

**47<sup>th</sup> RCA General Conference Meeting**

Vienna, Austria, Meeting Room 6, M Building

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**Welcoming Remarks**

by

Mr Dazhu Yang

IAEA Deputy Director General

Head of the Department of Technical Cooperation

International Atomic Energy Agency

Mr Chairman,

Distinguished Representatives of the RCA State Parties, Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you this morning at the opening of the 47<sup>th</sup> General Conference Meeting of the Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific (RCA).

On behalf of the Director General, I warmly welcome all the National RCA Representatives, the Director of the RCA Regional Office, delegates and participants, especially those who are attending this meeting for the first time. This annual meeting continues to be a concrete demonstration of the strong spirit of cooperation you have in common under the RCA framework.

Over the past 46 years, the RCA has actively supported the application of nuclear science and technology for sustainable social and economic development in the Asia and the Pacific region in multiple areas, including human health, food and

agriculture, industrial applications, water resource management and environmental protection, and nuclear and radiation safety.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Seventeen countries have deposited their instrument of acceptance of the new Regional Cooperative Agreement 2017. This shows the strong commitment of countries in the region to the RCA, and I wish to congratulate you all. I encourage those countries that have not yet submitted an instrument of acceptance to complete their internal procedures and to submit the instrument to the Director General as soon as possible.

I note that the implementation of the on-going RCA projects is progressing very well, in line with defined objectives and work plans. Twenty-three regional events, comprising training courses and meetings, have already been carried out in 2018. This constitutes an implementation rate of about 60% so far. The remaining events have been agreed upon with host countries and will be implemented according to plan. I commend the efforts made by the RCA in the implementation of the RCA programme in 2018. With its systematic working methodology, its rich experience, strong ownership, I am convinced the RCA will produce great results in the 2018–2019 cycle.

I am happy to note that (100%) of the Project Progress Assessment Reports (PPARs) for the RCA projects for 2017 were submitted on time via the IAEA IT platform. I congratulate the efforts made by the RCA on this issue and encourage the RCA to continue this good practice in the future.

I am also pleased to note that the RCA has in place a concrete plan to conduct an assessment of the social and economic impact of the RCA programme. The Working Group on the RCA 2018–2023 Medium-Term Strategy Coordination is working actively with the Quality Assurance Section in TC's Division of

Programme Support and Coordination to identify appropriate approaches to outcome mapping and to develop necessary methods and tools for the impact assessment. I look forward to hearing the results of the assessment of the RCA programme.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to hear that the development of the RCA programme for the 2020–2021 TC cycle is moving ahead well, and that it is in line with the RCA Medium-Term Strategy for 2018–2023, and the guidelines and timeframe set by the IAEA. I note that a project design meeting will be held in November 2018 for Lead Country Coordinators, relevant experts, technical officers, members of RCA Programme Advisory Committee and the RCA Focal Person to discuss and refine the eight project designs you have submitted to the IAEA. I congratulate your systematic approach to the development and prioritisation of project concepts and designs, which demonstrates the RCA's initiative, proactiveness and ownership in the development and formulation of the 2020–2021 RCA programme. I encourage the RCA to share this approach with the other Agreements. I also urge RCA State Parties to consider how the future RCA programme can contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of its State Parties in an effective and efficient manner.

I note also that the RCA is exploring all possible opportunities to strengthen partnerships with potential stakeholders and to secure extrabudgetary funding in support of the RCA programme. During this meeting you will also explore how best to promote Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), south-north and south-south cooperation, and will examine appropriate modalities for engaging the RCA in the Quadripartite Forum. I look forward to hearing your decisions on these issues.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you recall, we had our first TC international conference last year which was very successful. This year, the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology: Addressing Current and Emerging Development Challenges, will take place in Vienna, Austria, from 28 to 30 November 2018. This event seeks to facilitate high-level dialogue on the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, and their delivery to Member States, mainly through the Agency's technical cooperation programme. It will highlight their future contribution to sustainable development, and support consideration of high-impact innovations that can be integrated into the national Sustainable Development Goals strategies of Member States. I urge you to promote the conference through your networks, and I look forward to your government's support and participation at the highest levels.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the RCA Regional Office, the members of the RCA Programme Advisory Committee and the members of the Working Group on the RCA Medium-term Strategy Coordination, especially the Chair of the RCA PAC, the Chair of the Working Group and RCA Focal Person for their excellent contributions and dedication to the RCA.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to conclude my remarks by thanking Mr Aldo Malavasi, IAEA Deputy Director General, Head of the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications, and our colleagues in the technical Departments, for their excellent ongoing cooperation to ensure the successful implementation of the RCA programme. Their contribution is an essential part of the timely and efficient 'one-house' provision of support to RCA States Parties.

Once again, I would like to re-affirm the full collaboration of the IAEA, and the strong commitment of the Department of Technical Cooperation, especially through the Division for Asia and the Pacific, in support of the RCA programme.

I wish you a very productive meeting and a pleasant stay in Vienna.

Thank you for your attention.