



AFGHANISTAN

STATEMENT

IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE

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International Atomic Energy Agency

Vienna International Centre (VIC)

**Dear President,
Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi,
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a pleasure for me to join you, here today, at the 65th General Conference of the Agency. Let me begin by congratulating your Excellency, on your election as the president of this year's General Conference. We are confident that under your leadership this conference will be very successful and productive.

Furthermore, let me congratulate the hard work and the excellent leadership of Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi in maintaining the activities of the Agency despite the difficult situation due to the rapid spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic. My appreciation also goes to the highly professional and dedicated team of the Agency's Secretariat for the efforts undertaken to prepare for this important conference.

Dear President,

Though it is a pleasure for me to be here today, I regret that I cannot share with you the achievements of the Afghanistan Nuclear Energy Agency and the Afghanistan National Nuclear Regulatory Authority, or the developments in the implementation of our Country Programme Framework, or discuss new regulations ensuring the peaceful, safe, and secure application of nuclear science and technology for sustainable socioeconomic development.

In lieu of discussing the progress Afghanistan has made regarding nuclear technology, I must share with you the current humanitarian crisis Afghanistan is facing. As you all are well aware, on August 15th, Kabul was captured by the Taliban forces. Though I am still working to the best of my ability for Afghan citizens in Afghanistan and abroad, there is only so much I can do. I ask you, my colleagues, to please assist Afghanistan in its time of need. We need support and cooperation from the international community.

Dear President,

I would like to take this opportunity to also extend my thanks to Director General H.E. Rafael Mariano Grossi for his efforts in supporting the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan during the COVID-19 related emergency.

As Afghanistan reckons with the looming humanitarian crisis, more Afghans are at risk of severe COVID-19 infections than ever.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis that affects us all. The support of the Agency is indispensable for the people of Afghanistan and vulnerable people worldwide. This is why we strongly support and commend Director General H.E. Rafael Mariano Grossi in his decision to launch the ZODIAC project to strengthen global preparedness for future pandemics like COVID-19. This pandemic requires global solutions at local, regional, and international levels. The IAEA, with its vast experience in assisting countries with its technical and scientific expertise makes it the most suitable organization for creating a coherent and

comprehensive framework of assistance in the early detection, identification, monitoring, and control of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In recent years, the Agency has also played a large role in supporting our medical staff and facilities. One of our greatest priorities of technical cooperation with the IAEA was in the area of human health under our most recent Country Programme Framework. While cooperating, Afghanistan and the Agency made exciting progress. However, with the sudden turns of events in Afghanistan, unfortunately all of these gains are at high risk of being lost.

Due to the Taliban's ties to other international terrorists, transnational criminals, and drug traffickers, there is a grave concern about nuclear material trafficking through Afghanistan and its neighbours. I urge IAEA members to pay close attention to this issue and hold the Taliban accountable for not allowing it to happen.

Equally, the current security situation threatens the entire medical system in Afghanistan. We ask the IAEA to continue its cooperation and assistance in the field of human health for the Afghan people, to ensure access to medical services throughout Afghanistan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the past 20 years, Afghanistan made much incredible progress with regards to Women's Rights. We worked with the IAEA to give Afghan women the tools and support they required to join the next generation of Afghan scientists. We pushed for gender equality by encouraging applications to IAEA fellowships. We advocated for a new generation of women leaders in nuclear science and technology. We know that the involvement of Afghan women in the technical cooperation between Afghanistan and the Agency was a high priority for you as well.

All this progress we have made is in jeopardy. With the Taliban in control and nearly no clear understanding of how the Taliban will enforce Sharia law, women's futures are in danger. I urge you, to stand in solidarity with Afghan women and demand that the international community ensures their rights are respected and protected.

I would like to conclude by expressing once again my most sincere appreciation to the International Atomic Energy Agency for their cooperation and support as Afghanistan faces this challenging time. We are grateful to our friends and allies for their contribution and assistance in the past, and at this time.

We ask that you continue to reject the reinstatement of the Islamic Emirate, hold the Taliban to account for their violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, insist on an inclusive government, and draw a fundamental red line regarding the Taliban's treatment of women and girls, and respect for their rights.

I would also like to make it clear to you, my colleagues, that all is not lost. The futures of Afghans, and particularly Afghan women, can still be bright. Please, do not forget Afghanistan in its time of need. We need your help to ensure that the progress we have made

is not lost and that the Afghan people can continue to benefit from the Agency's assistance without fear.

Thank you for your time, your attention, your support, and compassion.