



**STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENERGY
AND POWER DEVELOPMENT,**

HONOURABLE YEUKAI SIMBANEGAVI

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Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you Mr. President on your election to steer the work of this 69th Session of the General Conference. I pledge my delegation's full support and cooperation towards the successful discharge of your mandate. Let me also add my voice to those who have spoken before me, in thanking the Director General and the Secretariat for organising this meeting, and for all the energies being expended in implementing the Agency's mandate. The fruits of these spirited efforts and hard work are indeed evident to us all.

Let me take this opportunity to appreciate the Director General's presentation outlining the valuable work that the Agency has carried out over the past year, which is a clear demonstration of the IAEA's commitment to the cause of safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. My delegation encourages the Director General and his staff to continue the drive to transfer nuclear technology and promote the sharing of nuclear knowledge with developing countries to enhance their capabilities and enable them to benefit more from the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and applications. It is against that background that we welcome the continued expansion of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme geared towards increasing the participation of women in nuclear science.

Mr. President

The theme of this year's Scientific Forum: "Atoms for Water", is timely and resonates with Zimbabwe's national and regional priorities in the midst of the climate change emergency, which threatens the security of water supplies. Zimbabwe, with the support of the Agency, is pursuing the use of isotope hydrology to explore and manage groundwater resources, especially in the drought-prone regions of the country, and we look forward to further support on the initiative. On collaboration with the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), particularly on Atoms for Food, we commend the Director General for raising extrabudgetary resources to support research and development in livestock, food safety, pest control, crop development, and climate-smart agriculture.

Zimbabwe fully supports the transition to clean energy to tackle the climate emergency as we find ourselves grappling with increased incidences of extreme, and often violent weather patterns manifesting in frequent droughts, floods and destructive cyclones. We continue to keenly follow developments in Small Modular Reactors to guide our national energy policy going forward. We urge the Agency to continue with the research and dissemination of accurate information to assist us as member States in making informed decisions on the utility, safety, and security of the technology.

IAEA support to Member States in their efforts to build the workforce, technologies, and partnerships needed to develop nuclear energy, science and technology is commendable. We particularly welcome the signature by the Director General of a Memorandum of Understanding between the

Agency and the World Bank aimed at increasing international support to developing countries looking to finance nuclear power projects.

Mr. President,

My delegation is grateful for the continued support offered by the Agency through the Technical Cooperation pillar, and on our part, we will endeavour to meet our obligations. Zimbabwe is particularly grateful for the support received from the Agency in establishing physical protection for the Disused Radioactive Sources Management Facility, as well as the development of the National Cancer Control Plan (NCCP).

On the health front, national efforts have been devoted to revamping cancer diagnostic and treatment facilities in public hospitals and to that end, a Sugar Tax has been introduced with all proceeds directed towards the fight against the rising cancer burden. This will augment the support from the noble initiative by DG Grossi, "the Rays of Hope", which will strengthen our capacities to respond effectively to the cancer emergency in a more sustainable manner.

Mr. President,

As a State signatory to the NPT and a firm believer in a world free of nuclear weapons, my delegation reaffirms Zimbabwe's commitment to international cooperation to enhance global nuclear safety and security through verification and safeguards measures. We therefore take note, and at the same time, commend the Agency for its work in that regard. My country recently hosted an International Physical Protection Advisory

Service (IPPAS) Mission in November 2024, and we are in the process of implementing the recommendations arising therefrom. The domestication of international treaties and instruments that Zimbabwe is party to remains work in progress, and the Radiation Protection Amendment Bill is under consideration by the national Executive.

As I conclude, let me reiterate that the Government of Zimbabwe values the contribution of nuclear science and technology in socio-economic development and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. We highly value the broadening and deepening of the Agency's work as it complements national efforts towards attainment of the country's Vision 2030 "towards an upper-middle income society. Allow me to, once again, appreciate the IAEA for the support rendered to my country through various cooperation projects. My delegation urges the Agency to continue deploying its expertise and knowledge, together with partners, in addressing the complex challenges that confront our modern world.

Thank You Mr. President