

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA DELIVERED BY
HON. DR. KWAKU AFRIYIE, MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT,
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION AT THE 67TH
REGULAR SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY
AGENCY (IAEA) GENERAL CONFERENCE HELD IN VIENNA,
AUSTRIA, FROM 25TH TO 29TH SEPTEMBER 2023**

Madam President,

Director-General of IAEA,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I join earlier speakers to warmly congratulate you and other members of the Bureau for this session on your election, and to commend you for the professional conduct of this meeting so far. My delegation assures you of its full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties.

2. In the same vein, I wish to convey hearty congratulations to you, Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, on your reappointment for a second term as Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Your reappointment is a testament to your invaluable work as head of the Agency. Ghana assures you of its continued cooperation and support in the discharge of your duties.

Madam President,

3. I would like to convey the Government of Ghana's appreciation to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and our development partners for offering Ghana technical and financial assistance in the areas of agriculture, nuclear energy, health, industry, environment, and human resource and capacity development. We are hopeful that the partnership between the Agency and Ghana, which is geared towards Ghana's

economic growth and development through the continued application of peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, will be sustained and strengthened for our mutual benefit.

Madam President,

4. Ghana's efforts to implement its Nuclear Power Programme are progressing steadily. We have issued a follow-up Request for Information (RFI) from prospective vendors, with a focus on financial details. Thereafter, responses to the follow-up RFI and the assessment report would be submitted to Cabinet for consideration, and it is expected that a decision will be reached by the close of 2023.
5. In this connection, we wish to highlight the IAEA's support to Ghana through the various Technical Cooperation Programmes. The activities under the TC programmes continually shape the competencies and skills of our nuclear regulator, owner/operator and the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC) thereby providing support to the Ghana Nuclear Power Programme Organization (GNPPO). Furthermore, with the support of the Division for Africa, Ghana could procure a Thermal Hydraulic Loop through Government cost-sharing mechanism. This will contribute to efficient training of postgraduates in nuclear engineering and related disciplines.
6. As we take steps to complete Phase 2 of our nuclear power programme, Ghana will continue to adhere to the IAEA Milestones Approach to ensure that we adopt the best international practices and hope the IAEA will also continue to support our peaceful nuclear programme.

7. Ghana also renewed its bilateral technical cooperation with the United States and Japan towards building capacity for the Ghana nuclear industry that supports infrastructure development. Ghana's nuclear programme has also received academic opportunities from other advanced nuclear countries like South Korea, China, and Russia.

Madam President,

8. As nuclear power programme requires a strong commitment to radiation safety and its continuous improvement to prevent or minimize the radiological/nuclear risk, the country has taken steps to improve its radiation protection programme. These steps include working towards upgrading and expanding its Secondary Standard Dosimetry Laboratory. This will ensure a safer use of nuclear and radiation technologies for the socio-economic development of Ghana and its West African neighbours. Additionally, with the experience Ghana has acquired in radioactive waste management over the years, we stand ready to share the expertise in this area with other Member States.
9. Again, radon gas monitoring programme in workplaces especially in underground mines has also been initiated in collaboration with other State institutions to ensure the safety of workers. The programme will help develop radon reference levels.

Madam President,

10. Ghana, like many other countries, is faced with a plastic waste problem. In this regard, the coming on board of the IAEA NUTEC Plastic Initiative is timely in its uniqueness of providing technical support and building of human resource capacity in Ghana to undertake research activities on recycling and microplastic monitoring. Through this initiative, the Marine

Laboratory at GAEC has been designated as a Regional Laboratory for Microplastic Monitoring in the Marine Environment. Ghana's participation in the NUTEC project is also envisaged to result in the establishment of recycling facility to manage plastic waste in the country using nuclear technology.

11. Similarly, Ghana and several other West African countries face a shortage of modern cancer treatment facilities, leading to limited access to cancer care. Ghana, with a population of over 30 million, has only three radiotherapy centres; two of which are publicly owned and one owned by a private organization.
12. To improve cancer care, the National Cancer Control Programme is being reviewed and the technical input of the IAEA will be needed in this regard. Additionally, the country has built capacity for training of all cadre of cancer care professionals such as radiation oncologists, radiologists, medical physicists, radiographers, and technologists. However, limited funds for expansion of facilities impede effective cancer care delivery. Ghana and other West African countries, therefore, need to take advantage of the IAEA's Rays of Hope Initiative to address the cancer burden.
13. It is in this vein that Ghana recently partnered CRDF Global, U.S. Department of State, UK Department for Energy Security & Net Zero and the IAEA under the Sustained Dialogue for Peaceful Uses to host a three-event series on "Improving Access to Radiation Medicine in West Africa", and we look forward to making tangible progress in this area.

14. Ghana intends to establish additional radiotherapy centres to improve access to radiation medicine for Ghanaians and our neighbours. Ghana will be grateful to receive the IAEA's support, especially equipment, in this regard.

Madam President,

15. Ghana continues to benefit under the IAEA ZODIAC project to ensure timely responses to outbreaks of zoonotic diseases. It may interest you to know that the country experienced an outbreak of anthrax in May 2023 which was confirmed in five districts in the Upper East region of Ghana. The Pong-Tamale Central Veterinary Laboratory acted swiftly by producing a total of 286,000 doses of anthrax spore vaccine during the outbreak for vaccinations. The Country is very grateful to the Agency for donating the RT-PCR used in this research effort.

16. In food and agriculture, Ghana, in cooperation with the Agency, has introduced a comprehensive intervention encompassing mutant cassava cultivars, precision drip irrigation systems for soil moisture management, and innovative soil nutrient management strategies. This holistic approach has yielded exceptional results, as evidenced by the remarkable augmentation of cassava yield from 21 tons per hectare to an impressive 70 tons per hectare.

17. The potential of food irradiation to address challenges in global food systems, contributing to food security, safety, sustainability, and trade facilitation cannot be overemphasized. Ghana will appreciate the support of IAEA, through donor countries or agencies, in acquiring an irradiation facility for food preservation to reduce post-harvest losses. This irradiation facility will serve multiple purposes as it can also be used for plastic

recycling, medical equipment sterilization, material processing, and other industrial applications.

18. Ghana has taken note of the IAEA/FAO Partnership in addressing food insecurity and malnutrition in Africa and welcomes the new initiative “Atoms4Food” announced by the Director General and looks forward to contributing to its success.

19. We are delighted and thankful to announce that the Biotechnology and Nuclear Agriculture Research Institute (BNARI) of the GAEC has been designated as an IAEA Collaborating Centre for Mutation Breeding and Related Technologies for Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security.

Madam President,

20. Ghana is actively supporting the Women in Nuclear Ghana (WiN-Ghana) agenda to mobilize and support women in the various nuclear-related fields. The IAEA could enhance its collaboration with the School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences on this initiative.

21. In concluding, Madam President, I would like to assure you of Ghana’s continued support for the IAEA in the discharge of its statutory duties. I would also like to request the Agency’s continued support to Ghana towards the application of peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology in the country for sustainable development.

I thank you, Madam President.