



**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
DELIVERED BY THE  
DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY,  
DR NP NKABANE AT THE  
66<sup>th</sup> REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)**

Mr President  
Director General Grossi  
Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegation  
Distinguished Delegates

Mr President, South Africa warmly congratulates you in leading the 66<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference and assures you of its cooperation and support.

Mr President,

The 2022 General Conference takes place following the failure of the 10<sup>th</sup> Non – Proliferation Treaty Review Conference to adopt a consensus outcome document [failed/unsuccessful 10<sup>th</sup> Non – Proliferation Treaty Review Conference] which is the second consecutive Review Conference (RevCon) which was concluded without adopting an outcome document. South Africa remains deeply concerned by the lack of commitment by Nuclear Weapon States to disarm, while we, the Non- Nuclear Weapons States continue to honour our non – proliferation obligations. We unequivocally reiterate our call for Nuclear Weapon States not to use the precarious international security/geopolitical environment as a justification for their continued possession, modernisation and increase of nuclear weapons. The failure of the RevCon to attain a consensual outcome, further affects the full, balanced and effective implementation of the NPT and adds uncertainty in the international security environment.

Despite its regrettable failure to produce an outcome document, the 10<sup>th</sup> NPT RevCon raised a number of issues of relevance to this General Conference. These include the importance of the implementation of safeguards and the impact of conflicts thereto as well as the inalienable and unconditional right to peaceful uses of nuclear technology. South Africa reiterates its unwavering commitment to the NPT and to upholding our obligations under the NPT. We express our intense hope that, unlike the NPT RevCon,

this General Conference will take positive steps in enhancing the contribution of nuclear technology to development.

Mr President,

South Africa as a Contracting Member of the Convention on Nuclear Safety places great importance to nuclear safety and the central role of the Agency in coordinating international efforts to strengthen Nuclear Safety. South Africa continues to fulfil its obligations under the Convention of Nuclear Safety and has submitted the 8<sup>th</sup> National Report on the Convention of Nuclear Safety. South Africa is honoured to have served as the Vice President of the Joint Convention for 2022 and welcomes the initiatives undertaken by the IAEA in promoting the wider adherence to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

South Africa participated in the 7<sup>th</sup> Review Meeting of the Joint Convention and has fulfilled its obligations under the Convention. We remain resolute to the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technology, as well as upholding our safeguards obligations. We are, therefore, pleased that the Agency has since 2011, concluded that all nuclear material in South Africa remained in peaceful activities and that there is no undeclared use of nuclear material in South Africa that might be used for illicit and malicious activities.

South Africa firmly stands with the Director General on the inviolability of civilian nuclear infrastructure everywhere and support his seven pillars of nuclear security and safety and call upon them to be observed by all Member States.

Mr President,

South Africa endorses the European Parliament's decision to include nuclear energy as green energy, albeit on a transitional basis at the beginning of July. This commendable decision comes at a critical time when countries in Europe as well as South Africa are facing power supply challenges. We hope that this decision will go a long way in garnering acceptance of nuclear technology and its benefits, especially amongst investors as a viable field for investment.

Nuclear power is an integral part of South Africa's energy mix and it is acknowledged as a major contributor to decarbonizing energy production and mitigating the effects of climate change. The Koeberg nuclear power plant, contributes 4.2% to South Africa's power grid. This plant which has been operating safely since 1984 is approaching the end of its 40 years of original design life. Eskom, South Africa's public power generator, has submitted a License application to the National Nuclear Regulator to extend the operating lifespan of the Koeberg nuclear power plant for an additional 20 years.

Eskom, has submitted a License application and a Safety Case for Long Term Operation (LTO) to the National Nuclear Regulator in July 2022. To support the safety case compilation Eskom invited the IAEA to complete the Safety Aspects of Long-Term Operation (SALTO) Peer Review Mission, in March 2022 which addressed key elements for the safe long-term operation of Koeberg.

Koeberg has on average created 1786 direct jobs and nearly 35,000 indirect and induced jobs per year, earning a total estimated revenue of ZAR 16.4 billion for the government. A successful LTO application will allow Eskom to continue operating Koeberg sustainably for an additional 20 years.

South Africa is implementing the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP2019) which, amongst others, provides for the procurement of a nuclear build programme to extend the current nuclear capacity by 2 500MW. Some of the work already undertaken to this end includes the testing of the market through a Request for Information for the programme and we are now finalising the Procurement Framework for the programme.

In addition, South Africa's Cabinet has approved setting up a Multi-Purpose Reactor (MPR) project which is intended to replace the SAFARI-1 reactor, and Necsa has completed the Prefeasibility study and issued a Request for Information February 2022. The MPR once completed will ensure the provision of health care benefits locally, continentally and inter-continentally with respect to diagnostic and therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals. Additionally, it will bring with a range of new and additional applications of nuclear technologies for Southern African and provides scope for further contribution to the African continent and the world and underpinned our commitments and contributions to UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

South Africa through Necsa is a trusted global manufacturer of cancer diagnostic and cancer care products including the delivery of targeted radiation. In this regard, we welcome this year's Scientific Forum under the theme: "Rays of Hope: Cancer Care for All". The implementation of this initiative will assist and strengthen Member States' capacity in addressing the gaps in cancer care and explore the importance of radiation medicine, innovation and collaboration in supporting equitable access to life-saving diagnosis and treatment. As a lead on cancer-related issues on the Continent, South Africa pledges its facilities and expertise towards realising the goals of this initiative. Furthermore, South Africa is also looking forward to hosting the IAEA's Integrated Research Reactor Utilisation Review (IRRUR) Mission in November 2022, which will focus on increasing utilisation of neutron beamline applications for SAFARI-1 and the future MPR.

