



International Atomic Energy Agency

General Conference 67th Session

Statement by the United Arab Emirates

Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Hamad Alkaabi

Permanent Representative of the UAE to the IAEA

25 September 2023

Madam President,

I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the 67th session of the IAEA General Conference. Allow me to extend my appreciation to the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, for his strong leadership and dedication to the work of the Agency. I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Grossi for his appointment for a second term as the Director General of the IAEA.

My delegation commends the Agency for its continued efforts in providing technical support and offering a platform for international cooperation in nuclear safety, security, as well as ensuring non-proliferation. The IAEA has always played a vital role in supporting its Member States in the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and has become an indispensable multilateral tool for international collaboration.

Madam President,

As we approach the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), which will take place in the UAE on 30 November – 12 December 2023, we look forward to discussing the role of nuclear energy in tackling climate change and mitigating its impacts. The UAE's decision to host the COP28 reaffirms UAE's commitment to tackling climate change issues proactively at various levels. In 2023, the UAE updated its National Energy Strategy to include several new goals such as including to raise the percentage of clean energy in the total energy mix to 30% by 2031, and to become carbon-neutral by 2050. The development of a peaceful nuclear energy sector is a key component of the UAE's net zero strategy, reflecting the UAE's commitment to diversifying its energy mix and reducing dependence on fossil

fuels. The nuclear power programme, which, along with renewable energy, will provide 14 GW of clean power for the UAE by 2030.

The path to net zero emission systems needs a built-in climate resilience to guarantee the security of energy supply.

Madam President,

The IAEA Technical Cooperation (TC) Program provides critical support to the Member States to develop the infrastructure and to build capacity required for the nuclear energy program and in other sectors, such as health, agriculture and the environment. These efforts contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The UAE would like to thank the IAEA for the valuable support it has received through the TC programme, in particular through a number of regional and national workshops and training courses, a number of which were hosted by the UAE during the year.

Efforts by the Agency to renovate and modernize Nuclear Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf are important and needed, UAE supported such efforts through funding contribution.

UAE welcomes the active discussion of the role of SMRs and advance nuclear technologies in achieving net zero and supporting energy security and sustainability. As noted by various regulators, deployment of advance nuclear technologies would benefit from international regulatory cooperation. Therefore, UAE supports the IAEA platform on SMRs and their Applications (SMR Platform) and the Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative (NHSI).

On 13-16 February 2023, the UAE hosted the IAEA International Conference on Effective Nuclear and Radiation Regulatory Systems: Preparing for the Future in a Rapidly Changing Environment. The Conference focused on the regulatory approaches to innovation, emerging and new technologies, including regulatory harmonization and international and regional cooperation. It also addressed regulatory credibility, capacity building to ensure regulators are prepared for future needs through the use of education, human resources, knowledge management, and knowledge networks.

I would also like to note that during the Conference the UAE announced the launch the UAE Professional Day of Nuclear and Radiation Sector Workers on 16 February to be celebrated annually on the same day. The 16th of February marks the day on which the UAE nuclear regulatory body – the Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation (FANR) – issued a license in 2020 to operate unit 1 of the UAE's Barakah Nuclear Power Plant

Madam President,

As a party to the international conventions in the area of nuclear safety, the UAE provides timely and comprehensive reporting and actively participates in the review meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) and those of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

In 2023, the UAE presented its national report at the Joint Eighth and Ninth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the CNS. The report highlighted the efforts made towards the licensing of the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant, where three out of its four units are commercially operational and delivering electricity to the UAE's national grid. Based on the evidence provided in the national report and its discussion, the UAE continues meeting its obligations under the CNS.

The UAE stresses the importance of the universalization of these conventions and encourages countries especially those operating nuclear power reactors, which have not yet joined the CNS, to do so at an early date.

In the context of nuclear safety, UAE received the IAEA Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) mission (in September 2022) and the IAEA Extended Occupational Radiation Protection Appraisal Service (ORPAS) Follow up Mission (in October 2022). The mission focused on the operational safety developments at the BNPP and confirmed that the BNPP operator had strengthened operational safety and met all the requirements.

Other missions includes an ORPAS Follow up mission which assessed the UAE work in the area of occupational radiation protection arrangements and their effectiveness by reviewing UAE's progress.. The mission identified several strengths in the UAE's occupational radiation protection arrangements and underscored that the Barakah NPP developed and implemented a radiation protection programme that fully complies with national regulations and relevant IAEA safety standards.

The UAE has received more than 13 major IAEA review missions in recent years and continue to view Peer Review missions as important tools to ensure progress and to address any shortcomings. we encourage member states to make full use of such missions .

Madam President,

The UAE places significant importance on enhancing global nuclear security.

We remain deeply concerned with the situation in and around the nuclear facilities in Ukraine. In this context, the UAE welcomes the efforts by the IAEA's Director General directed at ensuring that the nuclear power plants and related facilities are not a target and remain protected from the conflict. We would like stress the importance of the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission at Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant.

The UAE complies with its obligations under the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendment and supports the IAEA's continued efforts to promote the universalization of this significant international instrument.

Madam President,

The UAE emphasizes the crucial role of the IAEA's safeguards system. we welcome progress in the number of Additional protocols brought into force. UAE continues to call for the universalization of the IAEA Comprehensive safeguards supplemented by the Additional Protocol.

In order to support the IAEA's safeguards system, the UAE, concluded Practical Arrangement with IAEA in March 2023 to provide project-related direct funding and in-kind contributions for the activities of the agency in support of safeguards development.

Madam President,

We remain concerned with the outstanding unresolved issues in relation to Iran's implementation of its Safeguards, and with Iran's enrichment program advancement beyond agreed limits. UAE calls on all countries with concerns surrounding their nuclear activities to meet their international obligations and to cooperate with the Agency in a complete and timely manner.

A zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the Middle East is a goal that is long overdue. UAE will continue to support all constructive efforts towards establishing such zone.

Madam President,

To conclude, I would like to stress that in order to maintain the vital role of the IAEA, it is imperative to provide to the IAEA with the required funding.

The UAE remains committed to a strong, on-going partnership with the IAEA in our responsible approach to the development of a national nuclear power programme and to the use of nuclear applications. My delegation takes this opportunity to commend the work of the IAEA Secretariat for its excellent support and cooperation with my country.

The UAE looks forward to a continued collaboration with other Member States to achieve the highest standards of nuclear safety, security and safeguards at both national and international levels.

I thank you, Madam President.