



**National Statement by the Republic of South Africa**  
**delivered by Ms Samantha Jane Graham-Maré,**  
**Deputy Minister of Electricity and Energy at the**  
**International Atomic Energy Agency's Ministerial Conference on**  
**Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications, and the Technical**  
**Cooperation Programme, 26-28 November 2024**

Mr Kai Mykkänen, Minister of Climate and the Environment of Finland, and  
Dr Kwaku Afriyie, Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and  
Innovation

Director-General Grossi

Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegation

Distinguished Delegates

South Africa welcomes the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme, which addresses some of the developmental challenges we are confronted with and seeks to provide innovative and evidence-based solutions as we work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Through government departments, public entities, academic institutions, and research organisations, South Africa participates in various national, regional and interregional Technical Cooperation Programmes as part of our national priorities and commitment to developing solutions to challenges within the fields of energy, health, agriculture, water and environmental management.

Further to this, South Africa has demonstrated its commitment to the Agency's initiative on "Rays of Hope: Cancer Care for All" by launching Africa's first Nuclear Medicine Research Infrastructure Centre, which is one of the leading global centres driving cutting-edge research into cancer diagnosis, care and treatment, particularly on the African continent.

Through the National Institute of Communicable Diseases, we have made significant progress in the use of the Sterile Insect Technique as a vector for reducing the number of malaria-carrying mosquitoes in South Africa in order to reduce infection rates and prevent the terrible impact of malaria on our people.

South Africa is home to NTP Radioisotopes, a leading global producer and supplier of nuclear medicine and radiation-based products and services, which recently stepped-up production to alleviate a 40% global shortfall of the isotope Mo-99, which posed a massive threat to patient care around the world. Our country currently produces 20% of the world's radio isotopes, and we have ambitions to significantly grow our production, especially as a provider of nuclear medicine to the rest of Africa.

We are also home to the oldest research reactor on the continent; SAFARI, which next year will celebrate 60 years of operation. While it approaches its end of life, we have made significant progress on the development of the new Multi-Purpose Research Reactor Project to complement and eventually replace SAFARI. The use and value of research reactors will continue to grow with many new additional applications in the years ahead, and we believe will be key to the future programmes of the Agency. In this spirit, it gives me great pleasure to announce South Africa's pledge to host the International Conference on Research Reactor in 2031-32.

Perhaps our most ambitious project yet is to promote the use of nuclear power as a critical tool in mitigating climate change through new nuclear builds and Small Modular Reactors. South Africa is currently looking to revitalise our nuclear programme to provide energy security and grid stability through clean, dependable energy. The world once acknowledged our Pebble Bed Modular Reactor Programme as a global first, and we aim to restore our position as a leader in nuclear energy research by bringing to market a working prototype SMR, with supporting fuel production, that can be successfully commercialised. It is our vision for this African SMR to

transform Africa's energy landscape, and directly contribute to energy security and universal energy access across the continent.

Co-Chairs,

As proud members of the IAEA, we pledge our continued support for the Agency's excellent capititation and professional development activities, and affirm the Agency's commitment to the prioritisation of women and youth in these activities, especially in the Technical Cooperation Programme. We encourage all Member States to join us in prioritising the nomination of female and youth participants, fellows, and scientific visitors at Agency meetings and workshops, including through the Lise Meitner Programme and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

In closing, South Africa remains committed to furthering research and innovation in nuclear science and technology as key drivers of socio-economic progress, both nationally and across the African continent. With the support of all Member States for the Agency's role in ensuring that nuclear science, technology and applications is used for peaceful purposes, we believe that the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063 can be achieved.

I thank you.