

National Statement

By

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South African Ambassador to the USA

“International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century”.

Washington DC, United States of America

26 – 28 October 2022

Ms President

Ms Jennifer Granholm

The Director-General

Raphael Grossi

Your Excellences

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Afternoon.

Mr President

At the outset I would like to begin by thanking the International Atomic Energy Agency and the OECD / Nuclear Energy Agency for organizing this International Ministerial Conference. South Africa’s appreciation also goes to the host, the Government of the United States of America.

South Africa as a founding member of the IAEA and a member of various conventions such as those in nuclear safety, in which we are an active participant. South Africa is the first country to produce radio-isotopes from low enriched uranium in its SAFARI research reactor, which is now in its 56th year continues to ensure security of supply of these much-needed radioisotopes. We have started a process of acquiring a multi-purpose reactor (MPR) that will ensure continuity of medical and industrial neutron source generation from the early 2030s as SAFARI-1 nears end of life.

Mr President,

South Africa recognizes the efforts of the IAEA Secretariat, their continued support to the IAEA Members States, and the provision of information to member States to facilitate sound decisions on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We have participated in the four previous Ministerial Conferences that were successfully organized by the Agency. Therefore, we are confident that this Ministerial Conference will be equally successful.

The 2022 Ministerial Conference anchors on the issues related to the development and deployment of nuclear energy, including the reliability and flexibility of the nuclear industry during the COVID-19 global crisis and its contribution to economic recovery efforts amid the ongoing global pandemic. Following the COVID-19 challenges South Africa developed its Economic Recovery programme in which the nuclear programme is recognized as one of the key drivers of the economic recovery programme. We are extending the life of the Koeberg Nuclear Power Station to operate an additional 20 years beyond 2024. The use of nuclear energy in our country is guided by one of the key Policy Principle that: **Nuclear Energy shall form part of South Africa's strategy to mitigate climate change.** We believe that nuclear will play an essential role in the carbon mitigation strategies and also as a clean energy to be deployed towards the net-zero emissions by 2050. It is for this reason that we are forging ahead with the development and deployment of our nuclear new build programme to the extent of 2500 MW.

Mr President,

South Africa as a member of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, recognizes the role of nuclear towards decarbonization and ultimate mitigation of climate change and global warming crisis. We therefore urge members of the Conference of Parties to embark on developing and implementing plans to meet commitments under this framework.

South Africa made an informed decision to pursue nuclear as part of the energy mix based on our national policies and plans. The Nuclear Energy Policy of 2008 represents the South African government's vision for the development of an extensive nuclear energy programme and stipulates that our long term goal is to be self-sufficient in all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle. In addition, the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)

2019, which includes an additional 2500MW of nuclear power capacity, was approved by the South African Cabinet in 2019. This key energy planning document advocates for small nuclear units (i.e. SMRs) because of their various advantages, ability to be deployable at a scale and pace that flexibly responds to the economy and associated electricity demands. Therefore, SMRs are part of our plans to implement the nuclear new build programme.

Mr President,

South Africa is committed to ensuring that the expansion of our nuclear power generating capacity provides the maximum benefit to the country. We are carefully assessing the technologies offered by vendor countries to make a meaningful choice for ensuring an implementation at a pace and scale that is affordable to our country. This includes the benchmarking of the experiences in other countries, in particular their initiatives to build the required human resource skills and their programmes for local supplier development and industrialization.

South Africa is not immune to the public acceptance challenges faced by other countries seeking to pursue nuclear expansion programmes. Public acceptance of nuclear is a challenge that requires urgent attention by the nuclear community such as vendors, operators, regulators and utilities. South Africa is in the process of rolling out robust short term initiatives for public stakeholder engagements to ensure acceptance of nuclear programme implementation.

Mr President,

In 2013, South Africa invited the IAEA to undertake a review of our self-assessment on readiness to expand our nuclear power capacity, using the IAEA's Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (**INIR**) process. Subsequent to the IAEA INIR Mission, we further invited the IAEA Emergency Preparedness and Review Mission in 2014, the IAEA Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation in 2015 and the IAEA Integrated Regulatory Review Services Mission in 2016. The latest mission conducted was the Safety for Long Term Operation, completed in March 2022 (SALTO) for the Koeberg Nuclear Power Life Extension programme. South Africa benefited from the support of

the IAEA provided through these peer review missions, and we subsequently developed an Action Plans to address the recommendations of these missions.

South Africa is one of the water scarce countries in the world and the irony of it is that we are surrounded by the ocean and yet we are facing severe water restrictions and drought – a crisis that can be resolved through the deployment of nuclear technologies, especially Generation IV systems that are capable of desalinating sea water for human consumption.

South Africa achieved a major milestone of the nuclear new build programme when the Department of Environmental Affairs issued a positive record of decision – an Environmental Authorisation to Eskom with regard to siting of future nuclear power plants on the Duynefontein site in the Western Cape. The final decision for granting Eskom permission to build nuclear power plant at Duynefontein is still to be concluded. The next milestone we look forward to is the Nuclear Installation Site License.

Preparatory work is in progress at Thyspunt site in the Eastern Cape for which public participation process was already conducted in 2021 by nuclear safety authority, that is the National Nuclear Regulator. Once all public comments are addressed a record of decision will be made

Mr President

In conclusion,

The message of nuclear as a clean energy and a source of power for self-sufficiency cannot be overemphasized. We need to spread this message even in other platforms such as Clean Energy Ministerial platforms.

I am looking forward to holding fruitful discussions and an informative Conference. Thank you.