

## **58th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference**

**22-26 September 2014**

### **Statement by the H.E. Ambassador John Sandy, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the IAEA**

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, a Very Pleasant Afternoon to all, and thank you Mr. President for affording me the privilege of addressing this august assembly. On behalf of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago I wish to join previous speakers in warmly congratulating you on your election as President of the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the IAEA General Conference and thank you and the members of the Bureau for guiding the work of the Conference most effectively. My delegation is confident that under your able leadership you will continue to steer this Conference to a successful conclusion, and you can count on our delegation's sincere support and cooperation.

Mr. President, Trinidad and Tobago became a Member of the IAEA in 2012 and as this is my first opportunity to address this Conference, I would like to thank most heartily you and the Membership for your warm welcome to the Agency and also to express my deepest gratitude to the staff of the Secretariat who have guided us ably during our first steps forward into the Agency.

Mr. President, this is an auspicious interlude for the Agency as over the last three years the Caribbean presence has increased with each Annual Session. We recognise and congratulate the Commonwealth of Dominica on their successful application, alongside Trinidad and Tobago's own Membership in 2012. Last year our Caribbean Membership grew with the inclusion of The Bahamas, to whom we extend warmest congratulations, and at this 58<sup>th</sup> Session I am pleased to congratulate another fellow CARICOM member, Guyana, for joining the Agency's membership. The Caribbean presence in the IAEA Membership is strengthening and growing steadily. This is a reflection of the importance of the Agency to the interests of large and small States alike.

My delegation also recognises the new Membership status of the Union of the Comoros, the Republic of Djibouti and the Republic of Vanuatu and accordingly congratulates them on their successful applications.

As we work together this week to consider the vital pursuits of the IAEA in promoting the safe and effective use of nuclear technology for the common good, my delegation would like to commend Director General Amano and the Secretariat for their commitment and dedication to the pursuit of the mandates we, the Membership, have set for the work of the Agency.

The main focus of the Agency's work of nuclear safety and oversight is of particular interest for the small and vulnerable islands of the Caribbean and moreover for Trinidad and Tobago. My delegation is well aware of the devastating effects of natural disasters and in the context of this Conference, the effects of those disasters on nuclear facilities and implications of exposure to nuclear material for our societies.

Mr. President, Trinidad and Tobago shares the concerns of other Caribbean Community (CARICOM) States regarding the transportation of nuclear material through the Caribbean Sea. My delegation takes this opportunity to appeal to transporting States to respect our concerns and refrain from this activity.

My delegation has noted with interest the third annual report of the Director General on the progress being made in the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety and the report on the 2010-2013 Implementation Plan on IAEA Nuclear Security. We note further the several steps adopted to take on board lessons learnt and to ensure transparency of knowledge and experience sharing in order to maximise the benefits of best practice in approaching the challenges identified in the report.

Indeed, Trinidad and Tobago was a beneficiary of the Secretariat's information-sharing outreach meeting for the Caribbean and Central America sub-region on the Nuclear Security Information Management System (NSIMS), which took place in August 2014 in San José, Costa Rica. Trinidad and Tobago's participant was able to take away very important and useful tools for identifying our own nuclear security needs to inform our national nuclear security regime.

Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to the principle of peaceful uses of nuclear technology, shares the collective undertaking to nuclear safety and attaches great importance to the Conventions that underpin it. Trinidad and Tobago is also keen on preventing and counteracting the illicit trafficking of nuclear material both domestically and internationally. To this end, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is addressing the possibility of signing on to the Additional Protocol and Amendment to the Small Quantities Protocol.

Mr. President, Trinidad and Tobago's relationship with the IAEA in the area of public health began even before our formal membership with the Agency. The IAEA was able to offer emergency assistance on humanitarian grounds to Trinidad and Tobago when a private health facility reported a radiation overexposure accident in 2010. The positive outcome of that intervention opened our eyes to the benefits of IAEA Membership, especially as it pertains to

technical assistance programmes in the areas of health and health-related programmes.

Our engagement with the IAEA is deepening and I would like to embrace this opportunity to publicly thank the Director and staff of the Technical Cooperation Department for Latin America and the Caribbean, who have conducted fact-finding missions to Port of Spain to assist us with our national needs assessment and priorities and the status of radiation safety within the country, as well as formulating our national and regional projects.

We have recently assigned our National Liaison Officer and an accompanying team of four (4) National Liaison Assistants to follow through with project formulation and implementation and as such our relationship with the IAEA can only become more fruitful in the coming years. The Technical Assistance Division has been inclusive and encouraging of Trinidad and Tobago's participation in training activities, technical meetings and conferences.

At present the National Liaison Officer and the support team are working on finalising our Revised Supplementary Agreement for the Provision of Technical Cooperation (RSA) and our Country Programme Framework (CPF). As soon as this is concluded, our

attention shall be focused on finalising our technical assistance agenda for health, specifically as it relates to the legislative framework for radiation oncology and nuclear medicine practice in Trinidad and Tobago and the imminent completion of the National Oncology Centre and the Cyclotron and PET/CT Centre.

My capital is also looking forward to actively participating in regional technical assistance projects, in particular the proposed “Strengthening Cradle to Grave Control of Radioactive Sources in the Caribbean Region”. Concurrently, Trinidad and Tobago is interested in the Regional Cooperative Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (the ARCAL) and is studying closely the potential benefit of complementing our national cooperation programme with the regional opportunities within the ARCAL.

My delegation would like to once again underscore the importance of these technical assistance programmes that generate positive impact on important areas of national importance. We wish to express appreciation to the contributing Members and the Agency for their support.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, as I close, kindly allow me to reiterate my Government's commitment and full support to the mandate of the IAEA and working together with all other Members in meeting our universal goal of safe, secure and effective uses of nuclear technology.

I thank you.