STATEMENT
BY
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RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE/GOVERNOR
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE IAEA

FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
2015 REVIEW CONFERENCE
OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

CLUSTER III: PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

9 MAY 2012
VIENNA

Check against delivery
Chairperson,

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Chairperson,

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the only international instrument that contains both the legal commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons and measures to prevent nuclear proliferation, whilst recognizing the inalienable right of States Parties to the NPT to the peaceful use of nuclear science, technologies and applications pursuant to Article IV of the Treaty.

South Africa was encouraged by the momentum gained at the 2010 Review Conference through the adoption of the Action Plan but it is imperative that all States Parties be held fully accountable for strict compliance with their obligations under the NPT and strive to implement the actions agreed upon in the final 2010 document.

Chairperson,

In view of concerns regarding energy security and climate change as well as the importance of promoting economic development, it is expected that the international community will see a substantial increase in the development of nuclear plans for the production of electricity. This anticipated expanded use of nuclear energy has prompted some States to express concerns about proliferation and propose restrictions and controls over the legitimate peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

On several occasions, South Africa reconfirmed its view that peaceful nuclear cooperation and access to the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, pursuant to Article IV of the NPT, are integral parts of the Treaty. The inalienable right on the peaceful use of nuclear technology as recognized in the Treaty is of particular relevance and importance to the African continent, based on the need for sustainable and accelerated economic growth in the region.

At the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit President Zuma remarked in this context (and I quote), "nuclear energy provides not only for the expanded opportunity to generate power needed for our development. We also derive infinite value from its application to health, nutrition and agriculture. Our international legally binding obligations on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation allow for the enrichment of uranium for peaceful purposes."(Unquote)

Chairperson,

Due to decreasing natural resources, global warming, climate change, pollution and rapid global growth, security of energy supply has become an issue that ranges high on the agenda worldwide. African countries, too, are increasingly faced with the challenge of increasing energy demands, and are looking towards including the nuclear option in their energy mix.

As more and more countries turn to nuclear energy production and other civilian nuclear applications South Africa believes that the IAEA could play an increasing role in the future. Therefore, my delegation continues to attach great importance to the promotional role of the Agency, as set out in Article II of the IAEA Statute, aiming to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.
Chairperson

The IAEA's TC programme has proven to be of strategic importance to developing countries, particularly in the African region, and can provide the necessary impetus for accelerated economic development. Many of the IAEA's TC projects thus play a valuable role in the achievement of the MDGs and have made meaningful contributions towards the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), contributing in particular towards the alleviation of poverty on the continent.

South Africa recognizes the role of agriculture in enhancing the development of the countries in the Southern African region and the potential devastating consequences, which the spread of transboundary animal diseases could have, in particular, diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, rift valley fever, sheep pox and goat pox, African horse sickness and African swine fever, if not detected and treated at an early stage. Furthermore, within Africa there are limited national and regional capacities for the early and rapid diagnosis and control of various animal diseases, and, therefore, an over-reliance on the diagnostic capabilities of laboratories situated outside of Africa.

Chairperson,

Against this background, and the demonstrated successes of the Joint FAO-IAEA Division on Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, the Government of the Republic of South Africa announced in 2011 that it has extended to the IAEA a formal offer to support specific efforts to improve veterinary laboratory capacities in Sub-Saharan African countries. To that end, the Government of the Republic of South Africa, through its African Renaissance and International Co-operation Fund, has pledged R15,000,000.00 (Fifteen million Rand), approximately Euro 1.5 million, to support such laboratory capacity activities. The project duration is approximately four years and the total project cost amounts to Euro 3 million. The project is a collaborative effort between South Africa, the United States of America, the IAEA and FAO. South Africa encourages other States Parties to make contributions to the project and commends the USA for its contribution within the context of the Peaceful Uses Initiative.

South Africa attaches great importance to the Agency's TC Programme and has successfully participated in national and regional AFRA projects. Upon South Africa's initiative, the Agency was also instrumental in the establishment of the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa (FNRBA), seeking cooperation and peer review amongst the regulatory bodies in the region. AFRA and the Agency will also contribute to the work of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), established in 2011 under the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty).

Chairperson,

The 2010 Review Conference Action Plan accentuates what South Africa has consistently repeated at the meetings of the IAEA Board and the NPT, namely that every effort should be made to ensure that IAEA resources for technical cooperation activities are sufficient, assured and predictable and that continued efforts should be made within the IAEA to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of its technical cooperation programme. With the increasing demands made on the Agency, it is South Africa's view that securing sufficient, assured and predictable funding for TC projects now requires urgent priority.
In order for the IAEA to continue to utilize its expertise and know-how to the fullest benefit of Member States through its TC programme South Africa believes that TC Fund should be incorporated into the Agency's regular budget. Valuable initiatives such as the PUI, that aim to provide extra-budgetary assistance for TC projects that otherwise remain unfunded, can only be a temporary measure in view of the growing demand for technical assistance from the Agency.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the strength, credibility and continuity of the NPT rests on a fundamental bargain of the States Parties to the NPT, which must be recognized and upheld, rather than being used by some to serve selective interests through the perpetuation of discrimination and imbalance. The Treaty, the steps and actions agreed upon by Review Conferences must be implemented equally in all its aspects without favour or prejudice. As a multilateral legally-binding instrument, which was negotiated and equally agreed to by the members of the international community, nothing in the Treaty shall be compromised, including the very important aspect of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.