

Media Statement

03 October 2016

South Africa's ambassador in Vienna elected as Chair of the IAEA Board of Governors

South Africa's Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Governor to the Board of IAEA (Agency), Mr Tebogo Seokolo, was today, Monday 03 October 2016, elected to serve as its Chair for the period October 2016 to October 2017. The last time South Africa chaired the IAEA Board was in 1959.

The Vienna-based IAEA was established in 1957 with South Africa as one of its founders. It currently comprises 171 Member States.

The Board of Governors (BoG) is the major policy-making organ of the IAEA in between the Agency's annual General Conferences. It is made up of 35 Member States, with South Africa serving as one of the permanent members. The Board, amongst others, provides strategic oversight over the activities of the Secretariat led by the Director General. It also approves the Programme and Budget of the organisation and monitors its implementation.

The IAEA is a multilateral body with the responsibility to promote the safe and secure use of nuclear science and technology for peace and development. The IAEA has over the years played an important role in supporting interested Member States, based on their respective needs and priorities, to use nuclear energy to generate electricity.

In recent years, the IAEA has played a prominent role in assisting its members to implement their regional and national development plans. For example, in Africa the IAEA is involved in assisting affected countries, including South Africa, to use nuclear techniques to eradicate mosquitoes and tsetse flies in order to control their associated diseases, like Malaria and Trypanosomiasis. During the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the IAEA in partnership with South Africa, amongst others, used nuclear techniques for the early detection and treatment of the disease. The IAEA also uses nuclear techniques to detect and treat animal diseases, which also impact on human health. It is understood that 70% of human diseases directly emanate from animal diseases.

South Africa is highly regarded by IAEA Member States due to the development of its peaceful nuclear programme. Through the power plant in Koeberg, the country generates 5% of total electricity supply from nuclear. South Africa is the second largest producer of medical isotopes, which are used in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Through its research reactor, SAFARI-1, which has for over 50 years

operated safely, securely and reliably, South Africa exports this life-saving treatment to over 60 countries the world-over.

Since the term of office of the current Director General comes to an end during South Africa's tenure as Chair, Ambassador Seokolo will facilitate the processes for the appointment of a Director General.

In welcoming Ambassador Seokolo's election as Chair of the IAEA Board, Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane said "This election is an affirmation of South Africa's leadership role on the world-stage in general and specifically on matters of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy."

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