

Global South-South Development Expo 2012, Opening Ceremony and High Level Segment
**Statement by Mr Kwaku Aning, Deputy Director General and Head of the Department
of Technical Cooperation, International Atomic Energy Agency**

20 November 2012, 09:00–11:30 a.m.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

I am delighted to speak to you this morning on behalf of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Let me start by conveying the warm greetings of Director General Amano, and his wishes for a successful event.

Most of you may know the IAEA for its role in ensuring that nuclear technology is not misused – in fact it is frequently referred to as the UN’s nuclear watchdog. What the Agency is less well known for, however, is its contribution to development work. You may not be aware of how important nuclear science and technology is in addressing a whole range of development challenges. In the field of food and agriculture, nuclear techniques help farmers produce more food, protect animals and crops against diseases and pests, and ensure that food is safe and wholesome. Nuclear techniques are also used to map and manage groundwater resources to ensure safe and secure water supplies now and in the future, and to enhance water use efficiency in agriculture. In health, nuclear technology is used to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer and cardiovascular and other non-communicable diseases – diseases that are growing rapidly in developing countries. Nuclear techniques are also used to develop and monitor interventions to combat malnutrition.

The IAEA has a membership of 158 countries, in every part of the world. More than thirty are Least Developed Countries. We’ve been supporting cooperation among and between our Member States for over five decades, and are very actively involved in strengthening links between science and development, and in building and reinforcing scientific networks. Back in the 1950s, what was then called the IAEA’s ‘technical assistance’ programme was modest. It consisted of small, short-lived projects that focused mainly on building human resource capacity and creating institutions and facilities that would support the safe and effective introduction of nuclear technology. Today, however, the IAEA focuses on cooperation for sustainable socioeconomic development, building on the skills and infrastructure that countries have acquired through working with us over the past five decades. Our Member States are full partners in the technical cooperation programme, setting national and regional priorities, and offering training opportunities and technical support to the IAEA and to other IAEA Member States. Regional centres of excellence play an important role in sharing the benefits of nuclear science and technology among countries.

I'd like to draw your attention to the shift from IAEA assistance to IAEA cooperation – it shows how support in a specialised field at the national and regional level, successfully applied over decades, has resulted in a body of countries with solid, institutionalised capacities in nuclear science and technology – countries that are capable of sharing their experience and know-how at many levels. As national scientific capacity increases, so too does national ability to take the lead in defining country needs. Scaling up, these capacities allow countries to participate actively – to share resources and expertise – in multi-country projects that address the needs of several Member States.

For the IAEA, technical cooperation among developing countries – TCDC – is one of the primary ways of addressing the diverse science and technology needs of countries. TCDC draws on regionally available skills and facilities, and strengthens links between institutions in a region. Through their participation in regional TC projects, IAEA Member States with more developed nuclear sectors share their knowledge and amenities with other countries with less advanced nuclear sectors.

This is facilitated and supported through Regional Cooperative Agreements signed by IAEA Member States in a particular region. Such agreements are in place in Africa (AFRA), Asia and the Pacific (RCA and ARASIA) and Latin America (ARCAL). The agreements build national and regional ownership and encourage economies of scale and the efficient use of limited resources; they also provide a basis for intensified collaboration among countries through programmes and projects that are focused on their specific shared needs.

The Regional Cooperative Agreements are an example of formalized TCDC. By this, I mean that they have developed strategic frameworks for cooperative planning, which set out priorities, strengthen regional programmes and optimize horizontal coordination, including the use of institutional resources and exchanges of expertise. These frameworks allow for the identification of the regions' most pressing needs that can be addressed with available nuclear technology and with the support of the IAEA or other international sources of cooperation. Through such cooperative agreements, the IAEA Member States demonstrate a lengthy, substantial and robust tradition of TCDC. In fact, the agreements have been in place for almost as long as the technical cooperation programme itself – just this year, RCA celebrated its 40 year anniversary, while ARCAL has been in place for 27 years, and AFRA for 23 years. ARASIA, the youngest agreement, entered into force in 2002.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The themes that the Global South-South Development Expo addresses this year – energy and climate change, and the role of partnerships in sustainable development – are central to development. The IAEA is helping Member States to develop and implement solutions in these areas, applying nuclear science and technology. Right now, over one thousand IAEA TC projects are active in countries around the world, helping Member States to diagnose and treat diseases, fight hunger, enhance food

security and manage natural resources; supporting nuclear safety; building human capacities; and contributing to socioeconomic development.

