STATEMENT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DELIVERED BY HER EXCELLENCY MS TOKOZILE XASA, SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR TO BELGIUM, LUXEMBOURG AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Nuclear Energy Summit, Brussels

21 March 2024

Heads of States

Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr Rafael Grossi

Prime Minister of Belgium, His Excellency Alexander De Croo

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Guests and Delegates

Allow me to start by expressing our gratitude to the Director General of the ***International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA),*** Mr Rafael Grossi and the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium, Presidency of the Council of the European Union, for inviting South Africa to participate in the ***Nuclear Energy Summit***.

Let me also convey the well wishes from the President of the Republic of South Africa, ***His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa***.

Mindful of the ***intertwined challenges that the world is faced*** with, that being; firstly, to ***meet the rapidly rising demand for energy*** particularly in developing countries, and secondly, the ***need to increase energy supply in a globally carbon constrained environment***, this Summit affords us an opportunity to ***engage*** openly on the ***role of nuclear energy*** in addressing these challenges. **South Africa takes note of the declaration prepared by the Secretariat and adopted by the attending leaders earlier today. We wish to emphasise South Africa's continued commitment to inclusive and transparent approaches within the respective fora of the international multilateral system as the only way to achieve effective and sustainable responses to the common challenges. We therefore look forward to greater participation of all interested States without conditionalities in future Summits.**

Whereas South Africa has reached 93% access to electricity, reality of the matter is that ***600 million people on the African continent do not have access to electricity***. South Africa firmly believes that, if we are to ***eradicate poverty, unemployment, and inequality*** in Africa, we ***need to get rid of energy poverty*** and ***guarantee energy security***.

It is against this background that ***South Africa continues to pursue a diversified energy mix*** required to meet the ***expected energy demand growth*** and ***reduce carbon emissions*** as per our nation's energy infrastructure development plan, the ***Integrated Resource Plan (IRP).***

Declared as sustainable and part of the just energy transitional activities by the European Union taxonomy, ***nuclear and gas***, are important electricity generation sources to meet climate change goals and they, ***including coal***, can provide baseload energy to meet the world's energy demands.

Koeberg nuclear power plant, the only operational nuclear power plant in Africa which has been safely operated for 40 years, continues to provide the people of South Africa with ***reliable and affordable electricity***. As a result of ***Koeberg power plant's contribution to the country's energy security***, South Africa is extending its operational life by a further 20 years taking into consideration all the regulatory and technical factors. As part of this long-term operation, Eskom - South Africa's state-owned entity has successfully replaced the steam generators on Unit 1 in 2023 and is currently working on the replacement of the steam generators on Unit 2.

Informed by the IRP 2019 and the ***upsurge in small modular reactors*** in the world, South Africa has begun with the procurement processes for ***two thousand, five hundred megawatts (2500 MW) of nuclear new build*** for which a ***Request for Proposals (RFP)*** will be issued to the market within this calendar year.

Given Africa's endowment with critical mineral resources needed for the just energy transition, including ***uranium*** which can be used in various nuclear applications including the generation of clean baseload energy, and nuclear research reactors for medical purposes, South Africa intends on leveraging on the beneficiation of these resources to produce feedstock for Africa's nuclear power plants whilst developing its own Pebble Bed Modular Reactor technology as a strategic project considering all required approvals.

Based on our track record of producing Pebble Bed fuel, South Africa further intends on leveraging its natural resources to become a global supplier of a High Temperature Reactor fuel, followed by a Multi-Purpose Reactor technology envisaged for commercial deployment beyond 2030.

With the support of our competent Nuclear Safety Authority the ***National Nuclear Regulator (NNR),*** South Africa remains a trusted member of the IAEA and fully participates in all its conventions, hence we have been able to safely operate ***SAFARI 1*** research reactor for more than 58 years.

South Africa's Nuclear Energy Corporation (NECSA) continues to develop, utilise, and manage nuclear technology for national socio-economic development through, amongst others, the ***production and global supply of quality radiation-based products*** and

services including ***industrial and medical radioisotopes***. Mindful of the ageing SAFARI 1, NECSA is currently working on a feasibility study to prepare for a new Multi-Purpose Reactor for the sustenance of its research and development mandate.

Given all these realities, we firmly believe that in order to obtain all the potential economic benefits from nuclear and to achieve a self-sufficiency goal, South Africa deserves an opportunity to implement the complete ***nuclear fuel cycle for peaceful uses*** in line with our Nuclear Energy Policy.

In conclusion, we submit to this summit that if we are to effectively meet the growing energy demand and respond to climate change, the ***role of nuclear and gas*** in the energy mix need to be enhanced.

I thank you.