



STATEMENT BY THE BAHAMAS

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 67TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

VIENNA, AUSTRIA 25 TO 29 SEPTEMBER 2023

AMBASSADOR RON O. PINDER

Madam President Vilawan Mangklatanakul, on behalf of the Government of The Bahamas, I wish to extend congratulations to you, on your election as President of the 67th Session of the IAEA General Conference. Your leadership in legal matters and in diplomacy are noteworthy and we have every confidence that this session will continue to be a resounding success under your guidance.

We congratulate **Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi** on his reappointment as the Director General of this very important Agency. I also join other Member-States in welcoming our newest members, Cape Verde and The Gambia. We look forward to partnership in working towards atoms for peace and development.

Madam President, Director General, Excellencies, while The Bahamas is a small island developing state with a population of only 400,000 people, we are a large archipelagic territory spanning some 100,000 square miles and welcome up to 8 million visitors to our shores every year.

The Bahamas has no nuclear weapons nor do we have nuclear power plants, but we believe in and we reiterate our support for nuclear safeguards, nuclear safety and security, and the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. In this regard more recently, The Bahamas demonstrated its support for and signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

I am also pleased to report that The Bahamas is still actively implementing the recommendations it received subsequent to the country visit by the IAEA's Technical Team in the summer of 2022 on the implementation of the Technical Cooperation Project (BHA5002). This project holds significant promise for enhancing food safety in our nation. We consider ourselves poised to build upon our achievements and embark on new food safety initiatives for the upcoming 2023-2024 Technical Cooperation cycle.

Madam President, one of the most noteworthy advancements in our efforts to ensure food safety is the provision of Radio Assay Tools and Kits, which empower us to screen a wide range of food products, such as eggs, milk, honey, grains, and feed, in addition to veterinary drug residues, mycotoxins, and pesticide residues. Such tools are essential to

our commitment to safeguarding public health by preventing the consumption of contaminated or adulterated foods.

In addition to these tools, we have received Liquid (Chromatography Equipment), complete with essential accessories. This sophisticated technology serves a multitude of applications, from identifying and confirming organic chemical compounds to analysing chemical residues and detecting and quantifying trace-level contamination and adulteration. This equipment represents a significant leap forward for The Bahamas in our ability to ensure the highest standards of food safety for our various agricultural products.

Madam President, for The Bahamas our relationship with IAEA goes beyond technology; it extends to knowledge and capacity-building. The IAEA has played a pivotal role in enhancing our capabilities through various training programs. One such program is the Regional Training Course on Hazard Assessment, which provides a solid foundation for developing emergency preparedness and response arrangements in the event of a nuclear or radiological emergency. This integrated approach ensures that we are well-prepared to address unforeseen challenges with competence and confidence.

The regulations to ensure the safe and responsible use of nuclear technology in relation to radiation treatment and radiation diagnosis in the care and remediation of various forms cancers are of paramount importance to The Bahamas. Bahamians continue to grapple with high rates of cancer per capita; therefore, The Bahamas will seek to deepen

our partnership with the Director General's Rays of Hope Cancer Treatment initiative to provide greater access to cancer care and treatment in more practical ways.

The Bahamas also recognizes the urgent need to strengthen our resilience to address climate change and to better management and safeguard scarce resources such a water and other natural resources in the face of monumental threats. In this regard, we are immensely grateful to the Agency for their support in building our regional and national capacity in utilizing nuclear techniques to combat climate change as well as its support for specialised training through the *Energy Data Collection, Analysis, and Integrated Assessment of Climate, Land, Energy, and Water* programme.

Leveraging its expertise in nuclear science and technology, the IAEA has and continues to actively contribute to addressing the pressing challenges of climate change. The agency's support extends to various aspects of climate mitigation and adaptation, including nuclear energy's role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The IAEA plays a pivotal role in promoting research and innovation in areas such as nuclear fusion and radiation technologies for agriculture and water resource management, which have the potential to significantly enhance climate resilience. We appreciate the IAEA's multifaceted support for climate projects underscores its commitment to advancing global efforts in combating climate change through the responsible and innovative use of nuclear technologies.

Lyndon B. Johnson, the 36th President of the United States of America said it best when he admonished that “If future generations are to remember us more with gratitude than sorrow, then we must achieve more than just the miracles of technology. We must also leave them a glimpse of the world as it was created, not just as it looks when we get through with it.”

Madam President, at this juncture, The Bahamas wishes to congratulate the IAEA for its work in inspecting and monitoring the activities in and around the Zaporizhzaia (ZAP-PER-RE-SHIA) Nuclear Plant. The efforts of the Agency provides some important safeguards for Europe’s largest nuclear plant in the face of the reckless military activities of the Russian Federation. At the same time, The Bahamas takes this opportunity to once again condemn strongly Russia’s continued unprovoked aggression against Ukraine. We firmly view such actions to be a violation of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and in international law.

In the words of Hallie Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia: “Until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned, everywhere is war. And until there are no longer first-class and second-class citizens of any nation, there is war. Until a nation it right to its own self-determination is respected without fear of aggression, there is war. And until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all without regard to race, there is war. And until that day, the dream of lasting peace, world citizenship,

rule of international morality, will remain but a fleeting illusion to be pursued, but never attained... now everywhere is war.”

In closing, The Bahamas wishes to express gratitude for the continued support by the IAEA in meeting our developmental needs and in supporting key sustainable development goals. We join with Member States to reiterate our support for the mandate of ‘Atoms for Peace and Development’. We are here to commit to explore, identify, and meet future developmental needs, while we work with and give support to the Agency in improving radiation safety and nuclear security measures worldwide.

Thank you.