

**Statement by Ambassador Vilawan Mangklatanakul of Thailand,  
President of the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the IAEA General Conference,  
at the opening session of the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the IAEA General Conference  
16 September 2024, Vienna**

Excellencies,

Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. We are delighted that today's session has brought together several Ministers, Vice-Ministers, senior officials, and participants from all Member States. I warmly welcome you all to the 68<sup>th</sup> General Conference.

2. Before we begin, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to all Member States of the Agency for their broad support, commitment and cooperation, which have been instrumental in the successful conclusion of the 67<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the IAEA. This collective effort reflects the significant importance that we place on the Agency and its vital work as well as noble mission in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy and advancing global security and development.

3. It was a great honor for me to serve as President of the 67<sup>th</sup> session. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Southeast Asia and Pacific Group for entrusting me with this important responsibility. My great appreciation is to Mr. Vilmos Cserveny of Hungary for chairing the Committee of the Whole. I also highly appreciate the eight Vice-Presidents for their great cooperation. My genuine gratefulness goes to Ambassador Maria Cleofe Natividad and the Secretariat for their professionalism, knowledge, and support. Last but not least, my heartfelt thanks are for Director-General Grossi, and all Deputy Directors-General for their leadership, tireless efforts, and their commitment to the work of the Agency.

/Distinguished Delegates...

Distinguished Delegates,

4. The heart of the IAEA's enduring success is its ability to foster diplomacy and international cooperation, empowering nations to work together toward common goals. Nevertheless, as a member-driven organization, the Agency's future accomplishments are in our collective hands. Therefore, it is our shared responsibility to ensure that the guiding principle, "**Atoms for Peace and Development**," not only remains relevant but also leads to lasting global benefits.

5. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, I believe that the Agency stays a cornerstone of international cooperation for peace, security, and sustainable development as well as ensures that nuclear technology is used responsibly and exclusively for peaceful purposes. Over the past year, the IAEA has continued to adapt to emerging global challenges, addressing pressing issues like climate change, public health crises, and food security through its diverse initiatives with unwavering dedication. Its commitment to both collaboration and innovation has solidified its role as a key driver of progress on multiple fronts.

6. Since the 67<sup>th</sup> General Conference last year, the Agency has hosted numerous significant meetings, seminars, and workshops, including the first *Nuclear Energy Summit* in Brussels and the fourth *International Conference on Nuclear Security: Shaping the Future* in Vienna earlier this year. We also look forward to the upcoming *Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme* in November. These activities offer valuable insights into key challenges and lessons learned, while also strengthening coordination related to the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

/Excellencies...

Excellencies,

7. We all agree that the **technical cooperation program** has been a key driver of Member States' efforts toward socio-economic development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through capacity building, technical support, and essential equipment, the Agency helps address pressing global challenges. Let me highlight a few key recent achievements:

8. Cancer continues to pose a significant global health challenge, especially in developing countries. As the number of new cases and deaths rises, **the Rays of Hope initiative** shines as a beacon of optimism, creating Anchor Centres around the world to strengthen cancer treatment infrastructure and deliver life-saving care to populations that have long been underserved.

9. Our rivers and coastal areas are often overwhelmed by plastic debris. **The NUTEC Plastics initiative** has made notable progress, with pilot projects in the Asia-Pacific region, on successful nuclear-enabled plastic recycling.

10. **The ZODIAC initiative** has impressively continued its mission to combat zoonotic diseases by expanding its laboratory network.

11. The newly launched **Atoms4Food initiative**, highlighted at this year's Scientific Forum, is very timely and essential in addressing global food insecurity.

12. It is also encouraging to learn that the IAEA played a crucial role at the COP28 climate conference, highlighting the **contributions of nuclear energy to climate mitigation, adaptation and energy security** through, among others, the **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)** in achieving net-zero emissions. We look forward to the first-ever *International Conference on Small Modular Reactors and their Applications* in Vienna next month.

/In the areas of...

13. In the areas of **nuclear security and safety**, we should support the Agency to strengthen international nuclear safety and security standards. In terms of **nuclear safeguards**, the Agency's continuous monitoring and verification of nuclear activities are crucial for ensuring compliance with international non-proliferation agreements. These verification efforts are essential for upholding the peaceful use of nuclear energy and **deserve the full support of all Member States**.

14. I would like to commend the Agency's unwavering commitment to **women's empowerment within the nuclear field**. Through initiatives like the **Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellowship Program** and the **Lise Meitner Program**, we can create a more inclusive and equitable environment where women play an integral role in shaping the future of nuclear technology.

Distinguished Delegates,

15. In closing, I am hopeful that the spirit of **flexibility, open communication, and mutual understanding**—embodying the "**Vienna spirit**" that guided our negotiations last year—will continue to shape the current session. Through this commitment to dialogue and adaptability, we are better positioned to reach consensus and set clear, unified directions for the Agency's work in the years to come. I wish you many enriching and productive discussions, and I wish the new President of the 68<sup>th</sup> General Conference every possible success.

I thank you all very much.

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