



REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE Z. SODA,
MINISTER OF ENERGY AND POWER DEVELOPMENT

65TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

20-24 SEPTEMBER 2021

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you Mr President, on your election to steer the work of this conference. I pledge my delegation's full support and cooperation towards the successful discharge of your mandate. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Director General and his staff for preparing all the reports and documentation, as well as for all the arrangements made for this meeting.

My delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the IAEA for its outstanding work to ensure the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear science and technology, contributing to international peace and security, as well as to the achievement of the SDG's. More specifically we wish to thank the Agency for its work, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation and other partners, in supporting my country and others to more effectively confront the Covid-19 pandemic. We urge the IAEA to continue deploying its expertise and knowledge in this noble fight towards the eradication of the pandemic, as well as in building more resilient systems beyond the pandemic.

We applaud the IAEA for continuing to champion new initiatives even within the context of Covid-19 – most specifically the NUTEC and ZODIAC projects. I am aware that the Agency has already started delivering equipment to laboratories across the world under the ZODIAC project, and I would like to commend the Director General and his team for achieving such great strides in so short a time frame.

Mr. President,

The application of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes is largely in its infancy in my country. It is therefore imperative that we devote more energies in building critical capacities in infrastructure, safety, security, and technical expertise. We call on the Agency to continue to expand its fellowship programmes, supporting the training of nuclear scientists, including women scientists, and the integration of nuclear science and technology into our education system.

Mr. President,

Zimbabwe has benefitted greatly under a variety of IAEA technical cooperation projects. Agriculture is the mainstay of the country's economy. Extreme and often violent weather patterns experienced over the past two decades, demand that we build greater resilience and that we adapt our agricultural systems to current realities. Continued support from the Agency will enable us to develop new high yielding and highly nutritious seed varieties through mutation breeding, thus complementing existing conventional breeding techniques. Assistance with nuclear applications to control animal disease vectors, in artificial insemination in livestock, and in soil and water management, are also essential for our future development.

In the area of health, Zimbabwe welcomes the IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT). Continued technical advice in this field, training of experts, and provision of equipment and accessories remains critical as we seek to expand our capacities in the application of cutting-edge nuclear technology in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

Mr. President,

To enhance nuclear safety, my government continues to push ahead with the construction of the Disused Radioactive Sources Repository. I am pleased to report that the Facility is expected to be fully operational before the end of this year. Our gratitude goes to the IAEA Technical Officers and Experts for the advice and assistance being rendered on this project.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

My government is committed to its international obligations under the various conventions on nuclear safety, security and safeguards to which it is a party. Indeed, we are on course to ratifying or acceding to a number of relevant agreements during the lifespan of the current Parliament. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that my delegation deposited four Instruments of Ratification with the Director General at the Treaty Event held earlier today. These are:

- The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management;
- The Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident;
- The Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency; and
- The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM)

In addition, as part of our policy thrust to enhance our engagement with the rest of the international community, tomorrow I will jointly sign with the Director General, the Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

Mr. President,

Zimbabwe is currently engaged with the IAEA regarding the preparation of our 3rd Country Programme Framework - to run from 2022 to 2026. The new CPF will be fully aligned with our 5-Year Medium-Term National Development Strategy (NDS1), and will assist the country in addressing key socio-economic developmental needs through the application of nuclear science techniques.

Mr. President,

As I conclude, let me reaffirm Zimbabwe's commitment to global nuclear safety and security, and that we stand with others in the call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Let me also stress the critical importance of working together in addressing the global challenges confronting us all today.

I Thank You, Mr. President

**Vienna
20 September 2021**