



**STATEMENT
BY**

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President of the General Conference
Director-General
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr President,

On behalf of the South African delegation I wish to congratulate you and the other members of the bureau on your election. We thank the Director-General for his opening remarks and the preparations done for this important conference. We congratulate and welcome the Commonwealth of Dominica, Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Kingdom of Tonga as new members of the IAEA.

Mr President,

South Africa remains steadfast in the commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It is our view that 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, while recognizing the inalienable right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear science, technologies and applications. Therefore it is imperative that all States Parties be held fully accountable for strict compliance with their obligations under the Non Proliferation Treaty. While we are witnessing the intensification of nuclear non-proliferation measures South Africa believes that these need to be matched with similar measures to strengthen the other two pillars of the Treaty.

16 September 2011 marked 20 years since South Africa signed the NPT. During this period, we have worked closely with the IAEA in the verification of nuclear materials in our possession, as well as the strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system, including the Additional Protocol. Whilst the Additional Protocol is voluntary, South Africa recognizes its importance as a confidence-building measure, especially with regard to those States with advanced nuclear programmes and facilities.

Mr President,

South Africa would like to underscore the importance of energy security to promote sustainable development and poverty alleviation. We believe that nuclear energy can play an important role in this endeavor and in the mitigation of climate change. In line with its obligations under the

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), South Africa will continue to contribute to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to implement strategies to adapt the impact of climate change. In this connection and in preparation for COP17 to be held in Durban, South Africa recently hosted an African Energy Ministers Conference to articulate the challenges of climate change and how best to deal with them in the energy context. The Conference emerged with a Sustainable Energy Access Road Map/Joint Communiqué providing guidance on actions and financing possibilities for sustainable options of increasing clean energy access in Africa.

In pursuit of clean energy and the broader expansion of energy access, as well as diversification, our government approved a 20 year plan for electricity generation, referred to as the Integrated Resource Plan 2010, in which it is foreseen that nuclear energy will contribute 23% of all new generation capacity by 2030. According to the Integrated Resource Plan 2010, the first reactor of the new fleet would be connected to the grid by 2023. The South African Nuclear Energy Corporation will play an instrumental role in the nuclear power expansion programme by serving as the hub for the supply of specialized local content to the future fleet and entry to the global supply chain of reactor vendors and fuel manufacturers.

On the other hand Eskom, South Africa's electricity utility, has also undertaken, since 2007, an environmental impact assessment of three potential sites for nuclear power plants. The final environmental impact report will be tabled at the end of 2011 for evaluation and an environmental authorization. This environmental impact assessment, as well as the Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review process has been helpful in strengthening our understanding of all the important aspects of nuclear infrastructure.

Mr President,

In his opening remarks the Director-General drew our attention to the unprecedented attention given to nuclear safety this year, and the nexus of this with international public opinion on the viability of nuclear power. The accident at Fukushima, Japan, contributed to this increased focus on safety. We salute the resilience of the government and people of Japan in dealing with this tragedy. Informed by the Fukushima accident South Africa undertook various activities as we were convinced, like others, that we could no longer take a "business-as-usual" approach to nuclear safety.

Amongst the first actions the South African National Nuclear Regulator directed its licensees, including the operator of the Koeberg nuclear power plant, to conduct safety reassessments and stress tests of all the nuclear installations. The licensees are expected to, among others, address issues related to design requirements and potential vulnerabilities in the design, with particular emphasis on defense in depth and low probability beyond design basis accidents, prolonged power blackouts, availability of cooling water and cooling of spent fuel under severe accident conditions. We hosted the 2nd African Regional Conference on Energy and Nuclear Power to exchange views on energy challenges faced by the continent.

Mr President,

The review and enhancement of South Africa's regulatory framework will also include the safety standards relevant to the siting of nuclear installations, severe accident management, including multiple hazards and emergency preparedness and response. Likewise, South Africa will utilize its membership of the Institute for Nuclear Power Operators to support the continuous improvement of safety at its Koeberg NPP.

As a Contracting Party to most of the obligatory and voluntary nuclear safety conventions and best practice measures South Africa will work to ensure that its National Nuclear Regulator participates in the IAEA's safety standards committees, working groups and technical committees as well as a number of bilateral and multilateral for a on nuclear safety. In this regard the NNR participates in the IAEA Regulatory Cooperation Forum (RCF) which provides comprehensive support to regulatory capacity building and infrastructure development, as well as the IAEA peer review and advisory services.

