

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE

**51ST SESSION OF THE
IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**20TH SEPTEMBER 2007
VIENNA, AUSTRIA**

Mr. President,
Distinguished Director General,
Esteemed Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President,

I join the speakers before me in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the fifty-first Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference and pledge the support and cooperation of my delegation to assist you in steering this Conference to a successful conclusion. In the same vein I also welcome and congratulate the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Cape Verde, the Republic of Congo and Nepal, assuming membership of the IAEA. The growing membership of the Agency is testimony to the increasing relevance of nuclear technology to security and sustainable development.

For Namibia, the period since the 50th Session of the General Conference has been instrumental and has continued to show a marked contribution of nuclear technology to our development efforts, particularly in the areas of agriculture, human health, hydrology and radiation safety, thus contributing to some of the national objectives as defined in Namibia's VISION 2030. Indeed we would like to see nuclear technology increase its impact towards attainment of our national development goals, specifically in the areas of quality of life and food security, while also giving priority to our international obligations.

Mr. President,

In this context the review of our bilateral cooperation under the Country Programme Framework this year comes at an opportune time when we can tune IAEA technical cooperation with our national needs. We recognise that nuclear technology has many beneficial applications and also has the potential to contribute immensely to the development of our nation. It is thus vitally important that all levels of all societies, from government to the beneficiaries, realise the positive role of nuclear technology to sustainable development.

We would like to see all three pillars of the Agency's mandate being upheld in equal measure. This will demonstrate the intrinsic worth of nuclear technology as a viable alternative and complementary tool for national socio-economic development. In many ways this will also enhance a positive perception of nuclear technology globally as opposed to the traditional negative reading that we are all familiar with.

(Health)

Mr President,

Allow me to briefly highlight some important developmental issues identified in our third National Developmental Plan (NDP III) where we seek the IAEA collaboration and support.

Our national objective is to provide access to quality health care services that will contribute to the improvement of quality of life for our citizens. In this regard Namibia faces challenges to address its health problems related to diseases, the environment and social causes. Communicable diseases, mostly HIV/AIDS, Pulmonary Tuberculosis and Malaria still yield a high toll, with more than 1,000 deaths per 100,000 people every year. With regards to non-communicable diseases, the top causes of mortality include cancer, cardiovascular diseases and respiratory diseases. Despite the huge budget allocation (11% of Government spending) to the Ministry of Health and Social Services, it cannot meet the financial, infrastructure, material, equipment and drug supply needs required to tackle these diseases adequately. The Ministry of Health and Social Services has long acknowledged that nuclear techniques can play an important part in addressing public health concerns by committing resources and engaging the IAEA in the development of programmes that could contribute to the improvement in the delivery of quality public health services. This has been reflected in the assistance the IAEA has given to helping Namibia establish nuclear medicine services and radiation therapy programmes over the past several years. We trust that this assistance will be strengthened and also be expanded to include collaboration in the areas of molecular biology techniques for controlling malaria and tuberculosis and to better understand the link between the management of HIV/AIDS and nutrition.

(Food Security)

Mr President,

In order to improve the quality of life, it is also vitally important that we ensure food security for our nation in which all citizens have access to the basic daily commodities and also have the opportunity to participate in the global market. In this context the strengthening of the IAEA's collaborative efforts in our agricultural and water sector is core. Namibia aims to maintain the current meat and livestock export capacity, while also working towards increasing accessibility to the export market by all of our farmers north of the cordon veterinary line. It is thus important that quality be maintained according to international standards and that capacity be established for management of livestock diseases in the northern communal areas.

Namibia acknowledges the positive contribution of the Agency with the current assistance to develop improved soil, water and nutrient management technologies for the purpose of increasing crop production. We also endeavour to diversify and develop crops that are drought resistant or draught tolerant. We believe these two concepts will enhance food security as they uniquely address both the climatic and soil conditions in the northern communal areas.

