

**STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA DELIVERED  
BY MINISTER OF ENERGY, MS TINA JOEMAT-PETTERSSON, MP  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 59TH SESSION OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA) GENERAL  
CONFERENCE, VIENNA, 15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015**

Director General,  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies,  
Heads of Delegations,  
Distinguished delegates,

Mr President,

Allow me to extend my sincere congratulations to you on your assumption as President of this conference. I'm assured that your outstanding leadership will make this conference a great success.

Let me also extend my congratulations to *Antigua & Barbuda* and Turkmenistan on their admission as new members to the Agency.

Mr President,

2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the *nuclear bombing* of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the twentieth anniversary of the indefinite extension of the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*. During this year, we were also delighted by the fact that Director General Amano was able to join us in South Africa to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our SAFARI-1 nuclear research reactor.

The history of Pelindaba and the SAFARI-1 research reactor represents a true story that is symbolic of South Africa's democratic transformation. This site, where the Apartheid Regime once forged its nuclear weapons, is now central to our country's determination to use nuclear technology only for peaceful purposes. We renounced nuclear weapons as the basis for our security and instead resolved to build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, our position on nuclear weapons has been that these inhumane weapons of mass destruction do not guarantee security, but undermine it. South Africa is therefore concerned about the failure at the *2015 NPT Review Conference* to rally behind the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons by agreeing to take effective measures towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. We also regret that these developments deprived us of a consensus outcome document that could have contributed to our work this week.

South Africa remains committed to the attainment and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons. In this context, we are committed to the NPT and its three equally important pillars, namely nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The IAEA has an important role to play in each of these three areas, be it through accelerating and enlarging the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world, or by establishing and administering safeguards but also to promote peace and international co-operation by furthering the establishment of safeguarded worldwide disarmament.

Mr President,

*Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones* enhances global and regional peace and security, and constitute important steps to strengthen the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime, including in the Middle East. We therefore share the profound disappointment at the failure to reach agreement on this key issue during the NPT Review Conference. In our Region, South Africa will sign the host country agreement with the African Union Commission to establish the Secretariat of the *African Commission on Nuclear Energy* in South Africa.

Mr President,

Another significant milestone during 2015 was the conclusion of the historic agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme which is testament to the success of a negotiated and diplomatic solution, to which South Africa had steadfastly lent its full support. We particularly welcome the fact that the agreement is consistent with the provisions of the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT), in particular with the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy as enshrined in Article IV of the Treaty.

Mr President,

The inalienable right to the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy as set out in Article IV of the NPT is an essential objective of the Treaty and the basis for our work here at the Agency. Nuclear power and the peaceful applications of nuclear technology, if optimised to the fullest, can meaningfully enhance the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and could contribute to the post-2015 UN development agenda.

Mr President,

As we stated previously, South Africa will be embarking on a significant expansion of our nuclear power generating capacity which will see 9 600 MW of electricity to be generated through nuclear power, with the first new unit to be commissioned by 2023. This programme will contribute to our energy security through the provision of a reliable and sustainable electricity supply, and will enable the country to inter alia create jobs, develop skills, create industries, and catapult our country into a knowledge economy.

Since the previous General Conference, we have taken a number of key steps that include the following:

- We conducted detailed studies regarding various aspects of the new build programme and concluded that the programme is fundable and will contribute positively to our economy.
- Following the *Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR)* mission to South Africa, the first to a nuclear operating State, we have acted on the recommendations and the implementation of an Action Plan is underway.
- We are currently reviewing our *National Nuclear Regulator Act* and *Nuclear Energy Act*, and have completed benchmark studies on regulatory independence and institutional arrangements.
- We have also signed various *Inter-Governmental Agreements* to lay the foundation for co-operation, trade and exchange for nuclear technology as well as procurement.
- Similarly the vendor parades have been completed with all nuclear vendor countries that have shown interest to participate in the Nuclear New Build Programme.
- My Government is commencing with the actual nuclear procurement process to select a strategic partner or partners and the outcome of

which will be presented to Cabinet by the end of the 2015/16 financial year.

Mr President,

We stated last year that the training and development of human resources to fully support all aspects of our nuclear power programme, is a major priority. Whilst we have extensive expertise and knowledge in the nuclear disciplines, Nuclear New Build Programme will require more capacity and we have therefore initiated a nuclear skills and training programme. In this regard, South Africa continues to cooperate with various countries to develop the skills and training programmes.

We will continue to develop and maintain the requisite skills through cooperation with international partners, notably the Agency. In addition, our National Nuclear Regulator is in the process of establishing a centre of excellence to support early engagement efforts prior to the roll out of the Nuclear New Build Programme.

Mr President,

South Africa attaches great importance to the work done by the *Agency's Nuclear Application laboratories* through which the Agency provides vital support to Member States in fields such as human health, agriculture, and water.

We were honoured to co-chair with Germany, the *Friends of Renewal* initiative which seeks to mobilise Member States to support the renovation of the laboratories. An amount of 31 million Euro is required for the completion of this project. I understand that to date half of this amount has been secured but more is still needed. I wish to thank all the countries that have pledged funding for this project and appeal to all other states to pledge additional funding in order to bring these renovation project to its successful completion. I am pleased to announce that South Africa will make an amount of R3 million (or approximately Euro200,000) available for this purpose.

Mr President,

South Africa attaches great importance to the Agency's *Technical Cooperation programme* and commends the IAEA for its support for this programme. The programme contributes towards the utilisation of nuclear technology in support of sustainable socio-economic growth not only in South Africa, but also throughout our Continent.

