

**Statement by Sri Lanka at the 67th IAEA General Conference,
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Agenda Item 8 - General debate and Annual Report for 2022

Delivered by

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Madam President
Excellencies
Director General of the Agency
Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the delegation of Sri Lanka, I congratulate you Madam President on your assumption of the Presidency of the 67th General Conference of the IAEA. My delegation assures you of our fullest support to steer the deliberations of the Conference to achieve a tangible outcome.

Sri Lanka also takes this opportunity to congratulate you, DG Rafael Mariano Grossi on your appointment to the office for a second consecutive term. We commend your leadership for the agency to carry out its valuable mandate. Sri Lanka assures the Director General of our fullest support and cooperation in discharging your duties during the second term.

Madam President,

We express our sincere appreciation to the Director General and the Agency for their tireless efforts made to ensure the delivery of its Programmes to Member States, which has continued this year despite the global challenges.

As reflected in the Annual Report, we note with appreciation the significant progress in delivery of its mandate in peaceful uses of nuclear technology, enhancing nuclear safety and security as well as nuclear verification and safeguards. The Technical Cooperation activities of the Agency, are more than ever, vital for a developing country such as Sri Lanka. We appreciate that a high implementation rate has been maintained by the Technical Cooperation Department in 2022 despite challenging circumstances.

Sri Lanka underscores the importance of a solid financial footing crucial for the effective implementation of its six Major Programmes enabling the acceleration and enlargement of atomic energy to peace, health, and prosperity around the globe. Sri Lanka takes note of the Agency's Budget Update for 2024 as well as appreciates the cost-saving efforts, and urges the Agency to continue to do so in the future.

Madam President,

In consistent with its long-standing pursuit and advocacy for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Sri Lanka ratified the CTBT in July this year and deposited the

instrument of accession to the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW) last week in New York.

Sri Lanka respects the right of all state parties to peaceful use of nuclear energy. We emphasize the importance of building and strengthening capacities in all Member States, especially the developing states and appreciate the assistance provided by the Agency to developing countries operating, expanding or embarking on nuclear power and radiation technology programmes in establishing or enhancing their national safety infrastructure.

Sri Lanka has already determined to generate 70% of its electricity from renewable energy and the remaining 30% from thermal power plants by 2030. In accordance with an agreement signed by the president of Sri Lanka at the "COP 26" Glasgow Summit in Scotland in 2021, Sri Lanka agreed not to rebuild coal power plants in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka pledged at the COP 27 to become a Carbon Net Zero by 2050. Ministry of Environment has already prepared the Roadmap and Strategic Plan for meeting the Carbon Net Zero by 2050. The Strategic Plan consists of Green House Gas emission reduction in Energy, Transport, Industry, Waste, Agriculture, and carbon sequestration in the Forestry sector. The plan suggests introducing Nuclear power plants starting from 2035 and the first addition will be 600 MWe in 2035.

The IAEA Assisted Phase – I, INIR Mission was conducted successfully in April 2022. Sri Lanka is in the process of preparing the Integrated Work Plan based on the actions and gaps identified by the INIR Mission. The IAEA has arranged the IWP meeting for Sri Lanka during the fourth quarter of this year. Noting the crucial need to diversify the energy sources of Sri Lanka, we are confident that our steady progress so far will continue in the same fruitful manner, and encourage the Agency to continue providing the necessary support crucially needed.

Sri Lanka recognizes the importance of Small and Medium Sized Modular Reactors, their potential benefit as a source of power generation, especially for Member States like Sri Lanka with limited electrical grids. We take note of the progress of work under the Agency-wide Platform on SMRs and their Applications to provide 'one-stop shop' support for Member States and stakeholders.

As a nuclear embarking country, Sri Lanka has already conducted several site selection and evaluation discussions with stakeholder institutions. Further, Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Board (SLAEB) has conducted technical discussions with nuclear power vendor countries seeking possible future cooperation.

The Cabinet of Ministers of Sri Lanka has already granted approval to become a party to the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, the Convention on Supplementary Compensation (CSC) for Nuclear Damage and Accession to the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities. The country is in the process of completing domestic legal procedures in these regard.

Sri Lanka has sought assistance from the IAEA to conduct a gap analysis in the national nuclear law to determine whether it is compatible for future nuclear power programme as an adequate basis for the implementation of the relevant international legal instruments, standards, and guidance etc. The Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) has already scheduled to conduct a "Legislative Assistance Mission" in Sri Lanka from 13th to 17th November 2023. It has been scheduled to conduct a national workshop on nuclear law and awareness meetings for high-level government officials during the Mission.

Under the Technical Cooperation project "Nuclear Power Infrastructure Development in Sri Lanka" two national workshops namely "Workshop on Governmental, Legal and Regulatory Framework for Nuclear Power Programme" and "Expert Mission on Staffing, Organization and HRD Planning of the Regulatory Body for the Regulatory Oversight of NPPs" have already been carried out in February and July this year.

Madam President,

Sri Lanka recognizes the importance of Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCP) of the Agency which can contribute to enhance the use of nuclear technology to meet sustainable development goals in the developing countries. As we progress on the implementation of the current phase of the Technical Cooperation Programme in the country, Sri Lanka will continue to work closely with the Agency and other bilateral partners for future activities.

Sri Lanka welcomes progress made by the Agency in relation to ReNuAL2 (Modernization of Nuclear Applications laboratories in Seibersdorf), Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC), Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution (NUTEC Plastics), and Rays of Hope initiatives.

In conclusion, Madam President, Sri Lanka firmly believes in the potential of the IAEA by effectively sharing the benefits of safe and secure applications of nuclear technology. Sri Lanka looks forward to continue meaningful cooperation with the IAEA in the coming year.

Thank you.