

GHANA'S STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HON. KWAKU AFRIYIE
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION AT THE
65TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE HELD IN VIENNA,
AUSTRIA FROM 20TH – 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

Mr. President,

Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I join other speakers to warmly congratulate you and your Bureau on your election to lead this session on behalf of the Ghana delegation. We commend you for the professional and able manner in which you have been conducting this meeting so far and assure you of Ghana's fullest support and cooperation.

2. The Government of Ghana would also like to applaud the Director General of the Agency for his exceptional leadership during this difficult period of the COVID-19 pandemic in ensuring minimal disruption of the activities of the Agency. The Agency's assistance to Member States including Ghana in the fight against the pandemic is greatly appreciated.

3. **Despite the difficulties thrust upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic, Ghana has demonstrated resilience in making progress in negotiating and concluding its country programme framework with the Agency which is due to be signed in the margins of the General Conference.**

4. We appreciate the work and contributions of all Agency staff that have provided invaluable support to helping us achieve this milestone in particular, the Deputy Director General for Technical Cooperation.

5. On Ghana's Nuclear Power Programme, Ghana has issued Request For Information (RFI) from various vendor countries seeking to establish the technology for the programme. We have also installed and integrated into

the national seismic network, the seismic equipment that was procured through cost sharing with the IAEA. We are working assiduously towards the attainment of the needed social license especially at the candidate sites. Ghana Nuclear Power Programme Organisation (GNPPO) is, therefore, training and equipping the media with the right information to disseminate to the public.

6. As the country prepares itself for the Nuclear Power Programme the Nuclear Regulatory Authority is receiving technical support from the European Union's Instrument for Nuclear Safety to help in the development of the Authority's regulatory structures.

Mr. President

7. Increase in the nuclear applications in medical practice, agriculture, research, education, extractive (mining, oil, gas etc.) and other industrial activities as well as the advances made in the nuclear power programme in Ghana requires the establishment of competencies and capacities in internal dosimetry. A national dosimetry laboratory has been established at the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC) to detect and measure contamination along with a functional physical/biological dosimetry laboratory capable of performing cytogenetic and gene expression analysis for dose estimation.

8. Ghana is among dozens of Countries, which received Real time RT-PCR (COVID-19 Testing Equipment) to detect the COVID-19 virus from the IAEA. Additionally, the IAEA/FAO Animal Protection and Health Laboratory has also helped countries including Ghana to detect animal to human diseases and also to test for COVID-19 SAR-2 virus as part of the ZODIAC project. Ghana joined 33 other countries in five continents to assess international variations in CT utilization protocols and radiation doses in patients with coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pneumonia.

9. The School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences (SNAS) continues to educate and train young scientists in the nuclear field and graduated 24 Masters student and 6 PhDs in 2020. SNAS also hosted 20 participants from thirteen (13) different African countries who participated in the 9th edition of the Post Graduate Education Course (PGEC) in Radiation Protection from November 2020 to February 2021 which was made up of 11 females and 9 males.

Mr. President,

10. Ghana is participating in the Sahel Project, a Technical Cooperation Project which involves investigation of trans-boundary aquifers for groundwater quality, identification of sources of pollution, quantification of recharge to aquifers and impact of climate change on water resources. Ghana's focus is on the North East and North West parts of the country which fall in the Volta River Basin sharing the basin with Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Benin and Togo. Ghana is thus working with Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin and Togo in what has been classified as Liptako Gourma-Upper Volta Aquifer System. Results obtained so far, with the application of isotope hydrology techniques, show that old groundwater occurs in about 50% of the area, which hitherto was unknown. Ghana was selected alongside Benin, Niger, Cameroun and Nigeria to pilot the IAEA Water Availability Enhancement Methodology for water resources management.

11. The IAEA has taken steps to assist Ghana on plastics management through the NUTEC Plastics initiative, which combines irradiation and isotopic techniques to combat plastic pollution through designated modules like the Technical Cooperation (TC) and Coordinated Research Project (CRP). The project's objective is to accelerate the transition towards a circular plastic economy by adopting and applying nuclear science and technology solutions while the outcome is to improve the use of nuclear-based technology in monitoring marine plastic pollution and plastic recycling practices. Ghana is committed to make this project a success as a way to boost the country's efforts to control plastic waste. We commend the Agency for hosting the

NUTEK Roundtable for Africa on 2nd September 2021 and look forward to having similar engagements in the future.

Mr. President

12. To show our support to the Agency particularly in the area of peaceful uses of nuclear science, technology and applications, Ghana has made a contribution to the ReNuaL 2 project this year and urges member states in a position to do so to also contribute to the project.

13. I would like to conclude by assuring you of Ghana's continuous support for the work of the Agency.

14. Thank you, Mr. President,