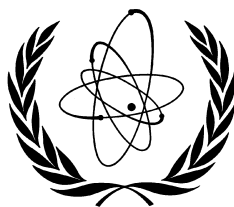


**OPENING REMARKS AT
2010 SCIENTIFIC FORUM**

Cancer in Developing Countries – Facing the Challenge

**Vienna
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**Yukiya Amano
Director General**



INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the 2010 IAEA Scientific Forum, devoted to cancer in developing countries. I am delighted that we have been able to secure the participation of so many top cancer specialists, scientists and experts from all over the world, as well as distinguished representatives from government, the private sector and leading foundations. I am grateful to Dr Margaret Chan, Director General of the World Health Organization – our key partner in the fight against cancer – for participating by video message.

We are especially honoured by the presence of the First Ladies of Egypt and Mongolia, both of whom have been outstanding advocates on behalf of cancer patients. Your support for this Scientific Forum means a lot and I thank you most warmly.

During my first year as Director General of the IAEA, I have had an opportunity to visit cancer treatment centres in a number of Member States.

In Egypt, I was inspired by my visit to the Children's Cancer Hospital in Cairo. The hospital was established through the good will and generosity of the people of Egypt and the selfless energy and commitment of its founders. I was particularly touched by the way in which the young patients help each other. Children who have already been through a treatment provide reassurance to others who are about to undergo it for the first time.

At St Mary's Hospital in Seoul, I saw not only world-class medical care being offered to cancer patients. I was also impressed by the generosity of the Korean people, who have contributed more than \$50,000 to the IAEA's cancer programme through a unique system of small donations. That money is raised through collection boxes in St Mary's Hospital and many other locations.

The lesson for all of us here is obvious: we too need to work together, to share our experience, expertise and knowledge with each other and to pool our resources to ensure that cancer patients in developing countries gain access to the best modern treatment and care.

When I took up my appointment as Director General in December last year, I was struck by the lack of awareness globally of just how serious a problem cancer is in developing countries. Cancer has often been seen, wrongly, as a rich person's disease. I therefore resolved to make cancer in developing countries a priority issue for my first year. On my very first overseas trip, to Nigeria, I visited the Cancer Centre and the National Hospital of Abuja. I raised the issue of cancer in my first meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and have continued to do so in numerous meetings with world leaders. The response has always been supportive and encouraging. I decided to devote this IAEA Scientific Forum to the subject of cancer in developing countries in the hope that bringing together the people in this room would move us a step closer to that goal.

The need is great. It is not an exaggeration to say that cancer represents an imminent crisis for developing countries. Most new cancer cases and cancer deaths already occur in the developing world. Around 70 percent of cancers in developing countries are diagnosed too late

for life-saving treatment. By 2030, over 13 million people worldwide will die from cancer every year. Almost 9 million of these deaths will be in developing countries. Particularly sobering is the fact that in many low-income countries, there is not a single radiation therapy machine. Millions of people who could be successfully treated die every year.

Deaths from the disease disproportionately affect the poorest people in the poorest countries. I believe it is essential that cancer in developing countries should be given the recognition it deserves as a vital part of the global health agenda and that global funding for cancer control in developing countries should be increased. I very much hope that this Scientific Forum can contribute to achieving that goal.

The IAEA's expertise lies in radiotherapy, nuclear medicine, radiology and medical radiation physics. Our role is unique and we have a proven record of success. We provide equipment and training, deliver know-how and technical support and help developing countries establish

cancer control policies and centres. Since 1980, the IAEA has delivered over \$220 million worth of cancer-related assistance to developing countries.

The IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) works with the WHO and many other partners to help developing countries establish comprehensive national cancer control programmes. In Africa, for example, we have helped some 20 Member States to establish radiotherapy capacity, enabling them to provide care for at least some of their cancer patients. But more than 80% of Africa's one billion inhabitants still have no access to basic radiotherapy and related cancer services.

We at the IAEA recognise that there are limits to what we can do on our own to make improved cancer care more widely available in developing countries. With the rising number of cancer cases in developing countries, the existing radiation medicine infrastructure and available resources meet only a small proportion of the growing needs. The IAEA is a small player with modest resources

and cannot act alone. But we do want to put our special expertise to work as effectively as possible, in cooperation with our partners, to help improve the lives of as many cancer patients as we can. Your input over the next two days on how we can best achieve that goal will be invaluable.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I will conclude by thanking you again for your participation. It is my hope that this Scientific Forum will build new relationships and partnerships in fighting cancer in developing countries, help to mobilise new resources and leave all of us with a deeper understanding of what we can do together to help put an end to much needless suffering.

Thank you.