

MEDIA STATEMENT ON SOUTH AFRICA'S PARTICIPATION AT THE 61st SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA) GENERAL CONFERENCE, VIENNA, AUSTRIA FROM 18-22 SEPTEMBER 2017.

21st SEPTEMBER 2017

The Deputy Minister of Energy, Ambassador Thembisile Majola, is leading the South African delegation to the 61st Session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference in Vienna, Austria from 18 – 22 September 2017.

Deputy Minister Majola is accompanied by, among others Ambassador Tebogo Seokolo, South Africa's Permanent Representative to the IAEA; senior officials from the Departments of Energy, and Science and Technology; as well as representatives from the South Africa Nuclear Energy Cooperation (NECSA); National Nuclear Regulator (NNR); and ESKOM. South Africa is currently the Chair of the IAEA Board of Governors for the period 2016 - 2017.

The Conference has considered, among others, resolutions reflecting on the progress made since the previous General Conference, with a particular focus on how Nuclear Science is used to assist States to attain their national and regional development goals; measures to strengthen the safety and security of nuclear facilities and radioactive material; as well as efforts to ensure that States' nuclear material are only utilised for peaceful purposes.

Significantly the General Conference coincides with the opening for signature today and ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Nuclear Weapons in New York. This Treaty represents a historical milestone in global efforts to establish and maintain a nuclear weapons free world.

In her address to the Conference Deputy Minister Majola used the opportunity to congratulate the IAEA for its continuous efforts in assisting Member States to use Nuclear Science and Technology for their socio-economic development. The Deputy

Minister particularly applauded the IAEA for its efforts through the Technical Cooperation Programme in applying the latest techniques in nuclear science to mitigate the effects of diseases that affect wildlife, livestock and humans. In this context Deputy Minister Majola congratulated the IAEA for the ongoing project to renovate its Nuclear Application Laboratories which are based in Seibersdorf. Through these laboratories the IAEA offers advance training, research and development opportunities to scientists and experts particularly from the developing countries.

One of the key outcomes of the Conference was the affirmation of the central role nuclear energy plays in enhancing global energy capacity. The Conference highlighted amongst others, the trend which demonstrates the increasing number of countries that are utilising nuclear power to diversify their energy mix. For example, the IAEA in its report entitled “International Status and Prospects for Nuclear Power 2017”, illustrated that the worldwide demand for nuclear power is on a positive trajectory with 447 nuclear power reactors operational in 30 countries, and 60 under construction in 15 countries.

On the margins of the Conference Deputy Minister Majola also met with the Director General of the IAEA, Mr Yukiya Amano, where she congratulated him on his re-appointment as Director General. The Deputy Minister also met with the Minister of Mines and Energy of Namibia to discuss issues of mutual interest between the two countries.

Deputy Minister Majola participated in a high level panel on the Added Value of Gender Parity focussing on the role women nuclear professionals, including young aspirants, play in the nuclear science, technology and engineering fields.

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