



KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

HONOURABLE NYAPANE KAYA

AT

**THE 61ST REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

18 SEPTEMBER, 2017

Madam President of the General Conference,

Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr Yukiya Amano,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Madam President,

I convey congratulatory message from the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho on your election as the president for the 61st IAEA General Conference, together with the other members of the Bureau. Please be assured of my delegation's support to yourself and the Conference secretariat towards the successful conclusions of the Conference.

We further extend the congratulatory message for the Agency Director General, Mr. Yukiya Amano on his re-election as the Agency Chief, the Government of Lesotho trust in his stewardship and we reiterate our support full support.

Madam President,

Today, His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho arrived in Vienna upon invitation by the Agency Director General. He will deliver a keynote speech during the opening session of the Scientific Forum scheduled for tomorrow. This is an auspicious moment for the Mountain Kingdom as it

signifies the close the relations developed with the Agency since becoming a member in 2009.

Madam President,

This year's Scientific Forum theme is without doubt pertinent to Lesotho's national objectives to hasten the establishment of the first radiotherapy facility in Lesotho and to introduce nuclear medicine in the next phase.

Lesotho is faced with a double burden of diseases as communicable diseases are still prevalent while non-communicable diseases are increasing. The WHO Global Burden Diseases estimates that cancer accounts for 17.2 % of non-communicable diseases and 4 % of all deaths in Lesotho. The country also faces high incidence of communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDs and TB which have a bearing on cancer burden.

In this regard, Lesotho acknowledges the Agency's partnership with the Ministry of Health in the planning and building of capacities to have a well-staffed and equipped radiotherapy facility to provide quality cancer care to patients in Lesotho. The non-communicable diseases strategic plan targets 25% relative reduction in overall mortality from cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, or chronic respiratory diseases by 2025.

The establishment of the National Radiotherapy Facility is therefore expected to contribute to the realization of SDG 3 by ensuring healthy lives and promote well-being for all.

Madam President,

The Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme continues to support member states in integrating nuclear technologies in realising their national

development goals. The Agency modalities and initiatives for enhancing South-South and North-South cooperation have certainly amplified the Technical Cooperation Programme.

We therefore note with appreciation the convening of the first International Conference on the Agency Technical Cooperation Programme held in May this year. The Conference gave an opportunity for member states to highlight national achievements and impact of the TC Programme, and sharing of experiences and lessons learned.

Lesotho's most notable success story thus far is the livestock project. Livestock production in Lesotho has declined in the past years mainly due to poor rangelands management which affects livestock productivity leading to poor livestock nutrition that result in low fertility rates, low milk production and poor fibre quality and quantity. In addition, livestock production is limited by poor breeding and general animal husbandry practices, the presence of diseases and threat of emerging and trans-boundary diseases.

The use of nuclear techniques has made it easy to accurately diagnose diseases and detect early pregnancies that result in control of trans-boundary diseases and those with zoonotic nature thus increasing livestock productivity and production. The TC Programme has supported laboratory personnel to be capacitated with skills and equipment and reagents to perform diagnostic tests accurately, and trainings in the field of detection of diseases and pregnancy diagnosis.

In this regard, we are grateful for the support from the Agency in the development of Lesotho's second Country Programme Framework to cover the period of 2018 to 2023. This second CPF defined sector priorities for socio-

economic development needs to be supported through technical cooperation activities using nuclear technologies in the fields of human health; agriculture and food security; water resources; energy planning and economics; environment protection and monitoring; and radiation safety and legal framework.

We look forward to our continued cooperation until completion of the second CPF and subsequent signing thereto.

Madam President,

The Government of Lesotho is mindful of the urgent need to establish a radiation and nuclear safety infrastructure and that, establishment of the Radiation Protection Agency will ensure the proper management of radiation sources for protection of human health and the environment from the harmful effects of ionizing radiation.

The latest developments in this regard include the approval of the Radiation Protection Agency Draft ACT by the Cabinet and review of the draft by the relevant Parliament Portfolio Committee. However, these efforts have been negatively affected by holding of three national elections within a period of five years, resulting in frequent change of Government and Parliament before the ACT could be passed. However, the Government remains committed to this goal and will give the necessary impetus to have the ACT enacted almost immediately.

The Agency's continuing assistance in developing skills for the intended Radiation Protection Agency personnel in authorization, inspection and enforcement is acknowledged as it ensures immediate implementation of the ACT once enacted.

Madam President,

In conclusion, we recognise the convening of the International Conference on Nuclear Security held last year in December. Lesotho was represented at the Conference at the Ministerial level. The Conference afforded an opportunity to discuss the national and international community's experiences and achievements to date in strengthening nuclear security; identifying trends and enhancing capacities in detecting and responding to threats.

Basotho professionals from different authorities continue to benefit in different nuclear security capacity building activities organised by the Agency and for that we are grateful.

Lastly, The Government of Lesotho is cognisant of the Agency's tireless work in striving to strengthen the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the Agency Safeguards regime, and continued work in assisting member states in implementing their safeguards agreements. The Government of Lesotho stands ready to support the Agency in this regard, and we reiterate our commitment in discharging our obligations under the agreement.

With these few words, Madam President, I wish you and your Conference every success.

I THANK YOU!