STATEMENT TO THE
MAIN COMMITTEE III OF THE
2015 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF PARTIES
TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION
OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (NPT)

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INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Helping countries to benefit from the peaceful use of nuclear technology is a central pillar of the IAEA's work. Our assistance covers areas including human and animal health, food security, water management, electricity generation, and environmental protection — to name just a few. This is part of our contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the development of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The IAEA Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme is one of our main vehicles for delivering this assistance. It is built on over fifty years of successful collaboration with Member States, and is focused on helping Member States to build, strengthen and maintain capacities in the use of nuclear techniques in support of national development priorities.

In a climate of global fiscal constraint, funding for the TC programme is limited. With this in mind, the Secretariat maintains a continuous dialogue with Member States to ensure that limited resources are used efficiently and produce the greatest results.

The IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI), launched in 2010, provides additional funds for the Agency's development work. It has helped to raise over 60 million euros for projects that benefit more than 130 countries. The IAEA welcomes the announcements made during the general debate to pledge new contributions to the PUI, and looks forward to continuing with this valuable initiative with the support of Member States.

Mr Chairman,

Technology is essential to feed the planet's growing population. The IAEA and UN Food and Agriculture Organisation have enjoyed a collaborative partnership for over 50 years to help countries to use nuclear technology to produce more, better and safer food. The IAEA cooperates with more than 500 agricultural research institutes and experimental stations globally on nuclear applications that contribute to food security and sustainable agricultural development. For example, the IAEA, through the application of nuclear techniques, helps countries to make best use drip irrigation. As a result, farmers in Kenya almost tripled the yield of tomatoes, while reducing water use by half. The IAEA has also made available food irradiation techniques that make food safer and extend its shelf life.

The IAEA has launched a project to help African countries develop capacity to detect a range of zoonotic diseases. During the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the IAEA supplied affected countries with simple kits so that they could diagnose the disease more quickly – in four hours rather than in four days.

Nuclear technology is essential to medical care, and the IAEA helps countries get access to it. Together with the partners such as the World Health Organization, the IAEA continues to support Member States in diagnosis and treatment of non-communicable diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases, and malnutrition.

The Agency's sterile insect technique is making it possible to fight insect pests without harming any other species. The IAEA helps countries use this technique to battle problems posed by the Mediterranean fruit fly and the tsetse fly, and the IAEA scientists are working to find out how the technique can be applied to fight malaria and dengue fever.

The IAEA Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre established in 2012 works to bring together leading scientists to examine the impacts of ocean acidification on marine ecosystems and to provide essential data on the changes that are occurring.

The IAEA helps countries to use nuclear technology to make informed decisions about sustainable water resource management. By studying the isotopes of water, scientists can determine the age of water and other data, which help countries determine whether and how to use water resources more efficiently. The work on the Nubian Aquifer in the Sahel is a great example.

Radiation technologies play a unique role in the treatment of industrial effluents to lessen their negative impact, and in the production of innovative materials and processes that are environmental friendly. The Scientific Forum to be held during the IAEA General Conference in September will showcase this topic.

IAEA laboratories provide direct scientific and technical assistance to Member States through training, applied research and development, and the provision of laboratory analytical services. Eight of these laboratories, located in Austria, are now in need of a full modernisation. To this end the Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories project, known as ReNuAL, was launched last year. This project is now at a crucial moment and needs extra-budgetary contributions to support the renovation and construction of new laboratory buildings.

Mr Chairman,

Nuclear power continues to play an important part in the global energy mix. IAEA projections show that use of nuclear power will increase in the coming decades. Many countries see nuclear power as a stable and clean source of energy, which can improve energy security and help to mitigate the impact of climate change. Currently, more than 30 countries are considering, planning or starting nuclear power programmes, but have not yet connected their first reactor to the grid.

The IAEA will, therefore, continue to provide assistance and share knowledge among Member States with existing nuclear power programmes and those considering such programmes in the future. The objective is to help them safely, responsibly and sustainably utilise nuclear power.

The Agency will also continue its work to establish an IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank as a contribution to the assurance of supply of nuclear fuel.

The accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in March 2011 demonstrated the need for continued vigilance in ensuring that nuclear safety remains a high priority. A commitment to safety first is essential. Extensive efforts have been made since the accident to strengthen nuclear safety, in particular through the implementation of the Nuclear Safety Action Plan. The IAEA is finalising a report on the accident which is intended to provide an authoritative, factual and balanced assessment of what went wrong, and why, in order to help improve nuclear safety everywhere. The report planned to be published for the IAEA General Conference in September 2015.

Primary responsibility for nuclear safety lies with each individual country, but international cooperation is vital. The IAEA plays the central role in bringing together governments and technical experts in the nuclear safety field. In this regard, a diplomatic conference was held at the IAEA's Headquarters in February 2015 under the auspices of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), at which the "Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety" was adopted. The aim of the declaration is to further strengthen efforts to prevent accidents and mitigate radiological consequences if an accident were to occur.

Mr Chairman,

Nuclear security is a State responsibility. That said, the central role in of the IAEA in helping to strengthen the global nuclear security framework is widely recognised. In July 2013, the IAEA hosted a successful International Conference on Nuclear Security, attended by more than 1300 participants from 125 Member States, including 34 Ministers. The next such conference, to be held in December, 2016, at ministerial level, will be an important opportunity to review progress, and all States are encouraged to take part.

As Director General Amano noted in his statement to the plenary, the most important area of unfinished business in nuclear security remains the entry into force of the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Currently, we need 17 States to adhere to the Amendment to achieve this goal. Therefore, all States which have not yet done so are encouraged to become party to the Amendment as soon as possible

Mr Chairman,

The IAEA is working hard to fulfil its very broad mandate, which can be summarized as Atoms for Peace and Development. The challenges are considerable, but the IAEA will continue to work to address them with the support of Member States. And the Agency will continue to encourage all States to help ensure that the importance of science and technology to development, including nuclear technology, is recognized in the Final Document of this Review Conference and as an important part of the post-2015 development agenda.