



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA DELIVERED BY THE
HONOURABLE DR KGOSIENTSHO RAMOKGOPA, THE MINISTER OF ENERGY
AND ELECTRICITY OF REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, AT THE 68th REGULAR
SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC
ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)**

16 September 2024

Mr President

Director General Grossi

Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegation

Distinguished Delegates

Mr President, South Africa applauds you in leading the 68th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference and assures you of its cooperation, participation and support.

Mr President,

In July 2024, Eskom, South Africa's Public Power Generator, was granted a license from the National Nuclear Regulator to continue operating its Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant Unit 1, thereby providing clean nuclear energy for an additional 20 years. Koeberg Unit 1 has joined approximately 120 reactors worldwide that have safely continued operations beyond their initial 40-year life.

The South African Nuclear Energy Corporation (Necsa) is also forging ahead with the development of a Multi-Purpose Research Reactor Project (MPR) to complement the current Research Reactor (SAFARI-1). The Feasibility Study has passed the Gateway Review, and the project is now shovel-ready, with procurement preparations in progress and a request for proposals to be issued by April 2025.

South Africa has also embarked on the establishment of an off-site above-ground Centralized Interim Storage Facility for spent nuclear fuel. This facility will provide a safe, secure and sustainable way for the long-term management of South Africa's spent nuclear fuel inventory.

The International Energy Agency Net-Zero Roadmap document proposes that about 17GW of nuclear power generation will be required per annum to achieve the global climate change target. South Africa continues to work towards achieving "The Just Energy Transition" objectives in line with the renewed international drive of including Nuclear Energy as a critical energy source to meet these goals.

Mr President,

South Africa welcomes the topic for this year's scientific forum, "***Atoms4Food: Better Agriculture for Better Life***", which encourages the drive for food security using nuclear science to grow stronger, healthier and safer crops to protect the food we need to live, globally and more especially on the African Continent.

My delegation further welcomes efforts to strengthen food security and, in this regard, supports the launch of the Group of Friends on Food Security co-chaired by Italy and Sudan.

In May 2024, we launched Africa's first Nuclear Medicine Research Infrastructure (NuMeRI). NuMeRI will assist with the IAEA "Rays of Hope: Cancer Care for All" initiative launched in 2022, in accordance with the recently signed Anchor Centre Agreement between the IAEA and South Africa's Steve Biko Academic Hospital. This is an important development to address cancer treatment needs within Africa.

Mr President,

The Technical Cooperation Programme is vital, therefore South Africa continues to support IAEA capacity building and training related activities, through participation at national and regional level.

In terms of the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA), South Africa is pleased to confirm that we will deposit the AFRA Revised Instrument of Acceptance with the IAEA later this week.

Mr President,

We remain steadfast in our support for advancing nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and upholding the inalienable and unconditional right of States to pursue peaceful nuclear energy development.

South Africa continues to support initiatives that aim to strengthen nuclear security through active participation in International Conferences on Nuclear Security.

South Africa is deeply concerned about the rising threat to international peace and security given the current intensifying geopolitical tensions among nuclear powers. Similarly, the risk of the threat of use of nuclear weapons is gaining traction, which is a serious concern. We remain gravely concerned about the persisting conflicts in Ukraine-Russia, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sudan and the devastating humanitarian effects these have on civilians, especially women and children.

We remain steadfast in our conviction that nuclear weapons do not guarantee security, but rather detracts from it. Simultaneously, we underscore the central role of the IAEA in strengthening and coordinating the respective nuclear security and safety frameworks globally. Therefore, it remains pivotal that the work of this body is not politicised and that we do not detract from the important and competent technical responsibilities that this Agency is seized with.

In closing, Mr President, I reiterate South Africa's unwavering and continued support for the Agency's fundamental role in ensuring that nuclear science and technology is used for peaceful purposes, and towards the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

I thank you.

