

**International Atomic Energy Agency**  
**68th. General Conference**  
16-20 September 2024

**Statement by Portugal**

Mr. Chair,

I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, for your election and wish every success for the mandate at the helm of this Conference. You can count on our support.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the official statement of the European Union which has been published online and makes its own all the considerations contained therein.

It would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity

I would like to reiterate Portugal's full **support to the IAEA** and to its central role in promoting, sustaining and strengthening the global nuclear safety and security architecture.

We praise and thank Director-General Grossi for his leadership and for upholding the Agency's independence, impartiality and technical reliability. Our appreciation is extended to the Agency's staff, in particular to those currently taking part in monitoring missions in some of the most challenging scenarios namely in Ukraine. They also deserve our praise and gratitude.

Chair,

Portugal is strongly committed to nuclear safety and security. We attach the utmost importance to the **full implementation of our obligations** emanating from the International Nuclear Safety and Security Conventions and from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We call on all states that have not yet done so, to adhere to these instruments without any reservation, for the sake of our collective security. All countries in this room have the obligation to comply in good faith with all the rules and commitments deriving from this international framework.

Last year, Portugal fulfilled its obligations under the Convention on Nuclear Safety by participating in the joint Eight and Ninth Review Meeting of Contracting Parties. A few days ago, we also participated in the Extraordinary and Preparatory Meetings to prepare the next Review Cycle.

We submitted the National Report under the Joint Convention and will continue to fulfill our related obligations for the next review cycle.

Portugal also fully supports IAEA's role in creating and monitoring the implementation of the **Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements** and are committed to its implementation.

Mr. Chair,

In 2018, our Ministries of Health and of Science signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the IAEA to provide education and training to professionals from developing countries from 2019 to 2024.

We are pleased to inform that implementation is now over 90% and that we are working towards its renewal.

In addition, Portugal welcome's the Agency's efforts to promote gender balance and career development for more women in nuclear and looks forward to step up its cooperation with the Lise Meitner and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Programmes.

Mr. Chair,

An independent and well-resourced **regulatory system** is a keystone for ensuring the radiation protection and nuclear safety. One of our regulatory bodies, which integrates the national delegation to this Conference, takes an active role in the system to protect persons and the environment.

My country has actively participated in the IAEA review services, namely by supplying experts to Integrated Regulatory Review Services (IRRS); Emergency Preparedness Review Services (EPREV); and to ARTEMIS missions, as well as in other consultancy missions, contributing to the continuous improvement of nuclear safety and radiation protection.

In 2022 and 2023, Portugal hosted IRRS and ARTEMIS missions through the IAEA. These initiatives represented a thorough review of the regulatory framework for radiation protection, nuclear safety and radioactive waste management in Portugal. We remain committed to implementing the recommendations of these missions through a combined Action Plan.

Still in the area of regulation, I would like to highlight the important role played by the **Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies (FORO)**, an association of regulators, existing for more 25 years and of which Portugal is a member, that promotes the highest levels of safety in all practices that use ionizing radiation in the Ibero-American region.

Portugal wants to stress once again the importance of the close cooperation between FORO and the IAEA and would like to point our country's support for the activities of FORO to the exchange of experiences and knowledge in radiological and nuclear safety.

Mr. Chair,

During this Conference, Portugal decided to bring to the table the issue of **Radon**. This carcinogenic radioactive gas is, according to the World Health Organization, one of the leading causes of lung cancer.

Therefore, jointly with Ireland, the European Commission and the IAEA, we hosted *[this morning]* a **side-event** to show case on the need to adopt plans to address and minimize the risk posed by exposure to radon.

Portugal attaches great importance to ensuring the protection against ionizing radiation and, in this context, the first National Action Plan on Radon was established by the Portuguese Environment Agency and is being successfully implemented.

Mr. Chair,

We see the **Technical Cooperation Programme** as an essential component of IAEA's work and we welcome its contribution to the global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, being also committed to raising awareness to the potential of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In addition, Portugal warmly welcomes and fully supports IAEA's **flagship initiatives**. Allow me to mention two such initiatives.

The most recent one, **Atoms4Food** constitutes an important and much needed contribution to our global fight against hunger with its huge potential to increase food security, in particular among developing countries. In this context, I would like to congratulate the African Group for the initiative to create also here in Vienna a **Group of Friends of Food Security**, which was launched yesterday. We look forward to collaborating with it.

The second one is the **Rays of Hope**. Cancer is among the top causes of death worldwide and this initiative will allow the use of new possibilities to treat this terrible disease. The current disparities among countries in access to these diagnosis and treatment instruments are not acceptable. We hope to be able to have a more concrete participation in the near future.

Mr Chair,

I conclude by underlining the **versatility of this Agency** and the importance of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Its benefits range from public health, agriculture or food security to water resources management, the protection of the environment and combat against climate change and pollution. The flagship initiatives I had just referred to, but also the technical cooperation programme, are a testament of this. Never before has the motto of this Agency been so true: *Atoms for Peace and Development!*

I thank you.