

## **49<sup>th</sup> RCA General Conference Meeting**

### ***Virtual Meeting***

*18 September 2020*

### **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,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you this morning at the opening of the virtual RCA General Conference Meeting.

On behalf of the Director General of the IAEA, I extend a warm welcome to all delegates and participants. Your presence and active engagement demonstrate your continued commitment to the programme and the importance you attach to regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At present, the global community is facing unprecedented challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic – challenges that go far beyond a health crisis.

Nuclear science and technology, however, continues to prove its unique role in sustainable development, as well as in emergency response. The Agency is in the

process of implementing its largest TC project to date in support of Member State efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic. I am proud to tell you that we have successfully delivered testing equipment and consumables to more than 120 countries and territories. In the Asia and the Pacific region, 27 countries and territories have received necessary equipment for testing.

In June this year, Director General introduced the ZODIAC project – an initiative proposed by the IAEA to prepare Member States for future possible zoonotic outbreaks. Allow me to inform you that we have prepared a proposal for a new off-cycle TC project designed to support the implementation of ZODIAC, specifically as regards national and regional capacity building. This project builds upon previous IAEA support in this area.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The crisis requires all of us to adjust the way we work. I note that the RCA has shown solidarity and proactiveness in responding to the crisis in an effective manner. I also noted that the implementation plan for ongoing RCA projects in 2020 has been thoroughly reviewed, and activities that can be carried out virtually have been identified in a timely manner. In this connection, I would like to encourage you to further explore innovative and practical measures for the delivery of the RCA activities, aiming at achieving bigger and more sustainable impact and using available resources efficiently.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to learn that the RCA has successfully completed a social and economic impact assessment of the RCA programme in mutation breeding. The IAEA highly appreciates the impact assessment and considers it an innovative

breakthrough. I congratulate the RCA on the achievement and fully support your efforts to thoroughly assess the socioeconomic impact of the RCA programme. I note that you plan in follow up to carry out social and economic impact assessments of two more sub-thematic areas: non-destructive testing and radiotherapy. Your experience is expected to provide a model for the conduct of such impact assessments of other regional TC programmes.

I understand that the development of the RCA programme for the 2022–2023 TC cycle is progressing well. Eight project designs have been developed and submitted to the IAEA. I would like to encourage the RCA to apply an innovative multidisciplinary approach, utilize available expertise and technologies in the region, and involve key stakeholders in project design to ensure that future RCA projects will produce their expected tangible social and economic impact.

As the RCA looks towards its 50th anniversary and beyond, I encourage you to use your rich experiences to generate new ideas, increase strategic planning, introduce innovative approaches, develop new partnerships and mobilize more resources in order to make tangible contributions to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my high appreciation to the RCA Regional Office, the RCA Programme Advisory Committee, and the Working Group on 2018–2023 RCA Medium-Term Strategy Coordination.

In conclusion, I sincerely wish you and your families good health and safety, and I wish you all a very productive meeting.

Thank you for your attention.