



Republic of Botswana

REMARKS

BY

MR. LESEDI TLHALEFANG GAOLAOLWE

**ACTING PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND
TECHNOLOGY**

OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

**DURING THE
GENERAL DEBATE**

**OF THE 68th REGULAR SESSION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)
GENERAL CONFERENCE**

18TH SEPTEMBER 2024

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

- *Madam Chair,*
- *Distinguished Delegates,*

1. It is a pleasure and honour to deliver the Statement of the Republic of Botswana on the occasion of the 68th Regular Session of the International Atomic Energy Agency General Conference.
2. I deliver this Statement on behalf of the Head of Delegation of Botswana, Mr. Lesedi Tlhalefang Gaolaolwe, Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Communications, Knowledge and Technology, who was not able to attend this Conference in- person.
3. Let me at the onset congratulate the President of the 68th General Conference of the IAEA, His Excellency Ham Sang Wook, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, upon assuming office, and to pledge Botswana's full support and cooperation towards the success of this Conference.
4. The Republic of Botswana recognizes and highly appreciates the many achievements and relevant initiatives of the IAEA under the visionary leadership of the Director General, Mr Rafael Grossi.

5. **Madam Chair**, I take this opportunity to welcome and congratulate the Cook Islands and the Federal Republic of Somalia as the new Member States of the IAEA.

6. **Madam Chair**, Technical Cooperation continues to be an important catalyst in the delivery of our national programmes in the areas of food security and nutrition, health and wellbeing, human capital development, energy security, and water resources management.

7. Indeed, Botswana has realised successes in the control of animal diseases, and in human health and nutrition, which we continue to build upon through uptake of the Rays of Hope, ZODIAC and Atoms4Food initiatives.

8. Recurring drought, which has afflicted Botswana during the past three consecutive years, continues to be a major threat to food security, that affects both crop and animal production. We are therefore reminded of the critical need for drought tolerant crops, and improved soil, water, and nutrition management practices.

9. **Madam Chair**, Agriculture remains an important pillar of our economy as evidenced by the significant Government investment in the sector, with initiatives aimed at improving production and development of the agricultural value chain.

10. Effective national animal health diagnostic laboratories to conduct coordinated monitoring, surveillance, early detection, differentiation, and control of emerging and re-emerging zoonotic disease outbreaks, are therefore critical.
11. Botswana has also recognized the need to strengthen the artificial insemination programme, and therefore, technical cooperation with the IAEA in this area will support improvements in the genetics of the national herd, and in turn, increase livestock productivity.
12. This year's scientific forum on Atoms4Food is very much aligned to Botswana's agenda on food security. We also look forward to the outcome of the upcoming Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and Technical Cooperation Programme, scheduled for later this year.
13. **Madam Chair**, Botswana continues to strengthen her radiation safety, safeguards and nuclear security capacity and infrastructure, to be able to respond to the evolving safety standards and security threats. Work is ongoing towards finalizing the review of the Radiation Protection Act, to ensure that the legislative and regulatory frameworks are adequate.

14. We remain committed to the international efforts on nuclear security, and therefore commend the IAEA for the successful 2024 International Conference on Nuclear Security. The implementation of the Integrated Nuclear Security Sustainability Plan continues to enjoy the full support of Government.
15. As a result, enabling programmes such as detection architecture, continue to be part of our National Development Plans.
16. **Madam Chair,** The IAEA's capacity-building programmes are very valuable for Botswana, and play a critical role in contributing to the Government's agenda of transforming the national economy into a knowledge-based one. We envisage that the knowledge and skills that we continue to acquire will make available impactful solutions to both the public and private sectors, where nuclear technology provides a competitive edge. We look forward to developing Centres of Excellence in this field through the support of the IAEA.
17. The current support in establishing relevant programmes will therefore lay a critical foundation for the utilization of nuclear technology for the development of the country. Initiatives such as the AFRA programme, the Marie Curie Fellowship Scholarships, and the AFRA PhD Sandwich

Programme, will continue to serve as valuable inputs in this regard.

18. **Madam Chair**, Provision of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine services aligns well with Botswana's commitment to the attainment of universal coverage of a high-quality package of essential health services.
19. I am happy to share with you that the recently established public radiotherapy programme is fully functional, and that it has greatly improved access to cancer treatment. Botswana will continue to enlist the support of the IAEA to further enhance and sustain these services.
20. As I conclude, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Agency for its support, and for the wide range of beneficial initiatives that address the needs of Member States, including Botswana. Allow me to once again assure you of Botswana's commitment to supporting the efforts of the IAEA for the benefit of humanity.

I thank you all for your kind attention.