

**Statement**

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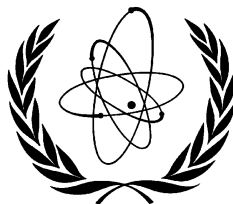
**The IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme: Sixty  
Years and Beyond – Contributing to Development**

**Vienna**

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**Director General**



**INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

Good morning, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am very pleased to welcome you all to this conference on the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme.

In this 60th anniversary year of the IAEA, we have been considering the many lessons we have learned in sharing peaceful nuclear science and technology with developing countries.

For me, a fundamental lesson is that science and technology are critical for development.

I grew up in Japan after World War Two. My country has limited natural resources. But by making use of all that modern technology has to offer, and investing in education, Japan built up its economy.

So I am a great believer in science and technology.

Transferring nuclear technology to developing countries is core IAEA business and one of the most important areas of our work.

The IAEA technical cooperation programme is central to delivery of our *Atoms for Peace and Development* mandate. It has improved the health and prosperity of millions of people.

We have been working for decades to make nuclear technology available in areas where it has unique, or added, value. The TC programme now helps countries to achieve the Sustainable

Development Goals, in energy, food and agriculture, industry and water management, as well as in health.

I have seen for myself in visits to developing countries all over the world that TC projects deliver huge benefits to individuals, families and entire communities.

The fact that we are constantly attracting new Member States indicates that the TC programme is effective in meeting development needs.

Central to our approach is the belief that developing countries should determine their own priorities. They decide in what areas they wish to benefit from nuclear science and technology. We then do our best to provide the support they seek.

That support is not primarily about handing over equipment. We focus on transferring knowledge and expertise. High-quality technical training helps developing countries to build their own expertise so they can train future generations of nuclear specialists.

Many developing countries have already acquired a high level of expertise in nuclear technology and there are many excellent examples of South-South cooperation. This makes a vital contribution to helping the Agency deliver its technical cooperation programme.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nuclear technology has applications in so many areas of our lives that it is not possible for me to list all of them. But I will mention a few examples of areas in which the IAEA is very active.

We have helped to save countless lives in developing countries by improving access to nuclear medicine and radiotherapy for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and other major diseases. Agency support for Mauritania and Zambia, for example, enabled them to set up their first nuclear medicine and radiotherapy facilities, bringing essential health services to millions of people

Nuclear techniques made available by the Agency are being used to manage water resources, reduce soil erosion, develop new varieties of rice and wheat that grow in difficult conditions, eradicate insect pests such as the tsetse fly, and monitor pollution in the sea.

In Europe and central Asia, many countries have been able to improve the yield and quality of food crops by using nuclear techniques. Viet Nam has increased rice production.

The IAEA contributed to the eradication of the cattle disease Rinderpest.

After devastating earthquakes in Ecuador and Nepal, we sent experts in non-destructive testing techniques – including radiography – to assess the safety of hospitals and schools in danger of collapse.

We demonstrated our ability to respond quickly to emergencies such as the Ebola and Zika viruses, supplying affected countries with simple nuclear-derived kits so they could detect the diseases quickly and accurately in the field.

Partnerships are an essential element of our work.

Together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the IAEA deploys nuclear techniques to help increase food production, manage pollution, reverse land degradation and restore soils.

We work with the World Health Organization to help improve the availability of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine. We train health professionals and sometimes supply equipment for diagnosis and treatment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When the IAEA Statute entered into force in July 1957, the nuclear world looked very different from the way it does today. Few countries had access to peaceful nuclear science and technology and there was little understanding of the potential benefits.

Capacity-building was part of our work right from the start. The first 218 IAEA fellowships were awarded in 1958.

Over the years, as many countries developed some nuclear capacity, the programme gradually evolved from assistance to cooperation. This was a very important shift in emphasis.

Since 1958, more than 48,000 scientists and engineers have held fellowships and scientific visitor positions through the TC programme, both at the Agency's laboratories, and in the facilities of our partners around the world.

Many of these scientists and engineers went on to play a key role in building capacity in nuclear science in their countries.

I am especially pleased to welcome a very distinguished former IAEA fellow – His Excellency President Tabaré Vázquez of Uruguay – as one of our speakers this morning.

