



Statement by H.E. Ayooob M. Erfani

Resident Representative and Head of Delegation

at the

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Mr. President,

Director General,

Excellencies,

Let me start by congratulating your Excellency, Ambassador Filippo Formica on your election as President of this year's General Conference. Also, I wish to thank Ambassador Aliyar Lebbe Abdul Azeez for presiding in such a great manner over last year's General Conference and I wish him every success in his future endeavors. I thank H.E. Director General Yukiya Amano for his statement and for the Annual Report 2014 and congratulate him on his outstanding leadership. My delegation also commends the strong efforts of the IAEA Secretariat.

The delegation of Afghanistan welcomes Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Turkmenistan to the IAEA family. We are confident that the new members will have a mutually beneficial relationship with the organization.

Mr. President,

The annual General Conference provides a fresh opportunity for all of us to learn from the past developments, evaluate our opportunities and address the evolving and protracted challenges we are facing in international peace and nuclear safety and security, which remain vital for the security of our global village.

Afghanistan, a founding member of the IAEA, started to benefit from IAEA's excellent cooperation as early as 1959, and we continue to do so in our ongoing joint efforts in developing nuclear applications and technology in the country. Therefore, today I will focus on further expansion of nuclear applications in Afghanistan through strengthening the technical cooperation between Afghanistan and the Agency.

As Afghanistan completed the transition and has entered its Decade of Transformation (2015-2024) towards a self-reliant economy, nuclear science and technology will have a crucial role in achieving the National Priority Programs of the Government of National Unity of Afghanistan, during the coming years of transformation. The Country Program Framework (CPF) 2012-2016 has already enabled cooperation between Afghanistan and the Agency in seven key areas, namely:

1) Legislative and regulatory framework; 2) human health; 3) agriculture and food; 4) water resources management; 5) energy planning; 6) nuclear analytical capability; and 7) human capacity building.

These policy issues remain vital in achieving our goals as set out in our national development agenda and NPPs throughout the Decade of Transformation. I can also report that the Parliament of Afghanistan has ratified Afghanistan's Nuclear Act, drafted by the Afghanistan Atomic Energy High Commission (AAEHC) with the IAEA's assistance on 10 September 2015. Afghanistan with the IAEA's support is about to finalize draft regulations

for radiation safety in the areas of 1) waste management and 2) the transport of radioactive materials.

Mr. President,

The Agency's technical cooperation activities are of great importance for Afghanistan and our entire region, and Afghanistan therefore considers it essential that the resources of the Technical Cooperation Fund be sufficient, assured and predictable. Recent technical cooperation projects between Afghanistan and the IAEA revolved around three key projects: The establishment of a Radiation Oncology Centre; a Radiology Diagnostic Centre; and Radiotherapy and Radiology Services in Kabul. Afghanistan appreciates the support that has been received from the IAEA technical cooperation projects and looks forward to the expansion of such cooperation in future projects.

On our part, we are committed to continuing our efforts to further develop the institutional and regulatory framework required for peaceful nuclear technology applications, through leading role of the AAEHC in the country. Training and capacity building remains a key component of the efforts being made by the AAEHC. The IAEA has provided considerable capacity building opportunities to the AAEHC in the form of fellowships and training courses. However, still a lack of funds indicates the need for further cooperation and support by the IAEA and the international community at large and we hope that donors are able to contribute sufficient funds for these important programmes.

I wish to reemphasize that Afghanistan attaches great importance to the IAEA's technical cooperation projects under the CPF and remains confident that more effective use of various activities under the CPF will have greater impact. We wish to encourage increased transfer of know-how and additional capacity-building programmes from countries with advanced nuclear and radiological standards, which could also serve as an important step in shifting from mere assistance to strong cooperation.

We highly commend the efforts of the IAEA in assisting developing countries in gaining further access to nuclear science and technologies and we believe this must be a priority for the post-2015 development agenda, especially on the eve of the UN Sustainable Development Summit (25-27 September 2015) and due to the importance of access to energy in poverty reduction and improving health and livelihoods. As Director General Amano has rightfully stated in his statement on Monday, there are obvious links between the activities of the IAEA and the new goals, including human health, water management, food security, nutrition, protection of the environment, and energy. We cannot overemphasize the importance of technology and science for our development, welfare and progress.

Mr. President,

Afghanistan welcomes the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed between the IR of Iran and EU3+3 in Vienna on 14 July 2015. We congratulate the IR of Iran, the United States and the other negotiating partners on the historic outcome, which will enhance security and stability in our region and beyond, and we encourage all sides to take every effort for the

implementation of this agreement. Safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology will contribute to global peace, security and development.

Afghanistan continues to fully support the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free-zone in the Middle East and respective consultations to achieve this goal. We emphasize the central role of the IAEA in this process. The Government of Afghanistan welcomes any confidence and security building measures in this region, as well as any similar positive steps towards elimination of WMD arsenals.

Afghanistan – a prime victim of international terrorism – strongly supports all efforts towards strengthened global nuclear security. We recognize that the global security framework is constantly changing. The IAEA must have the full support of all member states in order to be able to fulfill its mandate.

Mr. President,

I wish to conclude by reiterating the importance of continued cooperation between Afghanistan and the IAEA and its member states in the future and we are grateful for all the assistance we have received thus far.

Thank you, Mr. President