

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR GRACE T. MUTANDIRO TO THE 58TH
REGULAR SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)
GENERAL CONFERENCE: 22-26 SEPTEMBER 2014**

Mr. President

The Director General

Excellences

Distinguished Delegates;

Mr. President,

At the outset, I congratulate you on behalf of the delegation of Zimbabwe, on your election to preside over the work of the 58th IAEA General Conference. We look forward to fruitful deliberations and I assure you and members of your bureau of my delegation's full support.

Zimbabwe welcomes the Comoros, Djibouti, Guyana and Vanuatu that have joined the Agency.

Zimbabwe attaches great importance to bilateral cooperation with the Agency that has encompassed areas such as nuclear medicine, radiation protection infrastructure, radiotherapy, crop and livestock production, tsetse eradication, energy planning, cancer therapy and capacity building. This has contributed significantly to the government's endeavors to improve the socio-economic well-being of its citizens.

Zimbabwe is also appreciative of the ongoing significant support the Agency is extending to the National Radiation Protection Authority to strengthen regulatory infrastructure and radiation safety and security. We have made great strides from

the position obtaining in 2010 when the Agency could not approve the supply of category two brachytherapy radioactive sources owing to our inability to satisfy the minimum requirements for Thematic Safety Areas 1 and 2. Currently Zimbabwe is now able to make in-kind contributions to the Agency's programmes through the hosting of regional meetings. In the area of nuclear safety and security, we hosted a Regional Training Course on Nuclear Security Information Management Systems (NUSIMS) in July 2014. Zimbabwe is also assisting other countries in the region build their skills capacity through hosting fellows for training in radiation safety. We are committed to continuing to avail support to other Member States in this and other areas where we have capacity. The Agency has also assisted with the development of an Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan (INSSP).

It is gratifying that Zimbabwe was invited to participate and share its experiences in establishing and strengthening its regulatory infrastructure at the special briefing session on **A New Strategic Approach to Establishing and strengthening radiation Safety Infrastructure in Member States**, jointly organized by the Department of Technical Cooperation and the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security on the margins of the 58th General Conference. My delegation is deeply appreciative of support extended by the Agency and other international cooperation partners that has contributed significantly towards the national goals of establishing a robust and effective regulatory infrastructure.

Zimbabwe also looks forward to continued Agency assistance to enable the National Radiation Protection Authority focus on additional capacity building, improve occupational exposure control, medical exposure control and waste management for disused sources. My Government therefore wished to express its appreciation to the Agency for making possible the visit of an Integrated Regulatory Review Service Mission that will take place in November this year. National authorities are fully committed to heeding the findings and recommendations of the IRRS Mission in order to further improve the national regulatory infrastructure in line with international standards. Given the potentially high risks associated with the use of nuclear and radiation technologies including in medical and industrial fields, there is a compelling need

for all Member States to prioritize cooperation in establishing and strengthening radiation safety infrastructure.

Regarding national cancer treatment measures, the Zimbabwe government remains unequivocally committed to providing the resources necessary to strengthen the existing health facilities in the country and thus on-going Agency support in this area is deeply appreciated. This commitment, evident with the recent purchase of a LINAC and other relevant equipment, a Gamma Camera and Image Scanner Intensifier (C-Arm) is also being strengthened by activating measures to urgently address in a holistic manner much needed specialist manpower challenges and other attendant requirements including awareness raising amongst the population.

Agriculture remains one of the main pillars of Zimbabwe's economy and thus the effects of climate change and global warming resulting in drought and erratic rainfall patterns in the country has impacted our food security and the economy. Agency support and assistance under the project "Optimizing Water Use and Soil Productivity for Increased Food Security in Drylands" has proved critical in enabling the Ministry of Agriculture to take measures necessary to mitigate the challenges. Zimbabwe is also benefitting from Agency assistance in Improving Crops Using Mutation Induction and Biotechnology through Farmer Participation Approach and Developing Drought Tolerant and Disease/Pest Resistant Legume varieties with enhanced nutritional content using Mutation Breeding and Novel Techniques.

