



**NATIONAL STATEMENT**

**BY**

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COOPERATION**

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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR SECURITY OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)**

**VIENNA**

**1 JULY 2013**

**Check against delivery**

Mr. President

Director General

Ministers

Distinguished delegates

Mr President, on behalf of the South African delegation I wish to congratulate you on your election as President of this International Conference on Nuclear Security. Please be assured of South Africa's support for the success of this Conference.

Allow me to thank Director General Yukiya Amano for hosting this conference on nuclear security which will afford all International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Member States the opportunity to engage on this important subject, and contribute to an outcome that will pave the way to strengthening global nuclear security.

As we meet here we are conscious of the fact that we share a common vision of a world free of weapons of mass destruction, and in particular nuclear weapons. We are aware of the fact that we cannot strengthen global nuclear security as long as nuclear weapons exist. Progress is therefore required on nuclear disarmament in line with international commitments that we have all undertaken, especially in the context of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

This International Conference therefore takes place within this overall framework of our common objectives and commitment to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

We believe that this should be our shared vision.

Mr. President

Whilst nuclear security remains the responsibility of each Member State, South Africa welcomes the progress made to strengthen nuclear security at the international level through the important work of the IAEA. Our gathering today in this Conference is itself an affirmation of the international coordination role of the Agency.

South Africa has worked with the IAEA to strengthen nuclear security within our borders. This includes training, as well as support for the establishment of a Nuclear Security Support Centre. The IAEA also provided specific assistance to South Africa in this regard during the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Mr. President

Allow me to recall South African President, H.E. Jacob Zuma's statement when addressing the Washington Nuclear Security Summit held in April 2010, in which he expressed concern about the existence of networks dealing in the illicit transfer of nuclear related technology that could be used in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction. The experience with this network, where South Africa was the first, among many affected countries, to successfully prosecute suspects, suggests that there is room for improvement regarding international cooperation and national legislation and enforcement machineries in all countries.

The Agency's illicit trafficking database provides us with useful information, and we should commit ourselves to support this valuable instrument by providing the information that the Agency requires.

Mr President,

South Africa, like the majority of Member States, attaches great importance to the benefits derived from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. 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.

South Africa contributes to these nuclear applications through the supply of medical isotopes. We are now producing medical isotopes on a large scale using low enriched uranium fuel. We converted voluntarily to the use of low enriched uranium. This was a welcome technical achievement in addition to our capability to produce such isotopes using highly enriched uranium (HEU).

Whilst recognising the importance for nuclear security of minimising the use of HEU on a voluntary basis, and to use low enriched uranium (LEU) where technically and economically feasible, my delegation is concerned by the imbalance in the discussions on minimisation of the use of HEU. These discussions focus on HEU used for peaceful purposes, which is only a tiny fraction of the existing stocks of the HEU. In our view HEU conversion should cover both civilian and military stocks if it is to be of any benefit.

Furthermore we remain convinced that the minimization of HEU should be addressed within the context of the long outstanding negotiations on a fissile material treaty. South Africa has advocated that these negotiations should commence within the Conference on Disarmament without further delay.

Our international legally binding obligations on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation allow for the enrichment of uranium for peaceful purposes only, irrespective of the enrichment level. In this connection, South Africa has adopted a policy on the beneficiation of our mineral resources, including uranium. We agree that highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium require special precautions, and indeed South Africa has taken such precautions.

In seeking to improve nuclear security internationally, South Africa fully endorses the principle as contained in the Ministerial declaration that measures to strengthen nuclear security should not hamper international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities.

Mr. President,

The drivers of South Africa's nuclear energy policy are the need to ensure the security of energy supply, diversification of sources of supply, sustained economic growth and development, as well as our international commitments to reduce the carbon footprint.

It was in this context that the South African Government approved the Integrated Resource Plan 2010-2030 in 2011, which incorporates a significant expansion of nuclear power by 2030. In preparation for this nuclear build programme, South Africa has adopted the IAEA "Milestones" approach, which addresses 19 critical elements necessary for the successful implementation. In this context South Africa became the first country with an existing nuclear power programme to invite the IAEA to undertake a review of our self-assessment of our readiness to expand our nuclear power capacity, which took place in February 2013, using the IAEA's Integrated Nuclear

Infrastructure Review (INIR) process. One of the infrastructure issues is nuclear security. South Africa encourages other countries who are considering expanding their existing nuclear power capacity to apply the IAEA methodology and invite a review of their self-assessments.

South Africa also supports the Agency's continued efforts to build and develop nuclear security capacity that is capable of a sustainable response. My country has committed itself to carry out its international obligations, including accountability and security of nuclear material. In this regard South Africa's accession to the Amendment of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) is in progress.

Mr President,

Given the unique statutory mandate, capabilities and expertise of the Agency in the nuclear field, my delegation is of the view that the Agency has a leading role to play in the area of nuclear safety. Going forward, we believe that the best approach would be to address the issues of nuclear safety and nuclear security in a coherent manner by recognizing the distinction between the two areas while coordinating efforts in these areas.

In closing Mr President,

Our shared vision on strengthening nuclear security requires that Member States contribute to achieving the objectives of the IAEA which is to "seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world". It is South Africa's conviction that this vision also requires that we remain cognisant of the fact that peace, prosperity and security cannot be achieved as long there is no progress made in the area of nuclear disarmament.

I thank you.