



**Statement by
His Excellency Ambassador António de Almeida Ribeiro
Resident Representative of Portugal to the IAEA
on the occasion of the 62nd General Conference
Vienna, 17-21 September 2018**

Madam President,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, for your election to chair this 62nd General Conference and to assure you my delegation's full support to your endeavors. Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the EU and would like to make some additional comments, from a national point of view.

In a world of uncertainty, where technology development represents a constant challenge, we must all recognize the importance of the mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency as the leading global intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field, working for the safe, secure and peaceful use of science and nuclear technology, thus contributing to international peace and security and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology next November will provide an opportunity to highlight Member State's support to the IAEA in this endeavour.

Madam President,

Last year we have begun the 10th review cycle of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The treaty remains the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, while being vital for further development of peaceful nuclear energy applications. It is thus essential to ensure its full, complete and effective application and, furthermore, to underline and support the IAEA's central role in achieving the goals of the NPT, by implementing the nuclear safeguards regime, while promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including by establishing and upholding international standards for nuclear safety and security.

This is the reason why Portugal calls all States that have not yet done so to adhere to the NPT as non-nuclear States.

The Director General's reports on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear program consistently confirm that the agreement, achieved in 2015 and unanimously endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, so far has been working as expected. Thus, provided that Iran continues to implement its nuclear related commitments, Portugal will remain committed to the full and effective implementation of the deal. We cannot overstate the importance of the Agency's role in the implementation of the JCPOA. In fact, the IAEA's activities are essential to the long-term verification regime established in the agreement, as the necessary confidence and mutual trust crucially depend on these verification tools.

Portugal welcomes the recent inter-Korean high-level talks, the Panmunjom Declaration and the Joint Statement of the DPRK-US summit in Singapore. They are all positive steps that can lead, if North Korea seriously engages in the follow-on negotiations, to concrete steps towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the dismantling of the DPRK's ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons and related activities. On this subject, Portugal urges the DPRK to return at the earliest possible date to the NPT and IAEA Safeguards and to sign and ratify the CTBT. Once again, we cannot overstate the importance of the IAEA's role in assuring a satisfactory and fully verifiable outcome for this matter, once a deal is achieved.

Let me also state Portugal's regret with the lack of progress and continued non-compliance on the issue of the application of the NPT safeguards agreement in the Syrian Arab Republic and, once again, echo the Director General's request to the Syrian authorities for full cooperation with the Agency in connection with all unresolved issues.

Madam President,

Humankind well-being, wealth creation and the planet earth are entering critical times and facing threatening challenges, which can only be overcome by enlarging and strengthening knowledge-based international cooperation and, among many other subjects, nuclear science and technology do play a critical role in shaping our common future.

It is under this context that my country participates in this General Conference in a way to help reinforcing the role of the IAEA.

In fact, Portugal is overall determined to further strength the involvement of national stakeholders in the activities of the Technical Cooperation Programme towards the achievement of:

- The sustainable and safe use of ionizing radiation sources in medicine, industry and other sectors;
- A robust system of radiological and nuclear emergency preparedness and response;
- The security of radiation sources.

Furthermore, the activities of the Technical Cooperation Programme are perceived by national decision makers as of paramount importance to achieve the aforementioned objectives and to foster a comprehensive system of radiological protection and radiation safety. As so, Portugal is very thankful for the technical support received regarding the Portuguese Research Reactor, operated by Instituto Superior Técnico, and for the installation of a cyclotron, which will be an important means for diagnosis and therapy of multiple diseases, but also in the context of training, research and scientific development.

We also strive for the adhesion to the IAEA, of Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and S. Tomé e Príncipe, members of the Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries (the CPLP), so that they may become full members of the IAEA, and benefit of all the programs of the Agency in terms, among others, of Agriculture, Water resources, Mosquito control and Cancer Therapy.

Madam President,

Portugal is committed to help promote the applications of nuclear science and technology, particularly in the areas of radiation oncology and health, as a reliable and safe practice, as well as to guarantee its availability at a world level throughout all our health systems. This requires large international, public and private efforts, namely:

- to promote nuclear science together with biomedical engineering;
- to train future generations of medical physicists and nuclear health professionals;
- to improve all our health systems and the capacity to facilitate the best medical care and services to all our citizens;

We also commend the Agency, in line with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU, for the further development of the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) for the control or eradication of malaria, dengue, Zika and disease-transmitting mosquitos, which remain an extremely severe threat to the health of millions of people worldwide. The IAEA's Nuclear Sciences and Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf provide essential work in this regard.

Madam President,

Portugal is developing and applying nuclear analytical techniques in forensic science in cooperation with the IAEA. Yesterday we organized a side event at the margins of this General Conference on “Nuclear Analytical Techniques in Forensic Science”, focused on case studies and success stories where nuclear techniques have been used in different areas of forensics applications namely food safety and health-related issues, crime investigation, cultural heritage artifacts and environmental samples. Portugal looks forward to participate in the strengthening of these capabilities and encourages other Member States to do so.

Madam President,

My country believes in the decisive contribution that nuclear technologies can make towards a successful approach to the challenges raised by climate change. Portugal welcomes the decision of the Director General to devote this year’s Scientific Forum to "*Nuclear Technology for Climate: Mitigation, Monitoring and Adaptation*". Indeed, nuclear technologies play a vital role in addressing these challenges since they are instrumental in monitoring changes in climate and in helping countries adapt to their impacts.

Madam President,

Fully committed to nuclear safety, Portugal also attributes a especial relevance to the Informal Dialogue between Coastal and Shipping States, of which Portugal held the chairmanship in 2016-2017. It provides a successful forum that builds confidence and promotes transparency

between participating Member States on the transport of sensitive radioactive materials.

Madam President,

Finally, by taking this opportunity to commend Director General Amano for his leadership of the IAEA, Portugal wishes to express its gratitude for his successful official visit to Lisbon, held in April this year, reflecting the long established relations between the IAEA and Portugal, one of its founding Member States. The MoU and the Action Plan that were signed by the DG and the Portuguese Government do represent an important tool for the development of our participation in the Agency's activities.

Last but not least, I would like to express to DG Amano my Delegation's best wishes for his complete and quick recovery.

I thank you for your attention.