Statement by Dr Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy at the 68th General Conference of IAEA

President/Vice President, Excellencies, Ladies, & Gentlemen,

Namaste! A very Good Morning to all of you.

On behalf of the Government of India, I extend my warm greetings to the International Atomic Energy Agency and its Member States. I feel privileged to represent India and deliver this national statement to this august audience.

I also welcome the newly elected members of the Agency. Happy to note that two countries, Nepal and Bahrain, have been admitted as Members in 'Middle East & South Asia (MESA) Group', which would enable them to play a more active role within the Agency.

President,

2. Please accept our heartiest congratulations on your election to the post of the President of the sixty-eighth session of the General Conference of IAEA. I assure you of India's full support and cooperation for the Agency in its efforts to promote peaceful uses of atomic energy.

3. This year is special to us as we are at 70th year of our existence as Department of Atomic Energy. As we look back the 7 decades of our journey, it gives me immense pleasure to note that we are able to harness the goodness of atomic energy for the benefit of society and environment, in the true spirit of atoms in service of mankind.

4. I am proud to mention here that India continues to broaden its horizon through basic and directed research in the field of nuclear science and technology, both for power and non-power applications of atomic energy. It would be my privilege to share some of the highlights of our achievements since last conference.

President

5. **Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)** continued to maintain regulatory oversight on the nuclear and radiation installations to ensure that activities are conducted in a safe and secured manner. Some of the notable regulatory clearances were permission for First Approach to Criticality, Low Power Physics Experiments, Phase-C commissioning and progressively raising the power of unit 4 of Kakrapar Atomic Power Project in the state of Gujrat and core loading of Control & Safety Road, blanket etc in the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor.

6. Towards capacity addition, **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)** has started commercial operation of 2 units of indigenous 700 MW Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors at Kakrapar Atomic Power Station in last 1 year. Also initial fuel loading is completed in another unit of 700 MW PHWR at Rajasthan Atomic Power Station.

7. Closed fuel cycle being the cornerstone of Indian nuclear power program, country's first Prototype 500 MW Fast Breeder Reactor at Bhavini is undergoing core loading paving the way for First-Approach-to-Criticality.

8. Towards strengthening the fuel supply chain, a green field Nuclear Fuel Complex at Kota, Rajasthan has now entered in advanced commissioning stage, which will mainly cater the requirement of the upcoming fleet of indigenously built PHWRs.

9. As India sets its path to establish itself as a developed nation (*Viksit Bharat*), Government of India has envisaged a significantly greater role for Nuclear Energy in next two decades to ensure dual challenge of energy security and balancing climate goals.

10. Towards that pursuit, our government has recently announced to partner with the private sector

for (1) setting up of Bharat Small Reactor, (2) Research and Development of Bharat Small Modular Reactor and (3) newer technologies for nuclear energy.

11. Acknowledging the role of clean hydrogen in energy transition and the potential of using nuclear energy in production of clean hydrogen, **Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)** has forayed into pilot-scale demonstration of Copper-Chlorine thermo-chemical cycle of hydrogen production. A pilot-scale integrated facility for nuclear hydrogen production has been installed and commissioned.

12. ***Towards application of Radiation technologies in Health Care***, ***Food security and Industry,*** **Board of Radiation & Isotope Technology (BRIT)** together with IAEA conducted an awareness session titled 'Atoms for Humanity' showcasing its advanced Radiation Technology and products in support to Agency's Flagship Programs "Rays of Hope and Atoms4Food". *I invite all the delegates to our exhibition in the side-lines of the 68th GC, showcasing our radiation technology based solutions for societal applications.*

13. The National Cancer Grid (NCG) – now a 310 member network across the country, spearheaded by **Tata Memorial Centre**, treats approximately 60% of country's total cancer load. The international network of the program, NCG Vishwam, is making its mark in spreading standard and cost-effective cancer care, making it accessible to vulnerable sections of the society, globally.

14. For the first time in the country, **Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre** in collaboration with **Board of Radiation and Isotope Technology**, has done trial production of the SPECT radioisotope Lead-203 (Pb-203) for imaging and cancer therapeutic applications, using a low cost natural Thallium target using 30MeV Cyclotron Facility.

15. Pilot-scale production of radio isotopes Y-90 & P-32 has also commenced at **Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research** for societal applications.

16. **Heavy Water Board (HWB),** the largest global producer of heavy water, continues exporting Heavy

Water to several countries for non-power applications, including medical and healthcare.

President

17. **Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GECNEP)** has recently renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IAEA and continues to host various Multilateral Programs.

18. India's presidency over G20 Summit last year ended with reaffirmation of use of nuclear energy in the respective national energy mix by the G20 nations and role of Small Modular Reactors was particularly highlighted as supplementary to large reactors. In March 2024, India participated in the Nuclear Energy Summit, Brussels, and reiterated its commitment to achieve Net Zero emissions target by 2070.

19. At the dawn of the new era of nuclear renaissance, India stands ready to partner with the agency and other like-minded member states to harness the potential of nuclear energy through science and technology and contribute to a future defined by growth, innovation and energy security.

20. With that, I, on behalf of my beloved nation India, extend our sincere gratitude to the city of Vienna, the people and the government of Austria for hosting the General Conference of the IAEA. India remains committed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, both on the research and application fronts. We wish the 68th General Conference a grand success.

Thank you and Jai Hind.

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