

Remarks at G-77 Ceremony

11 February 2016

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to attend this ceremony marking the handover of the Chairmanship of the Vienna Chapter of the G-77.

I congratulate Ambassador Maruta of Namibia on assuming the Chairmanship.

And I thank the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Andereya of Chile, for his successful term of office. I have greatly valued his cooperation and support.

One of the most important developments since I spoke to you last year was the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in September.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals cover areas in which the Agency already works closely with our Member States.

These include poverty, hunger, human health, clean water, affordable and clean energy, and climate change.

We work to help countries achieve their development goals through the use of appropriate nuclear technology.

The G-77 is a key partner in that endeavour, making sure that the particular needs and priorities of developing countries are addressed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have just returned from a visit to six countries in Central America, five of which are G-77 nations.

There were many requests for urgent Agency assistance in responding to the Zika virus.

In view of the urgent need to address and contain the Zika virus outbreak, immediate, small-scale TC support for rapid Zika virus detection will be provided to the

affected Member States, using the TC Programme Reserve mechanism.

This involves the same nuclear-derived technology that was made available by the Agency to help countries in West Africa respond to the ebola virus outbreak in 2014.

This is another good example of the Agency's ability to respond quickly to urgent needs in Member States.

The Agency is also organizing an international experts' meeting in Brazil on February 22nd and 23rd to discuss the role of the sterile insect technique in fighting the Zika virus.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Zika case provides a reminder of why it is so important to complete the renovation of our nuclear applications laboratories in Seibersdorf.

The laboratories play a vital role in providing practical expertise and research that greatly benefit both developed and developing Member States.

I ask all countries once again to contribute generously to the ReNuAL project and I thank those that have already done so.

If sufficient funding is provided by June at the latest, we can proceed with parallel construction of the two planned new buildings, achieving maximum cost efficiency.

ReNuAL is one of the most important projects ever undertaken by the Agency, and the support of the G-77 countries is vital to its success.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2016 will be an important year for nuclear security.

I encourage all countries to be represented at ministerial level at the *International Conference on Nuclear Security*, which we will host in Vienna in December.

I also appeal to all countries that have not yet done so to adhere to the Amendment to the *Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material*. This is a very important nuclear security instrument and entry into force is finally within our grasp.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The other major development of the last 12 months was the breakthrough made on safeguards implementation in Iran.

The Agency has begun verifying and monitoring Iran's nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Much work still lies ahead of us.

The issue of how the Agency's additional responsibilities under the JCPOA should be funded needs to be sorted out by this summer in order to maintain confidence that the agreement will be fully implemented.

Turning to another major verification issue – the nuclear programme of North Korea – this remains a major cause for concern.

The Agency remains ready to resume its verification work in the DPRK once a political agreement is reached among countries concerned.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by expressing my appreciation for the very constructive role which the G-77 plays in the work of the Agency, and for the support which you have given to me personally.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with all of you.

Thank you.