With respect to the Agency's Programm of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) my delegation commends the Agency's ongoing collaboration with government's, private companies and international organisations including WHO, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the Union for International Cancer Control in initiatives to mitigate the growing global phenomenon of cancer. The magnitude of deaths from cancer and in most cases needlessly so on account of the lack of awareness that could result in early detection and treatment as well as the absence of cancer therapy facilities in

most developing countries demands a strengthened global collaborative approach. The priority the Agency has given to PACT is most commendable and worthy of greater support including from Member States and the private sector.

Mr President,

In collaboration with other UN Specialised Agencies, the Agency's support towards the African Union's PATTEC goal of creating sustainable tsetse and trypanosomiasis free areas, using flies suppression and various eradication techniques is further demonstrative of how the Technical Cooperation Programme significantly contributes to the socio-economic development particularly in Africa. Zimbabwe is a beneficiary of the Agency's Sterile Insect Techniques (SIT) applications for its national tsetse control project in the Matusadonha National Park. Significant progress has been made towards this end including in the setting up of insectary equipment at Makuti, the procurement of tsetse odour attractants and manpower development. Given that the area subject to the tsetse flies menace is 6 000km and therefore an area too big for an SIT project alone, national authorities will also continue utilizing ground spraying.

My delegation also applauds Agency support for similar projects in Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Senegal and Uganda.

The government of Zimbabwe has embarked on economic growth and wealth creation policy to attain a sustainable socio-economic development that will benefit Zimbabweans as well as reposition the country as one of the strongest economies in the region and continent. My delegation remains mindful that the success of the country's economic growth will be predicated upon tapping into the competences that repose in the Agency with respect to peaceful applications of nuclear energy. Zimbabwe looks forward to deepening bilateral cooperation with the Agency in the sectors that dovetail with the country's development agenda.

The Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme is the main conduit for promoting the global use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, socio-economic development and poverty alleviation. Zimbabwe believes that deliberations of the Working Group on Financing the Agency's activities, served as an extremely useful platform for building understanding and consensus towards measures that can be adopted to ensure that resources made available for technical cooperation are sufficient, assured and predictable.

Current global challenges that impact the lives of people everywhere such as climate change, food insecurity, water scarcity, the scourge of cancer and other diseases, the socio-economic ills accompanying economic underdevelopment all serve to underscore more than ever, the growing relevance of the Agency's activities in the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It thus behoves on all Member States to provide the requisite support to the Agency towards the successful realization of this mandate.

Zimbabwe remains unequivocally committed to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that is the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are however concerned at the disproportionate attention given towards the three pillars of the NPT and that efforts towards nuclear disarmament obligations have been consigned to mere rhetoric by those Member States with arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. We still maintain that equal attention must be given to the implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty for the attainment of complete nuclear disarmament and to allow unfettered use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Zimbabwe welcomes the designation of 26th September as the UN Day for the total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr President,

Zimbabwe also unequivocally supports the inalienable rights of every Member State to the development, research, production and use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with their respective

obligations. With respect to the developments on the State Level Concept, indeed the Agency must continually review its Safeguards Activities given the wider and growing global use of nuclear technology and the enhanced sophistication of nuclear facilities with the concomitant challenges on safeguards implementation. My delegation is cognizant of the imperative need to strengthen the effectiveness and efficacy of the Agency's safeguards system that allows for credible assurances of the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities. A robust safeguards system also underpins our collective endeavors towards realizing nuclear non-proliferation and a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons. To this end my delegation commends the Agency for heeding the calls of Member States and undertaking extensive consultations and open dialogue necessary to engender mutual trust and greater transparency. My delegation welcomes the Agency's commitment to continuing open dialogue on this very important matter and not to impose new obligations or rights to Member States under their relevant safeguards agreements.

Zimbabwe regrets that it has still not been possible to convene the Conference on the Establishment of Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zone in the Middle East. Zimbabwe is of the view that the creation of these Zones is a requisite step towards global nuclear disarmament and enhancement of peace and security. We urge the Director General to continue with his efforts to ensure the convening of the Conference at the earliest possible date.

In conclusion I wish to commend the Director General's unwavering commitment to addressing gender imbalance in top management positions and to increase the number of personnel in developing countries.

I thank you