In this regard I would specifically like to highlight the support given to the Africa Union's *Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign (AU-PATTEC)*. This project is not only raising awareness, but also aims to eradicate tsetse flies by creating tsetse free zones in Africa through various eradication techniques such as the *Sterile Insect Technique* which will contribute in attaining socio-economic development.

The threat to human and animal health posed by transboundary animal diseases has never been more apparent than in 2014. South Africa welcomes the Agency's contribution to the fight against the Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa and view the Agency's quick response in this regard is testament to the flexibility of the *Technical Cooperation Programme* and to the important role of the TCP in delivering this life saving technology.

South Africa's *National Institute for Communicable Diseases* was one of the Agency's main partners on Ebola in Sierra Leone, where the Agency provided equipment, laboratory supplies, and technical advice to enable affected countries to make rapid diagnosis of the disease, using simple kits. The National Institute for Communicable Diseases will again be one of the Agency's key partners in the project launched by the Agency to equip and train African countries to be better prepared to rapidly diagnose future outbreaks of zoonotic diseases, such as Ebola.

Mr President,

South Africa, through the NECSA subsidiary Nuclear Technology Products (NTP), continued to support the global nuclear medicine industry as one of the major suppliers of radioisotopes, particularly Mo-99, which meets around 20% of the world demand through the SAFARI-1 research reactor and associated processing facilities at its Pelindaba site. South Africa is proud to be acknowledged as the world's leading supplier of Mo-99 manufactured from low enriched uranium (LEU) and look forward to the users to successfully adapt their medical product registrations to LEU for us to fully convert our Mo-99 supplies to be LEU based.

Mr President,

Without *assured, sufficient and predictable funding* for the TC Programme the Agency will not be able to sustain its support to Member States. While welcoming the extra-budgetary support which the Agency relies on to support some of the TC programmes and projects, this is not a reliable

and predictable source of funding. It is thus crucial that we should redouble efforts to consolidate the regular budget of the Agency.

I am honoured to announce that my country will pledge the full recommended amount of Euros 302,352 to the Technical Cooperation Fund for the year 2016.

Mr President,

We note with appreciation the Agency's efforts to strengthen the operational safety of nuclear power plants internationally. While the SAFARI-1 nuclear research reactor anniversary marked a 50-year nuclear safety record, we aware that there is no room for complacency.

- In preparation for the December 2016 IAEA *Integrated Regulatory Review Service* (IRRS) mission to South Africa, a self-assessment project using the IAEA Self-Assessment of Regulatory Infrastructure for Safety (SARIS) methodology is also currently being undertaken and our National Nuclear Disaster Management Plan will be amended accordingly in 2015.
- Projects to strengthen our regulatory infrastructure are being implemented as part of the IAEA TC cycle 2014-2017. Capacity building initiatives and reviews of identified regulatory aspects are being conducted through national training courses and IAEA expert missions.
- The 2014 EPREV Mission South Africa identified good practices and made recommendations and suggestions, which are being addressed through an Action Plan.
- South Africa, participate actively in the four safety standards committees, the Commission on Safety Standards and the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee (NSGC) and currently serves as chair of the IAEA Transport Safety Standards committee (TRANSSC). South Africa will continue to support the Agency's initiatives for the harmonization and strengthening of international co-operation in nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety through active participation in the Agency's Safety Standards programme.
- Following the recent Joint Convention review meeting, South Africa will be hosting a regional conference to encourage States that have not done so, to join the Convention in October 2015.
- We were pleased to note that Member States were able to reach consensus on the Vienna Declaration on nuclear safety.

We also continue to participate actively in various regulatory forums at a regional level and international level such as SADC Nuclear Regulators Network (NRN), Forum for Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa (FNRBA), the Multi-National Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP), and the Regulatory Cooperation Forum (RCF) in order to strengthen our regulatory capability and infrastructure.

In addressing our ageing plants, South Africa through the power utility, Eskom will be using the Agency's developed Long Term Operation (LTO) methodology for compiling the safety case that will form the basis for extending the life of the Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant. South Africa will be hosting a PRE-SALTO mission in November 2015. This work is expected to be completed in 4 to 5 years. Another follow-up mission will follow in 2018 to assess the progress, with the actual SALTO mission being anticipated for 2020, before the submission is made to the regulator.

As previously reported, I am also pleased to report that the project to replace the steam generators at Koeberg Nuclear Power Station is currently at an advance stage.

Mr President,

South Africa supports the Agency's efforts to strengthen the safeguards system in all states with safeguards agreements in force and within its legal mandate.

South Africa continues to work closely with the IAEA on the verification of nuclear materials and related activities and has continued to maintain the broader conclusion. We are pleased to report that after numerous consultations with the Agency, an agreement was reached between South Africa and the IAEA to begin implementation of the Integrated Safeguards Approach for our nuclear facilities with effect from 1 July 2015. This safeguards approach optimizes both the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's safeguards implementation under the Comprehensive Safeguards and Additional Protocol Agreement.

Mr President,

South Africa attaches great importance to open communication to build confidence and demystifying nuclear energy. Nuclear education and awareness activities continue steadily to gain momentum as South Africa prepares for the Nuclear New Build Programme. These outreach efforts remain valuable mechanisms to convey to the public the many benefits

derived from the use of nuclear energy. We commend the IAEA Director General, as his visit to South Africa contributed towards promoting public awareness of the benefits that could be derived from nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

In conclusion, Mr President and distinguished delegates, be assured of the full cooperation of my delegation to ensure a successful Conference.

I thank you