



Republic of Botswana

REMARKS

BY

MR. PONTSHO C. PUSOETSILE

**PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND
TECHNOLOGY**

OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

**DURING THE
GENERAL DEBATE**

**OF THE 67th REGULAR SESSION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)
GENERAL CONFERENCE**

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VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Madam President,

1. We thank you for giving the Botswana delegation the opportunity to address the General Conference on the occasion of the 67th Regular Session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
2. Let me congratulate you for assuming the Presidency of the General Conference, and assure you of the full support and cooperation of Botswana in the implementation of your mandate.
3. Allow me to also congratulate Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, for his re-appointment as the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The achievements attained by the Agency under his leadership are indeed commendable; particularly in the areas of Technical Co-operation, Nuclear Safety, Safeguards and Security, and to that end Botswana pledges her unreserved support.
4. I take this opportunity to join other delegations in welcoming Carbo Verde and The Gambia as new members of the IAEA.
5. Let me also recognize the Staff of the IAEA Secretariat for their invaluable contribution, and appreciate their tireless efforts in ensuring successful convening of this important Conference.
6. **Madam President,** Botswana has over the years enjoyed immense support from the IAEA in the realization of her

national development programmes, and most significantly at this juncture, the implementation of Botswana's Reset and Reclaim Agenda.

7. We pledge to continue honouring our obligations to support the work of the Agency, and encourage all other Member States to continue doing the same. Indeed, Botswana continues to derive immeasurable benefits particularly through the Technical Cooperation Programme. We thank the Director General and the Technical Cooperation Department for their untiring commitment to facilitate the smooth implementation of the Country Programme Framework.
8. In that regard, **Madam President**, I am delighted to inform the Conference that the long awaited first public Radiotherapy Centre in Botswana, which is supported by the IAEA, was commissioned in July 2023. This is a major achievement for the country, considering the current cancer burden and the need to increase access to services for our citizens.
9. Botswana highly values the capacity-building and expert assistance provided over the years by the IAEA, and can attest to its positive impact on the social and economic development of the country.
10. We look forward to further collaboration and support as we develop nuclear medicine capabilities. The ongoing Rays of Hope initiative is also expected to contribute to the strengthening of our capabilities in the management of cancer.

Furthermore, Botswana commits to effectively implement the ZODIAC initiative, so as to be well prepared to rapidly detect and timeously respond to zoonotic diseases.

11. **Madam President**, agriculture remains one of the priority areas. Being a semi-arid country with unreliable rainfall, the development of drought resistant and high yielding crop varieties has become a matter of necessity. It is expected that the use of nuclear techniques will accelerate the development and adoption of improved crops, soil, water and nutrition management practices to support crop and livestock production and diversification. This will contribute to increased household food security and improvement in the livelihoods of citizens. Our long-standing cooperation programme in the field of agriculture, which mainly focuses on trans-boundary animal diseases, has yielded successes. For instance, Botswana's National Veterinary Laboratory is now a reference laboratory for the World Organization of Animal Health in addressing Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP).

12. **Madam President**, Botswana considers research, technology and innovation as strategic drivers to transform her economy from middle to upper income status, and nuclear science and technology have the potential to immensely contribute to realizing this vision. We therefore have embarked on exploring opportunities in nuclear technology research, and utilisation of nuclear technology, hence our national project on Developing National Nuclear Science Training Programmes and

Research Capacities, to build capacity in research, as well as in the delivery of state-of-the-art training programmes.

13. Botswana values the training opportunities offered under the African Regional Cooperation for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology Programme (AFRA), which continue to have a significant impact in the field. During the AFRA High Level Policy meeting in Cairo, Egypt in December 2022, the Minister of Communications, Knowledge and Technology of the Republic of Botswana, Honourable Thulagano Merafhe Segokgo, made a high-level commitment in support of the AFRA programme, which is a potential catalyst for the success of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area.

14. **Madam President**, Botswana recognizes her role in the global nuclear security agenda and we continue to abide by signed agreements such as the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendment; the Code of Conduct on Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, and other related nuclear security conventions and agreements. To make this a reality, my country has infused programmes in the national development plan aligned to strengthening the national nuclear security regime. These programmes include enhancing detection capabilities at ports of entry to prevent illicit transactions involving nuclear and radioactive material. We also continue to review and update our Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan to ensure that evolving security concerns are addressed.

15. As I conclude, **Madam President**, let me assure you of Botswana's commitment to rendering continued support to the work of the IAEA. Botswana remains resolute in contributing to the agenda of atoms for peace and development.

I thank you for your kind attention.