We have also noted the invaluable contribution of nuclear technology to the understanding and management of our water resources. The IAEA and the use of nuclear technology in the management of water resources have significantly complemented our national efforts in collaboration with other partners in

development. In this regard, I applaud the agency efforts to assist Member States to become self-reliant in isotope hydrology. As such the recently published *Atlas of Isotope Hydrology for Africa*, that provides overview of the nature of aquifers and river hydrology in twenty-six countries is indeed a welcome development.

(Energy Planning)

Mr President,

One of our national priorities is to transform Namibia into an industrialised nation with sustainable economic growth and a high standard of living with access to vital services, including electricity supply. Our challenge is to ensure that an adequate and efficient infrastructure for the supply of energy can be established and sustained for basic consumption and to support industrial development.

Namibia is currently commercially heavily dependent on foreign supply of energy and power. Due to increased local demand as well as increased internal demand in neighbouring countries the security, reliability, adequacy and efficiency of supply cannot be guaranteed. Therefore Namibia needs to put in place adequate mitigation measures and nuclear power is under consideration, including many other options of power generation.

Recognizing that expanding the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology is a fundamental mandate for the IAEA, Namibia seeks to be provided with the guidance and if appropriate the core engineering, technological and management support in the field of nuclear energy for electricity generation. In this connection, we welcome the document circulated by the Agency *"Milestones in the Development of a National Infrastructure for Nuclear Power Guide"*.

(Mining)

Mr President,

Namibia encourages the exploitation of its natural resources, such as the substantial uranium deposits, primarily for socio-economic benefit to the country. We however also recognised that this activity has ecological and health implications on our environment and people. For this reason we seek the expert advice of the IAEA to guide us in creating a framework where the natural resources can be exploited responsibly by developing appropriate policies and regulatory measures.

I am delighted to note that through the cooperation with the Agency, Namibia will soon host the Technical Meeting on 'Uranium exploration, mining, processing, mine and mill remediation environmental issues'. We welcome and encourage this development as it promotes closer collaboration to foster regional integration

(Radiation/Nuclear Safety and Security)

Mr President,

Namibia is committed to its collective responsibility to ensure national and international safety and security with respect to radiation sources, nuclear and

radioactive material. In demonstration of this commitment we have been working endlessly for the establishment of an independent and effective regulatory body for the control, safe and secure use of radiation sources, nuclear and radioactive material. I am pleased to report that soon we will announce the creation of a regulatory body, which will open the way for Namibia to meet its national and international requirements, including regulation and codes of practice in conformity with international standards as well as measures to fulfil our obligations with respect to all IAEA administered treaties and conventions.

With regard to the application Safeguard in the DPRK we welcome the agreements reached at the heads of delegation Meeting of the Sixth Round of the Six Party Talks from 18th to 20th July 2007 in Beijing, China for the Parties to fulfil in earnest their commitments in the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005 and the agreement of 13 February 2007. We welcome the Agency's verification of the shutdown of five installations at the Yongbyon nuclear facility and the continued implementation of the adhoc monitoring and verification arrangements with the active cooperation of the DPRK.

We thus wish to express our support for the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and support for the *Six-Party Talks* in finding a long-term solution with the Korean nuclear issue through diplomacy and dialogue, while maintaining that the IAEA remains the sole competent international authority in nuclear verification issues.

Similarly, we wish to support the Agency's proposal for a 'double time out', providing for the suspension by Iran of its enrichment related activities and the suspension of sanctions as a basis for renewed dialogue. In this regard, we applaud the Agency for its continued professional and impartial efforts to resolve the outstanding issues related to Iran's nuclear programme. We wish to reject any undue pressure on or interference in the Agency's activities, especially in its verification activities, which could jeopardise the efficiency and credibility of the Agency.

Further we support the establishment of a *Nuclear- Weapon-Free-Zone* in the region of the Middle East, and call upon all parties concerned to take urgent and practical steps towards the fulfilment of the proposal initiated by Iran in 1974 for the establishment of such a zone.

Lastly Mr. President, let me take this opportunity to register the gratitude of the Republic of Namibia to the Agency for its support, which has resulted in the implementation of the technical cooperation program within my country. We look forward to the continuation of this cooperation.

I thank you Mr. President!