

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Priyanee Wijesekera
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka
At the 61st Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference
Vienna, Austria on 20 November 2017

Madam President
Director General of the IAEA
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates

Madam President,

On behalf of the delegation of Sri Lanka, I have the honour to extend warm felicitations to H.E Mrs. Maria Zeneida Andara Collinson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines on your assumption of the Presidency of the 61st Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference. The Group is confident that under your able guidance and leadership, the Conference would achieve a meaningful outcome. Mr. President, let me assure you of my delegations' whole hearted support in this task.

I wish to thank the Director General Amano and the Secretariat of the IAEA for the arrangements made for this Conference as well as for their excellent cooperation with Sri Lanka in all aspects of Agency's work.

Sri Lanka congratulates DG Yukiya Amano on his reelection in office for the third term. His reelection by acclamation is a tribute to his contribution to making nuclear energy a force for prosperity and development. My delegation makes a note of its deep appreciation of the Director General's untiring and diligent efforts for the contribution of the Agency towards international peace and development. Sri Lanka look forward to the visit of DG Yukiya Amano to Sri Lanka in March next year and I believe this visit would symbolize the continued cooperation between Sri Lanka and the IAEA on the peaceful

use of nuclear energy and to enhance the cooperation in the field of nuclear science and technology in Sri Lanka.

I also wish to thank Mr. Yukiya Amano, Director General for his comprehensive report on the work of the IAEA for 2016 which provides information on the activities undertaken by the Agency.

Sri Lanka appreciates the efforts in 2016 which focused, in particular, on helping Member States use nuclear and isotopic techniques to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Madam President,

Sri Lanka considers nuclear security as a vital subject and appreciates the assistance given by the IAEA on security matters to strengthen local infrastructure. In this aspect Sri Lanka has embarked with the Agency to obtain assistance to update the Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan (INSSP) for Sri Lanka which was developed with the support of the Agency in 2013. During 21-23 August 2017, the plan updated collaboratively by the agency and the respective stake holder institutes in Sri Lanka is to be finalized and the acceptance of the plan is to be informed to the IAEA.

During this mission, it was also considered to establish National Nuclear Security Support Centers (NSSP) at SLAEB. The primary objectives of NSSP are to develop human resources through the implementation of a tailored training programme, to establish a network of experts, and to provide technical support for lifecycle equipment management and scientific support for the prevention and detection of and the response to nuclear security events.

I wish to acknowledge the assistance provided by the IAEA Department of Nuclear Security to train Sri Lankan officials and Sri Lanka would appreciate further training, and is interested in working with IAEA to use our experts in other missions on nuclear security.

Madam President

Sri Lanka accepted the first mission of IAEA safeguards inspectors through the Atomic Energy Regulatory Council under comprehensive safeguards Agreement on August 8 and 9, 2017 which is a significant achievement for fulfilling obligations of Sri Lanka and it has taken number of positive steps to become a party to the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement. The assistance of the IAEA Incident and Emergency Centre for training officers of the Council in Nuclear or Radiological Emergency Response and Planning is also appreciated.

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Madam President

After the establishment of new independent regulatory body, Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Regulatory Council (Council) in January in 2015 adhering to international requirements in radiation safety, security and safeguards and creating the necessary legal framework for this purpose has made a significant improvement in radiation protection, nuclear security and safeguards. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Council introduced a licensing and inspection system based on a graded approach and established an import and export control of sources and source security programme to meet requirements of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Guidance on Import and Export of Radioactive Sources which were endorsed by Sri Lanka on 08th January, 2016.

Madam President

In order to harness the benefits of nuclear science and technology for the advancement of national development, the Government of President Maithripala Sirisena has given priority to addressing the energy needs of Sri Lanka through an appropriate energy mix.

Sri Lanka is considering examining the possibility of utilizing nuclear power as an option to meet the country's growing energy demands as its economy expands and industry diversifies. Even though Sri Lanka has not still taken a firm decision to use nuclear power to meet the future power demand of the country, a project "Establishing a Roadmap for the Nuclear Power Programme in Sri Lanka" is to be implemented during next TC programme in order to train relevant officials on important aspects of nuclear power as it is important if Government takes a positive decision in future.

Madam President,

The technical cooperation programme is the Agency's key mechanism for transferring technology and building capacities in the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology, helping Member States to achieve their development goals and to address a range of global challenges.

The establishment of a National Centre for Research, Training and Services in Medical and Molecular Entomology for Vector-borne Disease Control is one of the major projects which is being successfully implemented at the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka under the 2016-2017 TC cycle, will assist solving issues occurring due to vector-borne diseases. Assistance received from the agency to train the team member of this project is greatly acknowledged.

Sri Lanka is also currently receiving assistance to improve the capacity to identify Sri Lankan adolescents at risk of cardiovascular diseases and to intervene in order to prevent future disease which can occur due to nutrition issues.

The TC programmes is also assisting with poverty alleviation in Sri Lanka by providing rural women dairy farmers high producing cattle, to enhance their livelihood through increased national milk production while conserving national dairy genetic resources.

Sri Lanka is also receiving technical assistance from the IAEA for establishing a National Centre for Nuclear Agriculture as well as a National Centre for Marine Applications in collaboration with national stake holders, the Marine Environmental Prevention Authority (MEPA) and the National Aquatic Resource Authority (NARA).

The IAEA has provided technical assistance and arranged for fellowship training at the Government-owned Multipurpose Gamma Irradiation Facility which provides irradiation services for industrial products. More participants are expected in future at this center.

It is worth to indicate the progress made by the Agency in the use of Isotope Hydrology for Water Resources Management, Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) and approaches to Supporting Infrastructure Development for Nuclear Power. These programmes are highly beneficial for countries which are facing difficulties in managing water resources, fight against cancer and technology transfer in connection with the infrastructure development for Nuclear Power.

Sri Lanka has requested the Agency to identify National Centre for Non-Destructive Testing (NCNDT) and Sri Lanka Gamma Center as regional resource Centers and Sri Lanka expects that it will take place in near future.

Madam President

We are pleased that technical assistance will be forthcoming under the next biennium programme commencing in 2018. The Establishment of a Nuclear Medicine Unit (Radioimmunoassay Laboratory) at Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, which is a former conflict torn area of Sri Lanka which is now being developed with

essential infrastructures is one of the projects preliminary selected to be implemented under next TC programme and will be immensely beneficial for the people in this area.

The combined use of isotopic and chemical techniques to resolve the fate of contaminants in hydro-geological systems is one of the five projects which is of national importance and expected to be implemented under the next TC cycle of the Agency.

I also take this opportunity to reiterate our request for assistance from the Agency to help solve the fast spreading Chronic Kidney Disease in parts of Sri Lanka. This is currently one of the urgent priorities for the health and water management sectors.

Sri Lanka is also currently taking steps to establish a Cyclotron based Radiopharmaceutical production facility in the country with the purpose of providing quality and productive services to the patients in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka expects the Agency's support through its technical cooperation programme in order to establish this facility in the country with a view to accomplishing the expected outcome.

Madam President,

We look forward to working with the IAEA in a spirit of cooperation.

Thank you