SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT ON THE REPORT OF IAEA AT THE UNGA
(AGENDA ITEM 88)
5 NOVEMBER

President,

Over several decades the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency has advanced the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The IAEA’s interventions in an array of important sectors such as human health, water and agriculture have sought to contribute to food security and poverty reduction. The Agency’s interventions in these areas are unique, due to its specific mandate and South Africa attaches great value to the development and application of technologies that have the potential to profoundly influence socio-economic development, especially in countries on the African continent. It can be expected that the Agency will continue to do more in these areas, given the growing number of its Member States from the developing world. The Agency is also to be lauded for the partnerships it has established in this regard with other relevant Agencies of the broader United Nations family.

The key goal of the Agency is to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. Member States of the IAEA should therefore continue to work together to enhance the capacity of the Agency to provide more Technical Cooperation. Member States should also do more to increase contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund.

President,

Events over the past few years have brought much focus to nuclear power generation. A number of States are engaged in processes to increase the share of nuclear power in their energy mix. This is necessitated by the imperatives of economic growth and security of supply, on the one hand, as well as the need to reduce the carbon footprint and preserve dwindling natural resources. The Agency has provided important support both to newcomer countries, as well as those who are expanding nuclear power generation. For many countries there is no luxury of choosing between the different energy sources. Therefore nuclear power is seen as a compliment to other sources of energy. My country is working closely with the Agency as South Africa embarks on its Nuclear Build Programme.
Another important pillar of the Agency is its work in verification. Undoubtedly the IAEA has proved to be an independent and impartial organisation that fulfils the task of safeguards implementation in accordance with established agreements with individual Member States. South Africa supports the Agency’s efforts to strengthen the safeguards system in all states with safeguards agreements in force and within its legal mandate. Closer collaboration and communication between Member States and the Secretariat is, however, required for continued success. In this regard South Africa looks forward to engaging with the Secretariat and other Member States on the Director General’s comprehensive report on the application of safeguards at a State Level in 2014.

In response to the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant accident two years ago the IAEA took decisive steps to strengthen the global nuclear safety framework. The adoption of the Action Plan for Nuclear Safety was a milestone and an important display of the Secretariat and Member States’ commitment to taking responsibility for nuclear safety. Whilst nuclear security remains the responsibility of each Member State, South Africa welcomes the progress made to strengthen nuclear security at the international level through the important work of the IAEA, which includes the hosting of the First Ministerial level Nuclear Security Conference by the IAEA earlier this year.

In conclusion President,

South Africa remains firm in its commitment towards nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We support the IAEA as the only internationally recognized competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring compliance with safeguards agreements of States Parties, concluded in compliance with their obligations under the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). SA stands ready to work with all Member States to strengthen the work of the Agency across all the pillars of the IAEA’s work.

I thank you.