

AEIA 61st General Conference

Vienna, 19 September 2017

Statement by the Portuguese Head of Delegation

Manuel Heitor, Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education

Let me start by congratulate **Ambassador Yukiya Amano** for a new mandate as Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We all should continue helping him to strengthen the role of the Agency **to promote peace and the sustainable development of our societies.**

Above all, we should share the responsibility of promoting “**Knowledge as our common future**”, including ways to allow population at large, from every country, to benefit from nuclear science and technology.

Portugal and the Portuguese Government are engaged in this endeavor and clearly share such responsibility.

Humankind well-being, wealth creation and the planet earth are entering critical times and facing threatening challenges, which can only be overcome by enlarging and strengthening knowledge-based international cooperation and, among many other subjects, **nuclear science and technology do play a critical role in shaping our common future.** This clearly requires our focus on **medical physics** and **radiation oncology** and, in general, **nuclear medicine and health applications of nuclear science and technology.**

It is under this context that Portugal participates in this conference in a way to help strengthening the role of the **International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA**, in the following dimensions:

1. Portugal is committed to help promoting **medical physics**, particularly in the areas of **radiation oncology** and **health applications of nuclear science and technology**, as a reliable and safe practice, as well as to guarantee its availability and safe practice at a world level throughout all our health systems. This requires large international, public and private efforts:
 - to **promote nuclear science** together with **biomedical engineering**;
 - to **train future generations of medical physicists and nuclear health professionals**;
 - to **improve all our health systems** and the capacity to facilitate the best medical care and services to all our citizens;

2. Portugal is particularly committed to foster the development of **high-energy protonics and other advanced therapies for cancer treatments**. We aim to re-orient our nuclear research and training activities towards health applications in close interaction with IAEA and in closed international partnerships with players worldwide. This is **to be made operational in the course of next years**, in close interaction with our main nuclear research facilities and major stakeholders in national health system;
3. Portugal is committed to foster **multilateral scientific and technological cooperation in complex systems engineering and science** towards an **integrative approach to medical physics**, together with emerging methods of data science for radiation oncology and risk governance. This requires strengthening **international networks of government, industry, and research organizations worldwide**, involving all countries in every world region;
4. Portugal also proposes the IAEA to promote an international initiative to promote **education and scientific culture about nuclear medicine**, as well as to use nuclear science for help promoting medical contents worldwide. We all require facilitating the expansion of existing activities at IAEA and other major players worldwide to raise awareness for medical physics among all children, but also **to deliver new educational and cultural contents in all countries**.

Lessons learned over the past decades with international partnerships in science, technology and higher education, among many intergovernmental scientific ventures, have clearly shown that **the future can only be built with more knowledge, a better scientific culture and enhanced exchanges of ideas under a context of openness**. Open science and innovation strategies with a focus on **health applications** are critical for future generations to better understand the role of science to shape “**Knowledge as our common future**”. This requires our common effort to build a better world and the **International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA**, should strengthen its role in these dimensions as a critical player at world level.