



**IAEA International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology:
Addressing Current and Emerging Development Challenges**

Vienna, 28-30 November 2018

Statement by the United Arab Emirates

Delivered by H.E.

IAEA Director General, Excellencies and delegates,

I would to start by congratulating the Co-Chairs you on their assumption of the Chairmanship of the *IAEA International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology: Addressing Current and Emerging Development Challenges*.

The UAE believes in the **Agency's essential role** in assisting member states to benefit from the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology, most importantly to address current and emerging development challenges, hence contributing to Sustainable Development. We commend the tireless efforts of the Director General and the Secretariat in fulfilling their mandates to this end, and promoting 'Atoms for Peace and Development'.

Mr and Madam Co-Chairs,

The UAE is well aware of the **interface of nuclear science with national visions and agendas** including its own. A significant mechanism for achieving substantive progress towards sustainable development priorities lies in collaboration with the IAEA. I'd like to highlight a few areas of our close cooperation with the IAEA, promoting peaceful use of nuclear applications and serving national development.

First, in **nuclear energy**: the UAE is in the final stages of construction of its first nuclear power plant with the commissioning process underway. We are the first country in nearly three decades to construct a nuclear power plant as part of a new programme. Generating clean nuclear energy will help decrease CO2 emissions levels and contribute considerably to action against climate change.

The IAEA Technical Cooperation programme with the UAE is an important one and is in line with the Government's vision and strategic plans, to address national development priorities and common regional challenges. This is achieved through capacity building activities and exchange of expertise. Since

joining the IAEA, more than 37 national projects and 170 regional and interregional projects have contributed to advancement in the UAE. For example , a **first state-of-the-art center for material analysis** in Sharjah was established under this programme. The center provides analytical services to the region, using X-Ray fluorescence and other nuclear techniques in a range of sectors including: archaeology, cultural heritage, environmental, and forensic applications. It benefits not only museums and environmental agencies, but also government and industrial partners. It is a hub for human capacity building and training on the use and benefits of advanced scientific techniques, as they are applied to cultural heritage and the well-being of the environment through the study of pollution and its health consequences. Another example is the **establishment of the first Secondary Standards Dosimetry Laboratory** in Abu Dhabi. The SSDL, which already joined the IAEA/WHO SSDL Network, provides radiation measurement and calibration services to ensure that accurately known doses are delivered to patients undergoing diagnosis and therapy. It also ensures that radiation measurement instruments used throughout the UAE, including in the nuclear energy programme, provide the expected degree of accuracy to support radiation protection. The lab reflects the UAE commitment to ensuring radiation protection of the public, workers and the environment, and is a cornerstone for the radiation protection infrastructure in the country.

Mr and Madam Co-Chairs,

Our cooperation with the IAEA has helped **enhance radiation protection standards in medical applications in the UAE** namely in radiology and nuclear medicine. This includes a comprehensive, upgraded patient radiation protection procedure. Over 225 medical professionals, 50% of whom are women, were trained through capacity building activities with the IAEA in areas of image quality optimization, patient radiation doses, and guidelines for patient radiological examinations. Through working with the Agency in these areas, we promoted radiation safety culture, improved radiation protection practices, and initiated scientific research related to radiation safety and patient radiation dosimetry.

Working to improve human health, our technical cooperation with the Agency has also helped **enhance Cancer screening and Palliative care capacity** in the UAE. We have multiple cooperation arrangements in place with the agency to further support exchange of expertise in the area of nuclear medicine, and promote the IAEA Curricula for Nuclear Medicine Professionals.

In relation to **environmental protection**, we continue to work closely with our counterparts at IAEA, regional and international experts, to enhance environmental monitoring. Major milestones have been achieved in my country to enhance the

protection of people and the environment from ionizing radiation , through effective monitoring and measurement of radiation in the marine, terrestrial and coastal environment. Our nuclear regulator has recently **released its first annual report on radiological environmental monitoring in the United Arab Emirates, establishing the baseline level of radiation for the UAE.**

Agriculture and food security continues to be an important area of nuclear applications progress and development in my country. UAE participates and contributes to numerous technical cooperation projects which promote sustainable agriculture, and efficient soil and water management. With regional projects, we shared our expertise in effective cropping practices for combating desertification and land degradation, and improving agricultural productivity of salt-affected lands. We have concluded a Practical Arrangement with the IAEA on enhancing collaboration and exchange of knowledge in these areas.

Mr and Madam Co-Chairs,

We remain committed to promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear applications to serve development, and to **contributing to IAEA's work**, with our experience. Since 2011 we have hosted almost 200 IAEA activities in the UAE, and dispatched more than 5000 participants and 220 experts to the agency's meetings and trainings worldwide. Noting the importance of supporting nuclear education and the benefits of nuclear science, the UAE national stakeholders launched its first '**Nuclear Science for Development**' student competition earlier this year. 100s of high-school student participated from all Emirates and shared their creative ideas and visions of how nuclear technology helps us achieve the SDGs. I am glad to see the winning teams join us today at this conference. We will continue to engage the youth, empower women and promote international collaboration to this end.

I'd like to conclude with the words of Sheikh Zayed, founder of the UAE: *"the process of development and progress does not depend on those in positions of responsibility alone; rather it requires the combined efforts of every citizen in the country"*.

I thank you, Mr and Madam Co-Chairs