

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**NATIONAL STATEMENT BY
MR. BEN NANGOMBE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
63RD IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE.**

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Vienna

Madam President,

At the onset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of duty as President of the 63rd General Conference. I assure you of Namibia's full cooperation and support. Similarly, I would like to congratulate the Vice Presidents, President of the Committee of the Whole and other members of the Bureau on their election.

Namibia pays tribute to the late Director General Yukia Amano for his significant contribution and dedication to the Agency and for the great work he did, especially in advancing nuclear science developments in developing countries. In this regard, we welcome the renaming of the Flexible Modular Laboratory (FML) at Seibersdorf laboratories to "The Yukia Amano Laboratories". We also extend our heartfelt condolences and join the people of South Africa in mourning the tragic and untimely death of the Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Ms. Bavelile Hlongwa, on Friday last week.

(We would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Cornel Feruta, Acting Director General of the IAEA, for leading the Agency, in the absence of a substantive Director General. We trust that the appointment of a substantive Director General will be finalised soon.)

Madam President,

Namibia notes with appreciation, the achievements attained by the Agency during 2018, in particular in the area of Technical Cooperation, Nuclear Security, Nuclear and Radiation Safety, as well as Safeguards and Verification, amid growing requests by Member States, and limited financial resources. Namibia continues to benefit immensely from the Agency's Technical Cooperation activities, through the Country Programme Framework. We are cognisant that the achievement of SDGs depends on several factors. The application of nuclear science and technology, especially in the fields of human health, eradication of hunger, energy, environment and climate change, is one of those factors. Namibia appreciates the Agency's support in this regard and wishes to explore further avenues for support in the area of resource mobilisation.

Madam President,

We believe that the choice of the theme for this conference is timely. Cancer related deaths are on the increase, particularly in developing countries. This is mainly due to limited access to timely diagnosis and treatment. This General Conference and the side events provide important platforms for member states to learn from each other regarding experiences and best practices to enhance their cancer control programmes and address related challenges.

For Namibia, cancer control remains one of the key priorities and national efforts to mitigate and reduce the growing cancer burden are ongoing. Partnering with the Agency in this area continues to be imperative. We are pleased that access to cancer treatment services has been broadened through the introduction of radiation therapy services, with the assistance from the Agency. However, diagnostic capability remains inadequate. We thus call on the Agency and development partners to support our efforts to enhance capacity in this area.

Our delegation has gained useful insights from our interactions with the Agency and potential partners during this General Conference. This will go a long way to support the implementation of our Bankable Document on improving and expanding radiotherapy services in our country.

Madam President,

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to international obligations on nuclear safeguards, as demonstrated by several visits and complimentary access by IAEA Safeguards Inspectors to facilities in Namibia. The latest mission was undertaken in July 2019. Safeguards Inspectors were granted access to requested declared sites and information to ascertain non-diversion of undeclared material and activities. They confirmed that Namibia's nuclear activities remain peaceful.

We are also committed to strengthen national nuclear infrastructure and radiation safety. Namibia welcomes the publication of Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material 2018 by the IAEA. With support from the Agency, Namibia will host a Regional Workshop on the Transport of Radioactive Materials, from 25 to 30 November 2019.

Namibia also contributed to the development of IAEA Milestone Approach for Uranium Mining. The document will assist Member States, especially new entrants to uranium exploration and production to identify key areas when making -decisions to grant authorisations to explore, mine and process uranium, as well as, to safely rehabilitate/remediate mining sites at the end of mining activities.

Madam President,

Many Namibians face food security vulnerabilities, resulting from the effect of climate changes, as evidenced by severe drought and other unfavourable climatic conditions. Poor households in rural areas, who rely on rain-fed crops, have been affected most, exacerbating food insecurity. In this regard, we appreciate the Agency's assistance in the area of food and agriculture, including the development of mutation bred drought resistant seed varieties to help improve crop yields in the context of adverse climatic condition in our country.

Equally, we are concerned about ocean warming and acidification in many parts of the world. In this context, concerted efforts are needed to better understand the processes of radionuclide contamination and the impact of bio-toxins. We call on the Agency to support in this regard.

Madam President,

Nuclear energy will continue to be critical in the foreseeable future, especially in the context of the global imperative to preserve the environment and mitigate the impacts of climate change. For developing and middle-income countries, energy demand and economic growth are intrinsically linked. As such, strategies to grow our economies and combat unemployment, should incorporate nuclear energy as part of our national energy mix.

Madam President,

We appreciate the significant benefits received through technical support and capacity building in the field of nuclear science. Our nationals have been trained and capacitated through workshops, scientific visits and fellowship programmes. Similarly, our National Radiation Protection Authority has been fully capacitated and enabled to host understudy and/or fellowship personnel

from neighbouring countries and the region through the TC program. MSc students and PhD fellows have also been supported.

In conclusion, **Madam President**, Namibia reiterates our commitment to furthering the goal of disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear technology and applications.

I thank you.