

52nd RCA General Conference Meeting

22 September 2023

CR3, IAEA Headquarters, Vienna, Austria

Welcome Remarks by Mr Hua Liu

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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you to this morning at the opening of the 52nd RCA General Conference Meeting.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone on behalf of the Director General of the IAEA, Rafael Mariano Grossi. The IAEA appreciates the continued strong commitment and determination of RCA State Parties in working together and their support for the TC programme.

I congratulate the Government of Australia on taking over the Chair of the RCA. I am confident that the RCA will continue its successful progress under Australia's leadership. I would like to express my appreciation to the Government of Viet Nam for successfully chairing

the 50th anniversary of the RCA and for leading the RCA effectively from April 2022 to May 2023.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to hear that the RCA programme in 2023 is progressing well. I understand that 22 regional training courses and meetings have been conducted so far and that twelve more regional training courses and meetings are in the pipeline for implementation. I note that the development of the RCA programme for the 2024–2025 technical cooperation cycle has been completed. Seven RCA projects have been proposed for submission to the IAEA Board of Governors for approval in November 2023.

At this meeting, you will begin discussions on the development and formulation of the RCA programme for the future 2026–2027 TC cycle. The decisions you make today will play an important role in shaping the outcomes of future RCA programmes. Your discussions will help to ensure that future RCA programmes address the region's high priority needs, and that the programme takes into consideration the successes, experiences and lessons-learned that the RCA has gained over more than 50 years. They will also allow you to consider how best you may take advantage of all possible opportunities and resources available in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we look to the future, we can see that our planet is facing more challenges: climate change, energy demand, plastic pollution, zoonotic diseases, and cancer, to name but a few. It is crucial for the RCA and the IAEA to continue cooperating closely on the use of nuclear technology and techniques to address these challenges.

Next week, the Agency will hold side events at the IAEA General Conference on ZODIAC, Rays of Hope and NUTEC Plastics. I hope you will all have a chance to attend and hear about the progress made under each initiative. We count on your support for their success. The Secretariat anticipates that future RCA programmes will be formulated closely in line with IAEA flagship initiatives, including Atoms4NetZero.

Food and agriculture is another high priority area where nuclear science and technology play an essential role. The IAEA builds capacities in Member States to use nuclear techniques to enhance food security and food safety, to improve crop production, and to strengthen animal health and production. The IAEA's new initiative called Atoms4Food will provide tailor-made comprehensive support Member States in increasing food production, food safety, agricultural planning and nutrition programming, using nuclear and isotopic techniques.

Our efforts to help Member States address climate change continue, including through the interregional technical cooperation project designed to support Member States that are considering whether to

deploy Small Modular Reactors. I encourage Member States, both donors and recipients, to participate actively in this project.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Declaration issued at the Ministerial Level Meeting on 26 September last year re-affirms the RCA's continuing strong commitment to promoting the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology. The goal is to address both existing and emerging challenges, to enhance the socio-economic wellbeing of the region, and to enable the sustainable development of the region and beyond.

Now we must ask what the RCA can do to materialize the Declaration. I encourage you to make every effort to thoroughly analyse and assess the RCA's strengths and weaknesses, its opportunities and challenges, and based on that to propose appropriate solutions, and formulate and implement concrete action plans to achieve the set of objectives stated in the Declaration.

The deciding factor for the successful realization of the Declaration is strong leadership, a high degree of responsibility, and the proactive engagement of the RCA Chair, the Committee of the RCA Chairs and the National RCA Representatives in the formulation, implementation and supervision of cooperative programmes and activities within the RCA framework. I would like to assure you that the IAEA is with the RCA at every step.

The RCA has successfully completed three social and economic impact assessments of the RCA programme in mutation breeding, non-destructive testing, and radiotherapy. I highly appreciate this initiative and encourage you to continue conducting assessments of the social and economic impact of the RCA programme in other thematic areas. I also encourage you to share this experience with other regional cooperative agreements.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I close, allow me to express my appreciation to the National RCA Representatives, the RCA Regional Office, the Programme Advisory Committee, the Working Groups, Lead Country Coordinators, National Project Counterparts, TCAP staff and our colleagues in the Technical Departments for their excellent cooperation in ensuring the successful implementation of the RCA TC programme.

Finally, I would like to re-affirm the strong commitment and full collaboration of the IAEA in support of the RCA.

I wish you all a very productive meeting.

Thank you for your attention.