

Statement by Honourable Mr. Devendra Paudel
Minister for Education, Science and Technology of Nepal at the 66th General
Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency
Vienna, Austria
26th September 2022

Mr. President,
Director General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentleman,

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to you, Mr. President, for your election as the President of the 66th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. I am fully convinced that this Conference will bring about fruitful outcomes under your able leadership.

I also extend appreciation to the Director-General, Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi, for the comprehensive report and valuable work.

Mr. President

Nepal appreciates the efforts and achievements made by IAEA towards the realization of safe, secure, and peaceful application of nuclear science and technology contributing to international peace and security.

Collaborating with the world community for the end of the arms race and complete disarmament of nuclear, biological, chemical, and other weapons of mass destruction constitute the fundamental disarmament policy of Nepal. We are committed to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, nuclear non-proliferation, and nuclear disarmament.

As a signatory and party to major disarmament-related international treaties and protocols thereof, including Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Small Quantity Protocol, Nepal believes that the use of nuclear science and technology should be solely confined to the peaceful purposes within the Safeguards' Framework of IAEA.

In line with the objectives of the IAEA, Nepal adopted long back National Nuclear Policy, 2007, which aims at regulating, controlling, and monitoring the use of nuclear energy as per IAEA guidelines; enhancing overall national welfare through the peaceful use of nuclear science; and taking sufficient safety measures for the development and use of nuclear energy by enhancing public awareness about benefits and consequences of it.

More recently we have also adopted Radioactive materials (use and regulation) Act, 2020 and Radioactive materials (use and regulation) Rules, 2022 in compliance with the IAEA Framework. Our commitments to the norms set by the IAEA are duly reflected in this legislation too.

Currently, we are working on establishing some basic standards and directives for the facilities related to ionizing radiation. In order to expedite the process, Nepal is working on establishing, in its own capacity, an efficient and effective Regulatory Body within the framework of IAEA compliances. IAEA's support in this regard is always appreciated.

We highly value the technical support and cooperation received from IAEA, ever since 2012 when we signed the Technical Cooperation Agreement with IAEA, in different projects, many of which are directly linked to the livelihoods of the Nepali people and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In fact, we are prioritizing our needs and commitment based on the SDGs and the 15th national plan of Nepal. Our ultimate motto is to improve the lives and livelihood of the people through peaceful nuclear applications, particularly in agriculture, water and environment, healthcare, and nuclear knowledge development.

I am happy to share that following the completion of two cycles of the Country Programme Framework (CPF) in 2022, the next cycle of CPF (2022-2027) will be signed today itself. The Country Programme Framework to be signed today will focus on technical cooperation in such areas as legal framework, radiation safety and nuclear security, food and agriculture, health and nutrition, water and the environment, energy and industry, and nuclear knowledge development and management

It's my firm belief that, with the implementation of TC and RCA projects, Nepal will be able to enhance the current state of knowledge and capacities in nuclear science application in the country.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate that Nepal is committed to supporting the activities of IAEA for a safer and better world and a brighter future for humanity through the peaceful and sustainable use of nuclear science and technology. I wish for the successful completion of the 66th General Conference.

Thank you.