

**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
DELIVERED BY THE HONOURABLE DR NOBUHLE NKABANE,
DEPUTY MINISTER OF
MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY,
AT THE
67th SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)**

Madam President
Director General Grossi
Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegation
Distinguished Delegates

Madam President, South Africa wishes to congratulate you in leading the 67th Session of the IAEA General Conference and assure you of our support. We further congratulate Director General Grossi on his reappointment.

Madam President,

As we reflect on the reports on the Agency's work since our last General Conference, it is clear that the past year was marked by both challenges and positive developments. South Africa remains committed to the Agency and will continue working with delegations to restore the Vienna Spirit.

South Africa as a Contracting Member of the Convention on Nuclear Safety places great importance to nuclear safety and the central role the Agency plays in coordinating international efforts. In this regard we are satisfied that we have met our obligations to the Convention.

South Africa's Public Power Utility has submitted a License Application and a Safety Case Report for Long Term Operation to the National Nuclear Regulator in July 2022 to allow for the continuous operation of the Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant for an additional 20 years.

A feasibility study is ongoing for the establishment of the Centralised Interim Storage Facility. Once completed and a shovel readiness status is obtained procurement for the facility will commence.

Madam President,

South Africa welcomes the theme of this year's Scientific Forum "**Nuclear Innovation for Net Zero**". We are convinced that we can make a meaningful contribution towards achieving net zero, through the inclusion of Nuclear Build Expansion Programme.

Our National Energy Regulator has recently granted the unconditional concurrence for the procurement of the 2500MW nuclear programme. This decision paves the way to issue the Request for Proposal to the market by March 2024.

The South African Nuclear Energy Corporation is forging ahead with the development of Multi-Purpose Research Reactor Project to complement the current Research Reactor which is now almost 60 years old. The project has completed the Feasibility study which is under review before procurement.

Madam President,

It gives me great pleasure to highlight the following significant achievements in nuclear medicine:

- A South African team facilitated the first Lutetium-177 Prostate-Specific Membrane Antigen procedure at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra, Ghana;
- One of our female experts, Professor Kgomotso Mokoala was elected a President of the South African Society of Nuclear Medicine;
- The iThemba Laboratory for Accelerator Based Science, which is our first and newly designated IAEA Collaborating Centre, launched the South African Isotope Facility (SAIF) in June 2023.

We are therefore proud to respond to the call by the Director General on "Rays of Hope: Cancer Care for All" and confirm that South Africa has submitted an expression of interest in hosting an anchor centre at the Steve Biko Academic Hospital. We look forward to cooperating with the Agency on this important initiative.

Madam President,

We continue to support the IAEA Technical Cooperation programme. South Africa is pleased to pledge an amount of two hundred and twenty-five thousand, six hundred Euros towards the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2024.

South Africa has 8 Regional Designated Centres under the framework of African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) that aims to promote Technical Cooperation in Developing Countries through collaboration in the development and expansion of nuclear techniques in Africa through capacity building initiatives.

Amongst others, South Africa has successfully hosted the 4th General Assembly of AFRA-NEST and the Regional Meeting of Vice Chancellors and Representatives of regional bodies and networks involved in education and training to address human resources and development needs in Africa which took place mid-August 2023.

The effective implementation of the Agency's Safeguards system is a critical element of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. It contributes to international peace and security and South Africa continues to cooperate effectively with the Agency to implement our Safeguards obligations under the Integrated Safeguards approach.

Madam President,

South Africa supports the Agency's efforts in promoting nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine through the support and assistance missions. As far as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is concerned, South Africa firmly believes that dialogue, mediation and diplomacy are the only viable path to end the current conflict and achieve a durable peace. It is these principles that inform South Africa's participation resolution of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

In closing, Madam President, I wish to reiterate South Africa's unwavering and continued support for the Agency's fundamental role in ensuring that nuclear science and technology is used for peaceful purposes, and development in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063.