The IAEA technical cooperation programme is a shared responsibility of all Member States, made possible by the sustained commitment of all to the Technical Cooperation Fund, and supplemented by further contributions by donor countries. Last year, the TC Programme delivered support to 146 countries and territories, including 37 Least Developed Countries.

In recent years, we have had more staff funded by our regular budget to implement technical cooperation activities. This enabled us to achieve a higher implementation rate for the TC programme.

The Agency's Peaceful Uses Initiative, launched in 2010, provides additional funds for our work. It has helped to raise over 100 million euros for more than 200 projects that benefit around 150 countries.

I am very grateful to all countries which have contributed to the PUI and I hope to be able to continue with this valuable initiative with the support of our Member States.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Energy is indispensable for development. Huge increases in energy supply will be required in the coming decades to support economic development and lift some 2.6 billion people out of energy poverty.

Many countries believe nuclear power can help them to address the twin challenges of ensuring reliable energy supplies, while curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

Nuclear power is one of the lowest-carbon technologies available to generate electricity. Nuclear power plants produce virtually no greenhouse gas emissions or air pollutants during their operation, and only very low emissions over their entire life cycle.

The use of nuclear power can also help to alleviate concerns about volatile fuel prices and security of supply.

Some 30 countries are already using nuclear power. Another 30 are considering building their first nuclear power plants, or have started doing so. Most of these possible newcomers are developing nations.

The IAEA does not attempt to influence countries' decisions on whether or not to add nuclear power to their energy mix.

But if countries decide to proceed, we provide assistance and information so they can use nuclear power safely, securely and sustainably.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The IAEA is unique within the UN system in having eight nuclear applications laboratories – not far from here, in Seibersdorf.

They assist more than 150 countries in areas such as food and agriculture, human health and the environment. Many Member States rely on the laboratories for training, technology transfer and analytical services. A long-overdue modernisation of the laboratories is underway.

Construction is at an advanced stage on the building that will house the new Insect Pest Control Laboratory. And work has begun on a second building, which will be home to three laboratories managed jointly by the IAEA and FAO.

When completed, the laboratories will offer improved scientific services to our 168 Member States.



I thank the countries whose generous contributions have made this vital modernisation project possible. I hope that Member States will continue to provide strong support for further work at Seibersdorf in the coming years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yesterday, I spoke at a meeting of National Liaison Officers from IAEA Member States. They help to identify, design, implement and monitor TC projects and have a key role in ensuring their success.

It is important that each country should think strategically about the TC support it would like from the Agency. TC proposals should be aligned with national priorities under the SDGs – although they need not be strictly limited to the SDGs.

Capable National Liaison Officers make a major contribution to the success of the TC programme. Ideally, they should not be too junior, because they might not have enough influence in their country to get things done. It is also helpful if NLOs remain in their posts for a reasonable period of time in order to ensure continuity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The IAEA strongly encourages women to participate in every aspect of the TC programme.

When I visit Member States, I am struck by the fact that more and more of the scientists, engineers and medical professionals whom I meet are women. This is true all over the world.

I am proud that some of these highly skilled women have received training from the Agency, or held IAEA fellowships. Many are already in senior positions in their countries.

In 2016, nearly 4,400 women participated directly in the TC programme, as counterparts, fellows, and scientific visitors, as well as meeting and training course participants. Many women also served as international experts and lecturers.

We encourage countries to ensure strong participation by women. At present, around a third of participants are women and we expect that proportion to show a steady increase in the coming years. The aim is equal representation. This helps to build a growing pool of qualified women for the future.

In the Agency, the proportion of women in senior management positions is now higher than it has ever been. My intention in the coming years is to appoint more women to very senior positions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The IAEA technical cooperation programme has made a valuable contribution to development in the last six decades.

In some areas, such as nuclear energy, safety and security, we are the leading international organization. In others, such as human health and food and agriculture, we play a supporting role – but a very effective one.

In all areas of our work, our goal is to achieve concrete results that make a clear difference to the lives of the people we serve.

The IAEA delivers.

I thank you all for attending this important conference to share your insights and ideas. I am confident that your work in the next few days will help to strengthen both the IAEA technical cooperation programme and the Agency's contribution to sustainable development.

Thank you.