



**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE
DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA
68TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA), VIENNA**

Item 7: General Debate and Annual Report 2023

[Delivered by M.R.K. Lenagala, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka]

Mr. President
Director General of IAEA
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates

1. On behalf of the delegation of Sri Lanka, I extend our congratulations to you Mr. President Ambassador HAM Sang Wook, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, on the assumption of the Presidency of the 68th General Conference of the IAEA. Sri Lanka associates itself with the Statement of the G-77 and China. My delegation would like to make this statement in our national capacity.
2. Sri Lanka has had an excellent working relationship with the IAEA since becoming one of its founding members in 1957. Sri Lanka recognizes the Agency's remarkable achievements. We express our sincere appreciation to the Director General and the Secretariat for their tireless efforts to ensure the delivery of its Programmes, through innovative solutions to global challenges.
3. As reflected in the Annual Report 2023, we commend the Agency's work to ensure the delivery of its mandate in peaceful uses of nuclear technology, enhancing nuclear safety and security as well as nuclear verification and safeguards.

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Mr. President,

4. The Technical Cooperation activities of the Agency are vital for a developing country like Sri Lanka. We appreciate that a high implementation rate has been maintained by the Technical Cooperation Department in 2023.
5. Sri Lanka welcomes the Agency's Financial Statements for 2023 and wishes to underscore the importance of maintaining a solid financial footing which is crucial for the effective implementation of its six Major Programmes, enabling the acceleration and expansion of the use of atomic energy towards peace, health and prosperity worldwide.
6. Further, Sri Lanka welcomes the progress achieved by the Agency concerning major initiatives such as the Rays for Hope Initiative, Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) Initiative, NUTEC Plastics and Atoms4Food.
7. Sri Lanka takes note of the Agency's Budget Update for 2025, appreciates the cost-saving efforts made, and confident that the Agency would continue to do so in the future.

Mr. President

8. Sri Lanka is seeking to increase and diversify its power production capacity to tackle climate change and the challenges of energy security, by exploring the possibilities of nuclear power as a reliable and low-carbon option for its energy mix. This is in line with Sri Lanka's Green Policies and the ambitious plan to increase the share of renewable energy in the electricity mix to 70% to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and achieve the Net-Zero target by 2050.
9. In this regard, Sri Lanka is pleased to inform that the Cabinet of Ministers granted approval in February 2024 for 'Taking of Strategic and Visionary Decisions required for Electricity Generation by using Nuclear Power as a safe, clean, reliable, affordable, and green Energy Source'.

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10. Accordingly, Sri Lanka is in the process of developing its nuclear infrastructure. This is led by the Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Board and the Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Regulatory Council, focusing on capacity development and other areas, including regulatory aspects such as the establishment of new legislation and the expansion of regulatory infrastructure, including safety, security, safeguards and liability.
11. In this connection, a delegation from the relevant stakeholder institutions had an engagement with the IAEA in January this year to discuss an Integrated Work Plan on Sri Lanka's Nuclear Power Programme. There has been steady progress in the implementation of this IWP. A list of future actions with assistance from the IAEA through workshops, training, scientific visits and expert missions has been identified and its implementation is in progress.
12. With regard to the proposed amendments of the present Atomic Energy Act covering the four areas of nuclear law, namely nuclear safety, security, safeguards and civil liability for nuclear damage, a high-level delegation comprising legal & technical experts from Sri Lanka had a very constructive engagement with the IAEA experts in Vienna, in June 2024. This collaborative effort was aimed at ensuring that the draft Amendment is consistent with relevant instruments, safety standards, and nuclear security guidance, and supports the establishment of a comprehensive national nuclear legal framework. Sri Lanka expects to present a new draft law to the Parliament for approval in the first quarter of 2025. We make avail of this opportunity to place on record Sri Lanka's appreciation of the cooperation of the IAEA in this endeavor, particularly the support of the Nuclear and Treaty Law Section of the Office of Legal Affairs.
13. Mr. President, an IAEA Site and External Events Design mission was successfully conducted to review the site survey report for nuclear power plants in Sri Lanka earlier this year, which was followed by a site visit. The SEED review mission was requested within the framework of the Technical Assistance and Co-operation Programme between Sri Lanka and IAEA.

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14. In collaboration with the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau of Sri Lanka the IAEA Safety Review Team reviewed the site survey report. The SEED review mission conducted interviews and discussions with the representatives of involved technical agencies, conducted a site visit to one candidate site in the Eastern Sri Lanka, and has provided observations.
15. I am pleased to announce that an agreement has been signed with a private entity to establish a medical cyclotron facility to produce FDG for PET scanners.
16. The Technical Cooperation Programmes of the Agency for Sri Lanka focuses on priority areas such as nuclear and radiation safety and security, food and agriculture, health and nutrition, water resources management, energy and industry, environmental monitoring, food safety, human health, and energy and industry, and human resources development for nuclear applications. There are six projects for the 2024-2025 programme cycle. For the 2026-2027 cycle, Sri Lanka has proposed 5 new projects in the areas of nuclear power infrastructure development, nuclear medicines, animal health, food safety, and radiation safety infrastructure development.

Mr. President

17. I am pleased to announce that on 5th July 2024 Sri Lanka deposited the Instrument of Acceptance of the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Sri Lanka is now in the position of making in-kind contribution towards IAEA Technical Cooperation programme by hosting regional events in Sri Lanka.
18. Mr. President, policies and strategies of Sri Lanka on the energy sector emphasize energy security, fuel diversification and environmental conservation and providing electricity at minimum possible cost. We encourage clean and green energy sources like Nuclear Power for Electricity Generation to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The nuclear programme aligns

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with Sri Lanka's Nationally Determined Contributions under the UNFCCC aiming for carbon neutrality by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.

19. In conclusion, Mr. President, let me reaffirm that Sri Lanka recognizes the significant benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy and remains committed to leveraging these advancements to enhance the country's development goals.

20. We appreciate the IAEA's expertise and support to the Member States, fostering an environment where the benefits of nuclear technology can be shared effectively and responsibly. Sri Lanka looks forward to continuing its fruitful cooperation with the IAEA in the years ahead.

21. Thank you.