

National Statement by the Republic of Azerbaijan
Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the
Technical Cooperation Programme
26–28 November 2024, Vienna, Austria

Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Co-Chairs of this Ministerial Conference, Ambassador of Finland, Her Excellency Ms. Nina VASKUNLAHTI, and Ambassador of Ghana, His Excellency Mr. Philbert ABAKA JOHNSON, for their outstanding leadership throughout the preparations for this important event and during the ongoing deliberations. We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its exceptional organization of this important event.

The adoption of the Ministerial Declaration today marks a significant step forward in the realm of nuclear science, technology, and applications, as well as the technical cooperation programme. This declaration underscores the collective commitment of the Member States to harness the potential of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, addressing global challenges such as energy security, health, agriculture, and environmental protection.

The Republic of Azerbaijan places great importance on its cooperation with the IAEA, ensuring that it fully benefits from the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in accordance with the IAEA Statute. Having concluded a Revised Supplementary Agreement Concerning the Provision of Technical Assistance (RSA), Azerbaijan actively participates in the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme, with a portfolio of 26 completed and 15 ongoing projects.

This year, we signed our 4th "Country Programme Framework" with the Agency, reaffirming our strong commitment to further developing our successful cooperation. This document outlines Azerbaijan's priorities for the next five years under the framework of IAEA's technical cooperation programme. Among our key priorities are capacity-building in nuclear research, climate change adaptation and mitigation, medical applications of nuclear technology—particularly for cancer diagnosis and treatment—water resources management, human resources development in nuclear physics, strengthening of regulatory infrastructure, and food security in agriculture.

As climate change mitigation and adaptation have become top priorities, the role of nuclear science in reviving Azerbaijan's cotton industry is undisputable. Under the national project in cooperation with the IAEA and in partnership with FAO, we have managed to enhance cotton production from 3 tons to 6 tons per hectare using a new climate-resilient cotton variety called "cotton super" combined with carefully implemented Climate-Smart Agricultural practices. To build on this success, we plan to apply these practices to rice and other crops in the next project cycle.

In our role as the COP29 host country, we assert the importance of nuclear energy in addressing the global energy transition, offering a clean, stable, and efficient long-term energy source. The COP29 held in Baku this month has also focused on highlighting and promoting the critical role of nuclear energy in combating climate change. Following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Azerbaijan and the IAEA during COP29, we reaffirm our intention to carry out joint analyses with the IAEA in energy planning, particularly regarding the role nuclear energy may play in our clean energy transition.

We thank IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi and his team for their active and productive involvement during COP29, as well as for their invaluable support within the framework of the Agency's technical mission on Nuclear Security Systems and Measures for Major Public Events. The IAEA's initiatives, most notably Atoms4Climate and Atoms4NetZero, are commendable for their role in our global commitment to fight climate change and deserve our full support.

As we explore expanded use of nuclear energy, we strongly believe it is imperative that we redouble our efforts in addressing nuclear safety. Moreover, together with the IAEA, we are also keen on exploring the possible use of nuclear applications in detecting landmines, which is of utmost significance to us today.

Azerbaijan is committed to promoting women's role in nuclear. We strongly encourage women empowerment and remain devoted to their equal participation, acknowledging the significant contributions they make in nuclear science and technology daily.

In conclusion, we are confident that this conference will serve as a valuable platform for the exchange of scientific knowledge, capacity-building, and technology transfer. We strongly encourage closer collaboration between states, research institutions, and the private sector to drive innovation in nuclear science and technology.

Thank you for your attention.