



**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
DELIVERED BY THE
MINISTER OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY,
HONOURABLE SAMSON GWEDE MANTASHE (MP)
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
64th SESSION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)
GENERAL CONFERENCE**

VIENNA

21-25 SEPTEMBER 2020

VIA VIDEO RECORDING

Mr President, Ambassador Farhane
Director General, Grossi
Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegations
Distinguished Delegates

Mr President, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Africa, accept our congratulations on your election as President of the 64th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference.

I applaud the IAEA for the theme “Atoms for Peace and Development”, which directs us to intellectually take up the role of nuclear technology. We must educate society that nuclear is, in many ways, a technology of the future.

In a continent like ours, Africa, where we are confronted with diseases like Cancer, Ebola, Malaria and others, the medicinal role of nuclear is beyond question. South Africa is committed to contribute towards enhancing African development, including through the peaceful use of nuclear energy, science, and technology. Covid-19 has re-emphasised the importance of global solidarity to deal with these challenges in a collaborative manner.

We need to emphasize the strategic importance of the balanced implementation of all three pillars of the Treaty, to strengthen the full realization of the Agency’s Motto of “Atoms for peace and Development”. The three pillars being those of disarmament; non-proliferation and the inalienable right of all State Parties to access nuclear energy for peaceful uses.

South Africa supports and is committed to the Technical Cooperation Programme. I am pleased to announce South Africa’s pledge of an amount of Two Hundred and Thirty-Four Thousand, Six Hundred and Forty-Two Euros (€234 642), to the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2021. We will continue to implement the country’s programme framework. The programme has enabled us to launch four (4) new national Technical Cooperation projects in the areas of agriculture, health, safety, with the assistance of the IAEA.

Excellency,

We welcome this year's theme for the Scientific Forum, namely, "*Nuclear Power and the Clean Energy Transition*".

Nuclear power will continue to play a vital role in South Africa's energy mix. In addition to energy security, there is a bigger role for nuclear in clean energy initiatives, to transition us from high to low carbon emissions, while expanding our power sources at the same time. We need to contest the space in the energy debate, for nuclear as a clean energy technology. Scientific evidence is available to support our position.

As part of implementing the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) 2019-2030, South Africa has commenced consultations with suppliers of nuclear power reactors to provide costing and schedule information and possible ownership models, through a Request for Information for the 2500MW programme issued in June 2020.

Koeberg is one of our most reliable; efficient; safe and affordable power stations on our electricity grid. We, therefore, decided to extend the operational life of Koeberg nuclear power station by another 20 years. The technical and regulatory work has begun. We thank the IAEA for its support through the Safety Aspects of Long-Term Operation missions on the Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant, with the most recent pre-mission taking place in September 2019.

Another key project we have embarked on is the replacement and upgrade of our aging nuclear research reactor, SAFARI-1. Since the establishment of a Ministerial Task Team in 2019, to develop a replacement by 2030, we have approved the Project Initiation Report that recommends that SAFARI-1 be replaced with a Multi-Purpose Reactor. The project has advanced to the pre-feasibility stage.

Further, despite the logistical challenges brought on by Covid-19 pandemic, we are beginning to see increased access to offshore markets for the supply of medical isotopes, that are critical to the rest of the World.

In conclusion,

This year the world marked with great sadness the 75th Anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. This is a poignant reminder of the need to remain steadfast on the elimination of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction.

Mr President,

I would like to reiterate our best wishes to you and all participating Member States at the Conference. We are certain it will be a success. We hope that in the next Conference we are able to come together, meet face-to-face, network and talk to each other.

We assure you all of our unwavering commitment to endeavour to bring the benefits of nuclear energy, science, and technology to society in a safe and secure manner.

I thank you