The IAEA brings countries together to resolve common development challenges in many fields, providing countries not only with technical capacity, but with the tools to work together and to learn from each other. Let me give you some examples. In June this year, together with sister UN organizations and other partners, we started a long-term project with thirteen countries in the Sahel region that will enhance these countries' knowledge and understanding of the five large transboundary aquifers that they share. This will be done through information and technology sharing as well as capacity building, and will ultimately help the countries taking part to jointly manage these precious resources. Now that's an example of large scale country cooperation.

In Africa, we have established capacity to evaluate nutritional interventions in people living with HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases such as malaria, using stable isotope techniques to monitor changes in nutritional status through body composition assessment. Networks of health professionals have been established in Latin America to develop and evaluate interventions to combat the growing problem of childhood obesity and related non-communicable diseases in the region. We have also supported interregional efforts to combat acute malnutrition in infants and young children, in particular through collaboration with the International Malnutrition Task Force composed of representatives from WHO, UNICEF, IAEA and other agencies. Through our Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT), the IAEA is helping countries to maximize the use of radiation medicine through integrated cancer control strategies.

We develop and transfer climate-smart agricultural strategies that help our Member States make judicious and efficient use of scarce resources such as soil, water or nutrients – strategies that minimise environmental damage. In Asia and the Pacific, for example, we are bringing together countries in a project to develop 'climate-proof' rice production systems. In our dedicated specialist laboratories, fellows from all over the world are trained in nuclear techniques, and learn from each other, forming friendships and developing professional networks that will support them throughout their careers. And finally, the IAEA brings together institutions from both developed and developing countries to work together towards specific solutions and to share good practices that support sustainable socioeconomic development through coordinated research projects.

Dear colleagues,

Nuclear science and applications for development cannot stand alone. For the IAEA's technical cooperation programme to have effective impact, partners are essential. The IAEA is not the lead international organization in food and agriculture, for example, or in health. That's why our partnerships with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization are so

important. These are also our best known partnerships – in fact we have a Joint Division with FAO, and a formalised working relationship with WHO. But we also work closely with partners in other areas. For example, we've just signed a Practical Arrangement (cooperation agreement) with UNIDO on using environmentally-friendly nuclear techniques in cleaner industrial production processes to detect and treat pollutants. This will allow us to leverage UNIDO's network of Cleaner Production Centres to increase TCDC in this specific field. We also anticipate that we will be able to strengthen energy planning and energy modelling scenarios for our Member States under this agreement, which is highly relevant in the context of the Sustainable Energy for All movement.

As many IAEA Member States in arid environments are affected by drought and desertification, we are in the process of finalising a cooperation agreement with the UN Convention for Combatting Desertification and are actively engaged in the Global Soil Partnership led by FAO. In this context we are cooperating with UNESCO and the Sahel Observatory to assess, monitor and manage groundwater resources in the Sahel region, through the project I mentioned earlier.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In 2000, the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions agreed on the Millennium Development Goals, and set the year 2015 as the deadline for their achievement. This date is rapidly approaching, and work has started on the post-2015 development agenda. In June this year, the Heads of State attending Rio+20 again recognised the importance of science, technology and innovation for development in many areas, including energy and climate change. They called for the strengthening of technical and scientific cooperation – North-South, South-South and triangular – in human resource development, training, sharing of expertise, knowledge transfer and technical assistance to enhance sustainable development capacities. The IAEA, with its wealth of experience in facilitating cooperation between Member States in order to jointly address common problems, together with its increasingly strong focus on partnering with other organizations in relevant areas, is well positioned to contribute to the debate on the development of Sustainable Development Goals.

To strengthen technical and scientific cooperation between countries, new forms of horizontal engagement and alliances are needed, and the role of science and technology must be reflected in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and integrated regional UN development agendas. A sound infrastructure of education, research institutions, laboratories and hospitals, all crucial for building a strong science base, must be in place. And in line with the IAEA's evolving approach over the past five decades, strong South-South collaboration will enable nations to share knowledge gained in environments like their own.

The IAEA is delighted to have the opportunity to showcase some of our activities in transferring proven nuclear technology to address development challenges, and to highlight how IAEA Member States cooperate for national, regional and global good. I encourage you all to visit our exhibition on the UN Agencies, Sponsors and Partners Exhibition floor. Thank you.