



Statement of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
At the 66th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference
To be delivered by Ms. Masiha Akrami First Secretary on behalf of H.E.
Manizha Bakhtari, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic
Republic of Afghanistan to the IAEA
28 September 2022

President,
Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,
Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

It gives me a great pleasure to be here and deliver the statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the IAEA.

Let me join the previous speakers in congratulating you, Excellency, on your election as the President of the 66th General Conference. We are confident that under your leadership this conference will be very successful and productive. 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.

Furthermore, let me congratulate the hard work and the excellent leadership of Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi in providing technical assistance to Ukraine and his efforts to safeguarding the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power plant. Nuclear safety and security missions to Ukraine are of great importance at this moment.

Dear President,

This year's General Conference is taking place against the backdrop of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Though I am still working to the best of my ability for Afghan citizens in Afghanistan and abroad, there is only so much I could do. I ask you, my colleagues, to please bring back Afghanistan on the international agenda. We need the support and cooperation from the international community.

After fourteen months of occupation, the Taliban are still not able to form a functioning, accountable and legitimate government that is able to deliver vital public services and protect the fundamental human rights of all citizens, especially of women and girls. The country is now facing a deep political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in which millions of Afghans live in poverty, repression, and fear for the future.

The Taliban's ruling has proved to be a fertile ground for the growth of international terrorism in Afghanistan. The death of Ayman Al-Zawahiri clearly reaffirmed the Taliban's ties with al-Qaeda and other international terrorist networks. Due to the Taliban's ties to international terrorists, extremist groups, transnational criminals, and drug traffickers, there is a grave concern about nuclear material trafficking through Afghanistan and its neighbours. I urge IAEA members to pay close attention to this issue and hold the Taliban accountable for not allowing it to happen.

Dear President,

As you all know, the erosion of women's rights has been one of the most notable aspects of the Taliban administration to date. Afghan women continue to face persistent gender-based discrimination, gender apartheid, segregation, and violence as well as severe restrictions to their most basic human rights. Of particular and grave concern is the continued denial of the fundamental right of women and girls to complete secondary education. Afghanistan remains the only country in the world where girls are denied the right to education.

I ask the IAEA and the international community not to stop their efforts in giving Afghan women the tools, education and support they require, to join the next generation of Afghan scientists. We must encourage the involvement and applications of Afghan women to IAEA fellowships. We can't afford to lose a new generation of women leaders in nuclear science and technology. I urge you, to stand in solidarity with Afghan women and demand that the international community ensures their rights are respected and protected.

Dear President,

I would like to conclude by expressing once again my most sincere appreciation to the IAEA and its Member States for their cooperation and support, as Afghanistan faces this challenging time. We are grateful to our friends and allies for their contribution and assistance in the past and at this time, but we must strengthen our cooperation further for the people of Afghanistan.

I thank you.