STATEMENT BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION ON PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY AT THE SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2015 NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE

Geneva 30 April, 2013

Chairperson,

I wish to note that South Africa associates itself with the statement that was made by the Non-Aligned Movement.

South Africa remains committed to the NPT as 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. Peaceful nuclear co-operation and access to the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, pursuant to Article IV of the NPT, constitutes one of the core objectives of the Treaty and are of particular relevance and importance to Africa where there is an urgent need for sustainable and accelerated economic growth.

Chairperson,

The IAEA, through its Technical Cooperation (TC) programme, plays an essential role in the development of technologies to improve food security, food safety, water resource management and the impacts of climate change. In this regard, South Africa believes that the IAEA’s success in developing technologies, such as the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT), and supporting Member States in their implementation thereof is one of the best examples of the practical application of nuclear energy for development. To ensure that the Agency is able to continue with the research and development of these technologies the Nuclear Application Laboratories must be modernised. In an effort to support regional capacity building in this regard, South Africa is collaborating with the United States, Japan, the IAEA and the FAO on a project to improve veterinary laboratory capacities in Sub-Saharan Africa for the early and rapid diagnoses and control of various transboundary animal diseases.

Chairperson,

The central challenge remains to ensure that the IAEA has the necessary resources to fulfil its mandate and to meet the needs of Member States. In this regard, the 2010 Review Conference Action Plan accentuates what South Africa has consistently stated 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.

Whilst the membership of the IAEA continues to grow, the increases in the TC fund lagged behind to the increases of the regular budget, the bulk of which is devoted to non-promotional activities of the Agency. South Africa shares the view that in order of the Agency to meet its technical cooperation for peaceful purposes, there has to be a balance between budgets devoted to technical cooperation and the Agency's non-promotional activities.

In addition, the rate of attainment has declined steadily since 2010 due to the global economic crises. All Member States are urged to address the impediments facing the implementation of the TC programme, which includes the need to ensure that funding is sufficient, assured and predictable (SAP). Although perceived to be voluntary, there is an obligation on all members of the IAEA to make contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund as per scales of assessed contributions, in order to facilitate the effective implementation of one of the IAEA's statutory mandates.

South Africa furthermore encourages the UN development organisations to work closely with the IAEA within the UNDAF in order to maximise the impact of development programmes.

Chairperson,

South Africa is now producing medical isotopes on a large scale using low enriched uranium fuel (LEU). This technical achievement is a welcome addition to the capability to produce such isotopes using highly enriched uranium (HEU). South Africa believes that the focus on minimising the use of HEU in peaceful applications, which represents a tiny fraction of the vast quantities of HEU in military programmes, should be dealt with in the context of the long outstanding negotiations on a fissile material treaty. These negotiations should commence in the Conference on Disarmament without further delay. By exclusively focusing on material in peaceful use, we will not be able to substantially and sustainably address the risks posed by the continued diversion of vast quantities of unsafeguarded material.

Chairperson,

South Africa is working towards having an energy sector by 2030 that promotes economic growth and development through energy infrastructure investment. An energy sector that advances social equity through expanded access to affordable energy services and underpins environmental sustainability by reducing pollution and mitigating the effects of climate change. Nuclear energy constitutes an important element in the energy mix required to generate power needed for our development.
In view of the significant growth that is expected in the use of nuclear energy worldwide by 2030, South Africa acknowledges the increasing role that the IAEA will have to play in the future, especially in countries that already have operating power plants. In preparation for our nuclear build to significantly expand our production of nuclear power by 2030, South Africa is working closely with the Agency and inter alia requested an Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR) Mission during 2013.

Chairperson

South Africa supports all the IAEA’s activities that strengthen global nuclear safety and believes that the purpose of enhancing nuclear safety should be to positively contribute to the development and utilization of nuclear technology for peaceful uses. South Africa also appreciates the work of the Agency in supporting the activities of the Member States to enhance nuclear security.

We welcome the IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security to be held in July 2013, where all Member States will have the opportunity to engage at Ministerial-level on matters that are of global importance. However, in our efforts to raise the awareness around nuclear security we should remain cognisant of the fact that only the verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons will ultimately prevent the use of such weapons.

In conclusion Chairperson,

South Africa believes that the integrity of the NPT rests on a fundamental bargain across the three pillars of the Treaty, each of which must be recognized and upheld. The peaceful use of nuclear energy is an inalienable integral right that should not be compromised. In this regard, the Treaty must be implemented in all its aspects without favour or prejudice and no aspect should be more strictly enforced or require stricter implementation than any other.

Thank you.