The current South Africa nuclear regulatory regime allows flexibility for SAFARI-1 to be a sustainable operational irradiation facility well beyond 2030, supported by well-executed ageing management programme. An engineering assessment and In-Service Inspections were performed with the recommendations justifying further safe operation until a new MPR is operational. It is therefore envisaged that SAFARI-1 **will continue operating, which will ensure continued production of medical radioisotopes and other nuclear-related research and development technologies.** The **overlap between the operation of SAFARI-1 and coming on line of the MPR will therefore guarantee** that South Africa remains a global player within the nuclear technology research and development sphere. This will further ensure that South Africa remain recognised as a regional (African) resource and centre of excellence in nuclear science and technology and is highly respected in the international research reactor community. Other than the provision of health care benefits to the South African community with respect to diagnostic and therapeutic radiopharmaceuticals, this will ensure South Africa's continued contribution to capacity

building in a wide spectrum of nuclear technologies for Southern Africa and provides scope for further contribution to the African continent and the world.

South Africa is looking forward to hosting the IAEA's Integrated Research Reactor Utilisation Review (IRRUR) Mission in November 2022, which will focus on increasing utilisation of neutron beamline applications for SAFARI-1 and the future MPR.

South Africa through Necsa, is a trusted global manufacturer of cancer diagnostic and cancer care products including the delivery of targeted radiation. In this regard, we welcome this year's Scientific Forum under the theme: "Rays of Hope: Cancer Care for All". The implementation of this initiative will assist and strengthen Member States' capacity in addressing the gaps in cancer care and explore the importance of radiation medicine, innovation and collaboration in supporting equitable access to life-saving diagnosis and treatment. As a lead on cancer-related issues on the Continent, South Africa pledges its facilities and expertise towards realising the goals of this initiative.

The iThemba Laboratory for Accelerator Based Science (LABS), our first and newly designated IAEA Collaborating Centre, has successfully installed an Accelerator based radioisotope production for medical, research and industrial applications. This includes the development of instrumentation for detection and characterization of environmental radioactivity. The Accelerator has capabilities for archaeological dating and climate evolution and we will continue to work closely with the Agency and Member States in this regard.

Mr President,

South Africa continues to investigate radioactive waste management solutions, such as the Borehole Disposal Concept that was developed by South Africa and accepted by the IAEA to provide a robust and technically sound solution for the safe and secure disposal technology for Disused Sealed Radioactive Sources inventories. Through the National Radioactive Waste Disposal Institute and the South Africa Nuclear Energy Corporation we will share the lessons learned through the implementation of the Borehole Facility with other Member States, particularly on the African continent.

South Africa has also embarked on the establishment of Centralised Interim Storage Facility (CISF) for the safe, secure and sustainable management of spent nuclear and high-level waste. The Feasibility Study has been concluded and the next phase entails the obtaining of the environmental and nuclear installation authorisations to ensure that the CISF is procured in 2024 and operational by 2030.

Mr President,

The South African Young Nuclear Professional Society and the Women in Nuclear South Africa (WINSA) Chapter continues to encourage the youth and women to be actively involved in nuclear related activities. A number of young women have benefitted from the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship and we thank the Agency for this initiative that has inspired women and youth to further their nuclear-related studies. Twenty five Women from the South African Nuclear Industry through a sponsorship supported by the Energy and Water Sector Education Training Authority are currently enrolled on an Executive Development Programme at Wits University. The programme

aims to equip women with skills that will enable them to be positioned in decision making roles in the nuclear industry.

It is also with great pleasure to announce that South Africa through WINSA launched WINSI-South Africa in 03 August 2022 with the objective of working towards gender equality in the nuclear security field and the South African nuclear industry. This was in support of the recently launched Women in Nuclear Security Initiative (WINSI) by the IAEA's Division of Nuclear Security, to contribute to the Director General, Rafael Mariano Grossi's vision of establishing the IAEA as a leading global voice for gender equality in the nuclear field,

Mr President,

Turning to Technical Cooperation, South Africa continues to support IAEA training related activities, of which there are currently 482 projects on the African Continent, under the Technical Cooperation Programme for national and regional development through capacity building in the field of nuclear science and technology. In this regard and as a sign of our commitment towards the Technical Cooperation programme, South Africa is pleased to pledge an amount of €217 610 towards the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2023.

The Technical Cooperation Programme is a high priority for my delegation and it is our collective duty as Member States to ensure that the Technical Cooperation Fund is sufficient, assured and predictable and South Africa will continue to support its mandate, including through in-kind contributions.

Building human and institutional capacity for the sustainable application of nuclear technology for development and strengthening regional cooperation across all thematic areas is vital for my country. In this regard, we have contributed € 186 605 (Euros) for the 2022/23 biennium towards the African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA).

In closing, Mr President, I wish to reiterate South Africa's unwavering and continued support for the Agency's fundamental role in ensuring that nuclear science and technology is used for peaceful purposes, and development in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063.