



**PERMANENT MISSION OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT
VIENNA AND TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA**

Speech delivered by Ambassador Juan Antonio Fernández to the General Debate of The 61st General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Vienna, 20 September 2017

Madam President,

I congratulate you on your election to preside this session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It took too long time for a woman to chair the most important forum of the Agency.

We congratulate the Director General, Mr. Yukiya Amano who has been re-elected by acclamation for a new mandate. It is ultimately the recognition of his leadership in the promotion of nuclear applications and technical cooperation of the Agency on the premise “Atoms for Peace and Development”.

Madam President,

We welcome Granada as a new Member State of the Agency. We are pleased that other sister Caribbean country joins the IAEA. The same Caribbean which is being severely harassed by the unrestrained forces of nature, by hurricanes occurring one after another and every time stronger.

Those events among some others, confirm that facing climate change is a priority for the humanity, particularly, the need of a special and differential treatment of the small island developing States.

We appreciate the numerous signs of solidarity and offers of assistance received from the system of the United Nations, Governments and civil society organizations. We specially highlight the High Level Meeting in solidarity with countries affected by Hurricane Irma which was held this Monday, 18 September called by the Secretary General of the United Nations and the President of the General Assembly.

Perhaps someday through the use novel nuclear applications we could foresee and mitigate more effectively those natural disasters. The IAEA can and should play a significant role in this sense. I would like to underline that the resources and efforts to the utilization of nuclear applications for the sake of development and environmental protection should constitute priorities for the Agency as stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Madam President,

Technical Cooperation is a main pillar which deserves prioritized attention. We recognized the commendable efforts of the Agency in the organization of the First International Conference of the IAEA Technical Cooperation which was held in May 2017.

The excellent outcomes of this Conference and the high level of its attendees confirm that the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme is the main mean for the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Ultimately, it is the priority of the vast majority of the Member States of this Organization.

I would like to recognize the enormous effort of the Secretariat and particularly, of the IAEA Deputy Director General, Mr. Dazhu Yang. We unequivocally support the organization of these Conferences which should be regularly held as in other IAEA fields.

The examples given on the impacts of the Technical Cooperation Programme in its 60 years validate the need for reinforcing this program and provide it with the necessary financial and human resources. Notwithstanding, in spite of the repeated calls of the vast majority of the Member States, the amount of resources allocated to the Technical Cooperation Programme is far from meeting the developing countries' needs.

We reiterate our support for ARCAL Programme as it is an essential mechanism to encourage cooperation in nuclear matters between Latin American and Caribbean nations. We endorse projects in the safety field which contribute to strengthen domestic protection and radiological safety infrastructures.

Madam President,

Cuba attaches great importance to **Application of nuclear technologies** in key areas of economy and society such as human health focusing on the cancer control programme, food security, agriculture, and environmental protection.

We welcome the decision of dedicating the Scientific Forum of this year to Human Health and we are delighted to show Cuban experiences, specially, in the Nuclear Medicine area.

Madam President,

We stress the outcomes of the International Conference on **Nuclear Security: Commitments and Actions** held from 5 – 9 December 2016. We ratify our country's commitment with the implementation of Ministerial Declaration adopted there.

We congratulate the excellent cooperation executed by our country together with the IAEA on the implementation of the Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan (INSSP) which has allowed us to strengthen our prevention, detection, and response to damaging acts.

Madam President,

Cuban delegation highly values development of activities related to Nuclear and Radiological Safety. Our country has deposited instruments of acceptance of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and instruments of accession of the Joint Convention in July. Both Conventions shall enter into force for Cuba on 1 October 2017.

We acknowledge the crucial work performed by the Ibero American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Bodies which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year

Madam President,

Cuba's commitment with the **safeguards** is evident through obtaining the double certificate for 10 consecutive years and the satisfactory results reached during IAEA inspections including the one executed this year.

Cuba supports efforts aiming at improving efficiency of Safeguards respecting the legitimate rights of the States. Provisions exclusively voluntary in nature cannot be mandatory. At the same time, it should be guaranteed that resources devoted to these safeguard activities will not affect the necessary resources to the development of IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme.

Madam President,

We welcome the positive outcomes which have been submitted on the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The adoption of this Plan is a clear example that dialogue and negotiations are the adequate ways for solving differences and achieving successful agreements for all parties involved.

We reaffirm our support for the establishment of a **nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East**. In this regard, we hope that during the preparatory process for the 2020 NPT Review Conference initiated in April 2017 in Vienna this topic shall be duly taken into account.

Madam President,

Allow me to conclude by pointing out that the international community is taken a historic step nowadays. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons shall be opened for signature in New York and Cuba shall be signing it today. We hope it shall be a first step towards the total elimination of almost 15 000 existing nuclear weapons. As it is established in the Treaty, the only effective way to guarantee that the humanity will never suffer again the terrible impact of these weapons is their total and absolute prohibition and elimination.

I thank you very much.
