STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DELIVERED BY

DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENERGY, AMB. THEMBISILE MAJOLA

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

IAEA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: ADDRESSING CURRENT AND EMERGING DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

VIENNA

28 NOVEMBER 2018

Co-Chairpersons
Ministers and Heads of Delegation
Director-General
Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the Government of South Africa, I congratulate the Co-Chairs for their outstanding efforts in coordinating preparations for this ground-breaking Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology. We hope that this Conference is the beginning of our high-level regular engagement on this important theme.

We would also like to commend DG Amano and the Secretariat for providing the vital support necessary for the holding of this Conference.

Co-Chairs,

Today humanity is facing enormous challenges relating to, among others, climate change and the environment; water resources; food security; access to affordable and reliable energy; as well as human and animal health. In many developing countries, these realities further compound the triple challenge of inequality, unemployment and poverty.

However, due to human ingenuity and inventiveness as expressed through scientific and technological advances, we are now better placed to find solutions to challenges which, many years ago, seemed intractable. We are indeed greatly indebted to luminary nuclear scientists and scholars whose pioneering work has enabled us to harness the power of the atom for human development.

Co-Chairs,

We thank the IAEA for making it possible for Member States to access relevant nuclear techniques and applications to diagnose and treat Cancer; control and eradicate Malaria; and fight against the deadly Ebola virus on our continent. Similarly, today our farmers are able to produce crops that are adaptable to changing climatic conditions.

The IAEA is able to provide this support to Member States through its Nuclear Applications Laboratories whose cutting-edge research and development carried out at its world-class facilities, and delivered through technical cooperation, enables our scientists and experts to find solutions that assist in addressing challenges which threaten our livelihood. For example, the IAEA is able to assist Member States, through the VETLAB Network project to capacitate their national veterinary laboratories in order

to better respond to animal and zoonotic diseases, which not only threaten animals but are also a danger to human beings.

It is for this reason that South Africa has supported the renovation and modernisation of these Nuclear Applications Laboratories through the ReNuAL project. We sincerely thank Member States who have contributed to its success, and would like to appeal to other Member States to also lend a hand of support.

Co-Chairs,

Over the years, South Africa has made significant investments in developing its nuclear sector for peaceful purposes. At the core of this endeavour has been a focus on research and development, with the SAFARI-1 research reactor and iThemba LABS as the lodestars. Today, South Africa is one of the leading global manufacturers of medical isotopes, supplying Moly-99 for the diagnosis and treatment of Cancer. These facilities also have the added value of providing cross-disciplinary materials research in a wide variety of fields such as construction, manufacturing, transport, medicine, electronics and energy.

One of our medical facilities, Steve Biko Academic Hospital in Pretoria is the foremost medical institute on the African continent, in the treatment of Cancer. Equally a number of our universities continue to be centres of knowledge development and sharing.

We appreciate the support that the IAEA continues to provide in facilitating the training of many experts from the region in our institutions.

Co-Chairs,

More importantly, our efforts in utilising nuclear science and technology towards human development will not be successful unless we locate at its core, the inclusion of women, as well as, skills development for the youth. Therefore in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of our programmes, it is imperative that we embed appropriate indicators in order to measure progress in this area.

Co-Chairs,

In conclusion, we owe it to present and future generations that the work of the Agency in the areas of nuclear science and technology is strengthened and responsive to the realities and challenges we face.

I thank you.