified key instruments and call on the Agency to provide regular support through training in consultation with Member States in order to strengthen our regulatory effectiveness in the field of nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety to nuclear safety and security at radiological and nuclear facilities.

I thank you.