As further evidence of strong commitment to nuclear safety, South Africa will be hosting an IAEA Technical Meeting on Nuclear Safety Culture in Cape Town in December 2011.

Mr President,

To strengthen its regulatory effectiveness, South Africa's NNR conducted a Self Assessment using the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Methodology and the associated Self Assessment Tool (SAT). The Self Assessment has enabled the NNR to review & strengthen the regulatory infrastructure and framework, by identifying the gaps between the current regulator safety standards and the IAEA safety standards that are used worldwide. A project plan for the implementation of the SAT actions, including the recommendations from

Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review has been developed. Implementation of these recommendations will, among others, assist in making sure that the legislative framework, key regulatory processes and activities are clearly documented, aligned, strengthened and harmonized and will provide assurance about the readiness to implement the nuclear power expansion programme.

South Africa continues to play a leading role in the Forum for Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa (FNRBA) which was given impetus by the coming into force of the Pelindaba Treaty establishing a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone on the African continent. To further complement the initiatives of the FNRBA, the Heads of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in the SADC region met in Cape Town in December 2010 and in Harare, Zimbabwe in February 2011, where a Memorandum of Cooperative Arrangement was developed leading to the formation of the SADC Nuclear Regulators Network (SADC NRN). The SADC NRN is working towards the development of a common regulatory framework for regulation of nuclear, radiation safety and security.

South Africa has embarked on efforts to improve public understanding of the peaceful uses of nuclear science, technologies and applications. This is spearheaded by the Necsa Visitor Centre at their Pelindaba site, officially opened in February 2011 and which has already attracted large numbers of visitors. On the other hand Eskom has also been conducting nuclear awareness workshops in the vicinity of the proposed nuclear sites.

Public Safety Information Forum meetings are also held each quarter in the communities living in the vicinity of our nuclear installations. Residents are invited to attend the meetings to receive information about the safety performance of the facilities. Residents also utilize those meetings to request for information about issues that they feel could impact on their safety and well-being.

We are pleased that the IAEA Action Plan on Safety will be adopted by the Conference. We urge all Member States to spare no effort in the implementation of this Action Plan.

Mr President,

In order to consolidate and entrench a culture of nuclear security, South Africa will continue to draw on work undertaken by the Agency's Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan. Support will be provided to

Necsa for the establishment of a nuclear forensics laboratory as an extension of its already existing radioanalytical capabilities. Furthermore, the training programmes of the Necsa Skills Development Centre are being expanded to include training in nuclear security.

Concerning the utilization of atoms to advance human health South Africa plays a leading role in the stabilization of the global radioisotope market, after the supply disruptions in recent years. A major investment has been made in the conversion of the molybdenum-99 production process to be entirely based on low enriched uranium thus making Necsa/NTP the world's first industrial scale producer of LEU-based Mo-99.

Mr President,

We attach great importance to the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme. In this regard I am pleased to announce that South Africa will pledge the full share of our contribution to the TC programme for the next cycle. We commend AFRA for its projects in support of Africa's development and the ultimate realization of some of the Millennium Development Goals. South Africa will also work towards ensuring that AFRA and the Agency assist with the prompt commencement of the activities of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy.

We recently announced that our government has extended an offer to the IAEA to support activities aimed at improving veterinary capacities in Sub-Saharan African countries, in the context of the work of the IAEA/FAO Joint Division on Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture. We will contribute Euro1,5 million to this project, which is expected to last for four years.

Mr President,

South Africa welcomed the 2010 NPT Review Conference decision on the need for the full implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. In this context we call for hastened efforts towards the organization in 2012 of the Conference on the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East. Furthermore, we are encouraged by the IAEA DG's convening of a Forum on the Middle East during November 2011. The success of these initiatives will certainly contribute to the broader goal of the peace in that important region.

In conclusion,

I would like to reiterate South Africa's previously stated view that we have to collectively enhance the implementation of our long outstanding decision to expand the composition of the IAEA Board of Governors. In order to translate this political commitment into practice, we have completed the ratification of the Amendment to Article VI of the Statute and lodged the instrument of ratification with the depository government.

My delegation also believes that there is a need to heed in practical terms the various calls made by many delegations on the compelling need to reform, revitalize and strengthen the Agency. South Africa believes that this will go a long way in enhancing the relevance of the Agency while placing it in good stead to rise to the challenges of our epoch in the peaceful uses of nuclear science, technology and applications.

The nature and complexity of these challenges require of us to constantly review and retool our organization in a manner that will enable it to realize its aims and objectives in an efficient and effective manner.

I thank you.