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61st GC of IAEA
Vienna, Austria
September 20, 2017

STATEMENT AT THE IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE

Madam President, Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning to all of you.

I would take this opportunity to convey on behalf of the people of India, and the Government of India the warmest greetings to the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Member States on the occasion of 61st General Conference.

India has always given primacy to IAEA's role in the promotion of peaceful uses of atomic energy, both in the area of nuclear power and nuclear applications, while maintaining due support in IAEA's role in safeguards.

Madam President,

I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as President of the 61st General Conference. I am sure that the current General Conference will accomplish successfully all the tasks laid before it under your leadership.

We welcome Granada as a new Member to IAEA.

Madam President,

I would like to compliment Dr. Yukiya Amano for his reappointment for the third consecutive term as the Director General of IAEA. Your Excellency, Mr. Amanov, through your tireless effort you have steward the work of the Agency so that it can be better prepared to face the contemporary challenges and also realize the immense opportunities that lie ahead.

India's Minister of State for External Affairs participated in the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Security held in Vienna in December 2016. In the meet, India reiterated its commitment to global nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

I am happy to inform that we have signed Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement with Bangladesh in April this year alongwith two more complementary Agreements.

We are collaborating with our Russian and Bangladeshi partners on establishing Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Bangladesh.

India became Associate Member of European Organisation of Nuclear Research (CERN) in November 2016 with whom we have been working for the last five decades.

We have also signed Civil Nuclear Cooperation agreement with Japan and Vietnam.

Madam President,

Let me tell you some of the recent developments in our country in the field of the Nuclear Energy and its applications:

This year we have completed 7 decades of our independence. 70th year of Indian independence has also been an year of exceptional achievements for us in the area of nuclear power, heavy water, nuclear fuel and associated material, uranium mining and milling, rare earth, radio isotopes and cancer care. All our research facilities, including synchrotron, cyclotron and reactors achieved their highest ever performance.

We are making sustained efforts to achieve major growth in our programmes of nuclear energy and nuclear applications.

Recently, Indian Government has approved the construction of 10 Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors in serial mode and also the construction of 2 more reactors at Kudankulam. Apart from the objective of major growth in carbon free electricity production, this step will give major boost to the industries producing the reactor equipment in India.

With these reactors we will now have 21 reactors under construction and 22 reactors in operation. This will increase the capacity to over 22,000 MWe by the end of next decade. We shall continue to add more capacity in future.

To cater to the needs of expansion of nuclear power programme, we are also stepping up our exploration and mining operation for production of uranium. In the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor front, after completion of construction, the commissioning activities are making steady progress while fulfilling all the safety requirements.

In the Cancer care sector, we have started major expansion by taking up construction/ upgradation of 6 additional facilities throughout our country. This will help us in doubling number of new patients treated from the present figure of 70,000 in the next 4 - 5 years. We have established a cancer grid connecting over 100 hospitals for diagnostic and therapeutic consultancy. We are also reorganizing ourselves to cater to further expansion in terms of research, education and patient care.

In the frontier science area, we are establishing a small underground research laboratory in one of our uranium mines for pursuing research on dark matter. This will enthuse scientists from all generations.

Madam President,

As part of our celebration of 70 years of independence of our country, we organized a side event at this venue on Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership and I thank all of you who participated in the programme. This Centre will have 5 schools covering safety, security and societal activities. I invite Member States to make use of this facility under the aegis of IAEA.

We thank the city of Vienna, and the people and the Government of Austria, for hosting the IAEA and this event.

India looks forward to IAEA's continued leadership for fostering safe, secure and sustainable use nuclear energy in the future. India will continue to support IAEA in all areas of its endeavor.

We wish the 61st General Conference a grand success.

Thank you.

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