



ELEVENTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (NPT)

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL STATEMENT TO MAIN COMMITTEE III – PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

5 MAY 2026

Chairperson,

South Africa associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group.

Chairperson,

Along with the legal commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons and measures to prevent proliferation, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) reaffirms the inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy pursuant to Article IV of the Treaty. The demand for nuclear power and the application of nuclear technology continues to increase.

While many interpret Article IV to be about the promotion of nuclear power, the requirements for developing States are in many instances more basic -- the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in health, agriculture and industry amongst others which have the potential of improving the lives of millions of people.

Nuclear power and the peaceful applications of nuclear technology, if optimised to the fullest, can meaningfully contribute to the achievement of a country's socio-economic development goals in line with their national priorities, the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals, and the African Union's Agenda 2063. The inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology is therefore of particular relevance and importance in attaining sustainable and accelerated socio-economic growth in Africa.

There is positive momentum that we are witnessing globally with respect to the trade of nuclear technologies in view of the increasing interest in the application of nuclear energy for power generation to combat climate change and the use of non-power applications. On the African continent, Member States continue to collaborate through nuclear science and technology projects and programmes focussed on specific and shared needs. The African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training (AFRA) is a vital framework

that allows us to intensify efforts aimed at creating awareness in our countries about the benefits of nuclear science and technology, not only to policymakers but also members of our communities, particularly women and the youth. AFRA also provides an important platform for building skills and capacity across the region.

Chairperson,

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has a leading role in the development and promotion of nuclear and nuclear-derived technologies. Through international cooperation, and working together with the IAEA, Member States are thus able to harness the enormous benefits that accrue from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, consistent with the Agency's motto "Atoms for Peace and Development".

South Africa therefore recommends that the Conference reaffirm the 2010 NPT Review Conference outcome which inter alia states that each country's choices and decisions in the field of peaceful uses should be respected and under which Member States undertook to:

- Facilitate and reaffirm the right of States Parties to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful uses of nuclear energy;
- Give preferential treatment to the non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty, taking the needs of developing countries, in particular, into account;
- Facilitate the transfer of nuclear technology and international cooperation in conformity with Articles I, II, III and IV of the Treaty; and
- Eliminate undue restrictions inconsistent with the Treaty.

Chairperson,

The Technical Cooperation Programme of the IAEA is the main delivery vehicle for nuclear science, technology, and applications for peaceful uses, in accordance with the IAEA's Statute. We have seen the invaluable contribution of the Technical Cooperation Programme in this time of global crisis and it is therefore essential that we prioritise the Technical Cooperation Programme even under difficult global and financial conditions.

South Africa attaches great importance to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme through which peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology is made available to countries and remains committed to hosting, supporting and participating in fellowships, scientific visits, training courses and international schools in all the areas of the IAEA's work. South Africa is proud to have the iThemba Labs become South Africa's first IAEA Collaborating Centre and which is being used as part of an IAEA-supported initiative to enhance regional capacity. This supports a growing trend of student exchanges and collaborative sample analyses towards building a sustainable pipeline of experts and professionals in Southern Africa, particularly in advanced particle accelerator techniques.

Additionally, iThemba LABS has contributed dosimetric expertise for X-ray devices, deployed in trials across various Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) vector control- and agricultural pest programmes and continues its research and development in radionuclide production, setting its sights on theranostics radiopharmaceuticals to further its societal impact agenda.

We also note the continued work being done at the Nuclear Medicine Research Infrastructure (NuMeRI) a designated Rays of Hope Anchor Centre, towards providing cancer care for all, including through the provision of training, research and technical support to various nuclear medicine and radiotherapy centre across the African Continent.

South Africa remains concerned about the lack of sufficient, assured and predictable (SAP) funding for the IAEA to fulfil its promotional mandate through the Technical Cooperation Programme, and to meet the increasing number of requests for Technical Cooperation projects by Member States. In order to deepen international cooperation and ensure greater access for Member States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology, it is vital that the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme be strengthened.

This will allow the IAEA to provide Member States with access to nuclear technologies, thus, playing an important role in the interest of humanity. It is therefore important that the resourcing of the Technical Cooperation Fund be sufficient, assured and predictable.

Chairperson,

South Africa attaches great value to the role of the IAEA's Nuclear Applications laboratories at Seibersdorf, which continue to assist Member States in enhancing their access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies.

South Africa would also like to congratulate Director General Grossi and Agency on the completion of the construction and transition of the new and improved laboratories at Siebersdorf, bringing an end to the ReNuAL2 project. We take this opportunity to thank all members of the Group of Friends of ReNuAL and Member States for their generous contribution to the success of this mammoth project. Given the time and financial commitment to this project, it is essential that these fit-for-purpose facilities and equipment operate to their fullest potential and are maintained at optimum levels.

Chairperson,

South Africa supports all the IAEA's activities that strengthen global nuclear safety and believes that the purpose of enhancing nuclear safety should be to positively contribute to the development and utilisation of nuclear technology for peaceful uses. South Africa also appreciates the work of the Agency in supporting the activities of the Member States to enhance nuclear security. However, South Africa reiterates its position and calls on the Conference to reaffirm that nuclear security should not be a precondition to access nuclear science and technologies for peaceful uses.

Chairperson,

South Africa believes that the integrity of the NPT rests on the fundamental bargain across the three pillars of the Treaty, each of which must be recognized and upheld. The peaceful use of nuclear energy is an inalienable and integral right that should not be compromised. In this regard, the Treaty must be implemented in all its aspects without prejudice and no aspect should be more strictly enforced or require stricter implementation than any other.

I thank you.