

19 April 2022

Statement by HE Mr Richard Sadleir

Opening Ceremony of the 44th RCA NRM and 50 years of the RCA (1972-2022)

Thank you Chair, and welcome to your role as RCA Chair.

Deputy Minister, Director General, Excellencies, esteemed representatives and colleagues,

It is an honour to participate in the Opening Ceremony of the 44th Regional Cooperative Agreement's (RCA) National Representatives Meeting (NRM) and 50 years of the RCA.

Australia has been an active participant in the Regional Cooperative Agreement since 1977 and has supported various RCA programs through the provision of experts at training courses and meetings; hosting workshops, IAEA Fellows, and Scientific Visitors; and engaging in—and leading —RCA projects.

Australia's participation and engagement in the RCA stems from its multi-decade experience in operating the advanced multi-purpose nuclear research reactors – OPAL, and its predecessor, HIFAR – and other critically important nuclear infrastructure, producing nuclear medicines, and undertaking a diverse range of research to benefit health, the environment, and industry.

Australia is privileged to serve the RCA through its future chairing of this meeting, and stands ready to provide support to all Member States as we plan and prepare for the 2023 National Representatives Meeting, which will be held in Sydney. On behalf of Australia, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all, and to your representatives and delegates, to this important meeting.

The NRM, being the highest decision-making body of RCA, is critical for the success

of the RCA program, and provides strategic direction to Member States. Meetings of National Representatives ensure we can all continue to identify innovative methods and approaches to meet regional needs.

Over the past 50 years, the RCA has supported the development of technical and human resource capabilities in over 20 countries through more than 150 technical cooperation projects. Through the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, the RCA has made significant strides in the Asia Pacific region. The RCA has improved human health, preserved and improved drinking water resources, addressed air and marine pollution challenges, improved farming and environmental conditions, built capability and capacity in all areas of nuclear science and technology, and offered significant developmental support to industry. These are outcomes of which we all should be immensely proud. While there is much work to be done still, these outcomes demonstrate the hard work and commitment of all Member States, National Representatives, and all personnel engaged in RCA activities.

I would like to sincerely thank the Chair of this NRM and all representatives from Vietnam who have made this meeting possible. I also wish to thank the outgoing Chair, Thailand. I thank all national representatives for their hard work and continued engagement in the RCA, and the IAEA Technical Cooperation Division for Asia and the Pacific for their continued support and assistance. Most importantly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all RCA NRM participants for demonstrating solidarity and agility throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, you have ensured that the RCA can continue to deliver on its objectives despite the many challenges imposed by the pandemic.

And finally, I wish you all a successful and fruitful meeting. Your work here is crucial for the ongoing success of the RCA.

Thank you.