



Republic of Botswana

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA**

HER EXCELLENCY DR. ATHALIAH L. MOLOKOMME

**AT THE 61ST REGULAR SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA) GENERAL CONFERENCE IN
VIENNA, AUSTRIA**

18-22 September 2017

Madam President;

- **Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr Yukiya Amano;**
- **Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies, Heads of Missions and International Organizations;**
- **Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

1. It is an honour and privilege for me to address the 61st Regular Session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference on behalf of the Botswana delegation.
2. Madam President, I also take great pleasure in congratulating you on your assumption of the Presidency of this 61st Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference. This marks an important milestone in the progress of the Agency, and indeed the whole UN system, towards greater equality in the conduct of our public affairs. It is already evident from the manner in which you have steered the proceedings that under your guidance, the agenda of this Conference will be achieved.
3. Botswana values this forum as it provides us with opportunities to interact with and learn from other countries. Consequently, I pledge my delegation's full support and participation in the proceedings of this Conference.
4. I also wish to congratulate and welcome Grenada as a new member of the Agency and express the hope that this becomes the beginning of a rewarding strategic partnership with all of us in the atoms for peace and development initiative.

5. Allow me also, Madam President, to express my delegation's profound commendations to the Director General, Mr Yukiya Amano, for his comprehensive, informative and guiding statement covering the programmes and activities of the IAEA over the last year. I had the honour and privilege of meeting him when I presented my credentials last week, and we had a rich exchange of views, for which I thank him.
6. Madam President, my delegation has noted with a high degree of satisfaction the achievements attained by the Agency during his tenure as the Director General, particularly in the areas of Technical Co-operation, Nuclear Safety, Safeguards and Security despite the limited financial resources to meet the diverse challenges and expanding demands. We therefore congratulate him on his much deserved re-appointment as the Director General.
7. Whilst the agency plays an important role in promoting and facilitating co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it is also the sole internationally recognised authority responsible for verifying that these activities are not diverted for non-peaceful purposes. It is therefore our collective responsibility to comply with, rather than undermine the Safeguards agreements by pursuing narrow and selfish agendas that make the world an unsafe place.

8. Madam President, Botswana is fully committed to the ideals and objectives of the Agency, which is why the country continues to honour its financial obligations to the Agency. We believe that our modest financial contribution will contribute to the effective and successful implementation of the Agency's mandate. I am therefore pleased to confirm that Botswana has fully paid the annual contributions for the year 2017.
9. Madam President, we acknowledge the contribution of the Agency's technical cooperation program, which has been a driving force in the use of nuclear technology for development. We have noted the impact of technology transfer in areas such as crop production, animal health, energy studies, waste management and environment monitoring.
10. My delegation is cognizant of the financial limitations of the technical cooperation, and therefore encourage member states to voluntarily contribute to the technical cooperation fund (TCF) to ensure that there is sustainability in the program.
11. Madam President, our new CPF for 2017-2022 has been developed in order to ensure that the Technical Cooperation between Botswana and the Agency continues. The CPF has been aligned to the country's recently adopted National Development Plan (NDP) 11 and the Vision 2036 Strategy. This is meant to ensure that the projects developed are aligned to our national priorities for sustainable development and increased impact.
12. The major achievements in the last CPF are the establishment of the Environmental Radioactivity Monitoring Laboratory and the Satellite Veterinary Laboratories and capability in nuclear and isotopic analytical techniques in chemical food contaminants.

13. Human resource development has also been achieved through training, meetings and workshops in various sectors such as human health, Food and Agriculture, Radiation Safety and Security. Some projects were not successful due to drought conditions and we hope to continue with these at the right time in order to achieve the desired results.
14. Botswana is participating in the African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA). The immense benefits of the AFRA projects are also being realized in the fields of agriculture, human health, water resources, food and nutrition. We encourage Member States that are still to contribute to the AFRA fund to do so in order to allow for maximum use of the resources availed by the Agency.
15. Madam President, like many other African Member States, Botswana needs support and assistance for the acquisition, adoption, adaptation and use of appropriate nuclear technologies. This would catalyze economic development and contribute towards poverty reduction amongst our people, as well as fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals as well as Botswana's Vision 2036. While we seek to develop and maintain our national capacity and capability in nuclear technology, we are also ready to explore mutually beneficial cooperative agreements in the region such as the SADC network.
16. Our aim in establishing multi-lateral relations is to ensure that the available resources are optimally utilized, and leverage on the experience of others. Key areas of collaboration include but are not limited to: nuclear safety and security, uranium mining and milling, food safety and security, public

health, animal health, nutrition as well as research and development.

17. One of the highlights of the partnership in the recent past is in Agricultural sector where human resource development, linked to the project on the control of trans-boundary animal diseases, resulted in the Botswana National Veterinary Laboratory being appointed as the World Organisation of Animal Health reference laboratory for Contagious Bovine Pleuro Pneumonia (CBPP).
18. Madam President, until recently, the Botswana National Veterinary Laboratory (BNVL) dealt with trans-boundary animal diseases (TADs) through the use of conventional disease diagnostic methods. In order to speed up diagnosis and establish methods for early warning, prevention and control of TADs and other infectious diseases, the Joint FAO/IAEA Division assisted BNVL in developing and adopting modern molecular techniques such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and isotopic methods.
19. Madam President, we are also delighted to be exhibiting for the first time at the General Conference. We have focused on demonstrating how Botswana has benefited from the use of nuclear technology. I wish to emphasize that we have been able to achieve all this thanks to the technical Cooperation provided by the Agency.
20. In the Health Sector, the teaching hospital, where a radiotherapy centre will be established, has been completed. This gives us hope that a sustainable, cost saving and convenient solution on cancer treatment is within reach. We are expecting the radiotherapy center to be operational in the not so distant future. My country therefore welcomes parallel

programmes for early cancer diagnosis, particularly in collaboration with the WHO and other UN organs.

21. Madam President, we are looking forward to the Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) Mission to be conducted by the Agency in October 2017. The preparations for this mission are at an advanced stage. The mission will help to evaluate the current status of compliance of the governmental, legal and regulatory infrastructure for safety in accordance with IAEA Standards and to enhance the effectiveness of the national infrastructure for safety.
22. We commit to implementing the recommendations and any suggestions for improvement. The mission will also identify any good practices, which we will greatly appreciate and certainly leverage upon.
23. Madam President, a global approach to nuclear security cannot be overemphasized. We are seeing new trends of terrorist attacks where the perpetrators are targeting public places. As part of the implementation of the International Nuclear Security Plan (INSSP), we are at an advanced stage of developing a threat and risk assessment and from this we will be able to put strategies in place to mitigate the threats. We therefore encourage member states to accede to the amendment to the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.
24. Madam President, my delegation would like to emphasize the importance of the Agency's Safeguards system and of continuing steps to reinforce it. I would like to encourage Member States to conclude the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocol. This will buttress the

safeguards regime and promote greater confidence among States in the peaceful utilization of nuclear material.

25. Madam President, in conclusion, I wish to reiterate our sincere gratitude to the Agency for the continued support and assistance to ensure that Botswana benefits from the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We remain committed to the realization of the ideals of this organization. We all belong to one global community, and we believe there is a need to continue to work together as different nations towards promoting a better and safe environment for all.

I Thank you.