

GHANA'S STATEMENT DELIVERED BY DR. ALBERT W. N. Q. BARNOR CHAIRPERSON OF THE GHANA ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION AT THE 58TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE HELD IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA, FROM 22-26 SEPTEMBER, 2014

Mr. President,

Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ghana delegation joins other speakers, to warmly congratulate you and your bureau on your election to lead this session. We commend you and your bureau for the professional conduct of this meeting, so far, and assure you of our full support and cooperation. Ghana also congratulates the Union of the Comoros, the Republic of Djibouti, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Republic of Vanuatu on becoming Member States of the IAEA and welcome their, respective, delegations to this session.

Mr. President,

We are pleased to note the increased focus on the peaceful application of nuclear energy in the areas of agriculture, health, industry, environment, human resource and capacity development. The people and Government of Ghana appreciate the Agency's support in those areas, particularly, in the establishment of an accelerator Centre in Accra. We continue to count on the mutually beneficial partnership between the Agency and Ghana, towards national growth and development, through the increased application of peaceful nuclear technologies.

With regard to Ghana's nuclear power infrastructure development, we would like to state that work has progressed on various fronts including the identification of an

appropriate site technology and energy assessment, human resource development, management system development, grid assessment and stakeholder engagement, among others. All these works have been directed towards the development of the capacity to comprehensively review and update Ghana's energy plan. In support of the above, public awareness programs and other stakeholder engagement meetings have been organized to educate both the public and the relevant stakeholders. In addition to these, various stakeholder fora have been organized to seek support and information for the execution of the various tasks that lie ahead.

A bill, for the establishment of an Independent Nuclear Regulatory Authority, with a mandate to oversee and certify the licensing procedures of the various stages of the milestones towards the construction of our first nuclear power plant is currently before parliament. The Government has increasingly supported the nuclear power program through the development of the required policy guidelines. In view of these developments and Ghana's decades of political stability, many of our developing partners have also shown keen interest in that regard.

With the continued technical and other forms of support by the Agency through its technical cooperation programme, Ghana will eventually welcome her first nuclear power plant to help accelerate socio economic development, not only in Ghana, but also in the West African Sub-region through the existing power pool system.

Mr. President,

Through the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme and other IAEA Coordinated Research Projects, Ghana has systematically increased its capabilities in the

application of Isotope technique to water resource assessment. This has led to the inclusion of Isotope Hydrology in the National Water Resource Assessment Programme.

Currently, efforts are underway to apply the technique for the development of a comprehensive aquifer map of the country. This and other water resource information have become imperative for national policy development options. Additionally, significant progress has been made in the Agency led project, namely, the Integrated and Sustainable Management of Shared Aquifer Systems and Basins of the Sahel Region. The role of the IAEA and other supporting countries to encourage a better understanding of national and trans-boundary aquifer systems is highly commendable. Ghana would further appreciate that other Member States with the technological capabilities and financial resources may consider extending their support which, among others, would help stem environment-induced migration and extreme poverty.

This trend of climate-induced migration poses a grave challenge to many communities affected by extreme weather conditions, as has been the case of the Sahel Region. The IAEA may, therefore, seek to ensure that its contribution, in this area, will be captured as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's); to enable it continue to attract the needed support to combat forced migration and eradicate extreme poverty.

Ghana recognizes the importance of sustainable nuclear education and training in the broader framework of capacity building and nuclear knowledge management for the nuclear industry. The country, therefore, maintains its commitment to the Agency's Human Resource Development (HRD) initiatives and Nuclear Knowledge Management (NKM) programme at the Graduate School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences (SNAS) at the University

of Ghana. As you may be aware, **Mr. President**, the Ghana School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences has been an IAEA African Regional Designated Centre (RDC) for Professional Training and Higher Education in Nuclear Science and Technology and Radiation Protection.

We are grateful for the IAEA's support to the School, especially, for awarding fellowships to a number of Ghanaian students for various PhD programmes and also to a number of students from various African countries. Ghana has through this support, offered Postgraduate Certificate Courses and Master of Philosophy programmes at the School. These fellowships have aided Member States, enormously, in the AFRA region to build capacity in the nuclear industry, especially for regulatory activities and research in nuclear and radioactive source usage, safety, security and safeguards. The fellows and alumni of the School have and continue to constitute the core personnel to preserve and expand nuclear knowledge in their respective countries.

It is gratifying to note that most of the Ghanaian who benefitted from the IAEA's PhD Sandwich programmes have joined the academic faculty of the School. This has been a very positive development and we look forward to further cooperation in this field in support of the gradual transition of nuclear knowledge expertise from the older generation to the youth.

Mr. President,

Once again, with the support of the IAEA and other stakeholder institutions, we are delighted to announce that Ghana has been able to develop the human resource capabilities for radioactive waste management. We have developed a set of draft Radioactive Waste

Management regulations and a Radioactive Waste Management Policy and Strategy. A Successful implementation of the Borehole Disposal Concept (BDC) will provide Ghana with a disposal option for the (DSRS) generated. It will also enable the Ghana acquire the necessary technical capabilities to play pioneering roles in the West Africa Sub-region and in Africa in borehole disposal technology.

Since 1978, various national and international activities have been undertaken by Member States, with the support of the Agency, to convert Highly Enriched Uranium fuel (HEU)-based research and test reactors (RRs) to Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) fuel. Ghana has in that regard conducted feasibility studies for the possible conversion of her research reactor from HEU to LEU with the support of the IAEA and the Argonne National Laboratory (ANL). A reactor Core Conversion Safety Analysis Report (CC SAR) has since been completed. In line with the international efforts, plans to return HEU spent fuel were initiated in February 2011, when an international MNSR Working Group (WG) was established to coordinate these activities. Ghana has officially requested the Agency's assistance in the removal and transportation of the irradiated HEU MNSR core. A Project and Supply Agreement (PSA) has also been signed by Ghana and China, with the Agency's support and guidance to ship the first LEU fuel to Ghana.

Finally, **Mr. President**, Ghana acknowledges the concern of the international community regarding the responsibility of Member States to implement all necessary measures, including the provision of adequate protection for nuclear and radioactive materials under their control against theft and sabotage.

May I add that, Ghana has been supportive of nuclear security training programmes organized by the IAEA through the provision of experts and facilities. Ghana's active

involvement in nuclear security programmes, is indicative of our commitment to partner the international community in fighting nuclear terrorism. To this end, we have been engaged in the activities of the IAEA's International Network of Nuclear Security Support Centres of excellence aimed at helping to build national capacity for nuclear security in Member States.

Mr. President,

I would like to conclude by assuring you of Ghana's continued support to the IAEA in the discharge of its mandate.

I thank you.