

**Ver. 23 August, 2021**

**Ministerial Declaration**

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA)**

(pp1) We, the Ministers of the twenty-two Government Parties (GPs) to the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA), gathered at the Ministerial Conference celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its establishment,

(pp2) Recalling that it is a function of the International Atomic Energy Agency (hereinafter referred to as the Agency) to encourage and assist research on, and the development and practical application of, atomic energy for peaceful uses, which function can be fulfilled by furthering co-operation among its Member States and by assisting them in their national atomic energy programmes, (*c.f.: Preamble of the RCA Agreement*)

(pp3) Recalling that the Governing Parties to the Agreement recognize that, within their national atomic energy programmes, there exist areas of common interest wherein mutual cooperation can promote the more efficient utilization of available resources, and desire to encourage such co-operation under the auspices of the Agency, (*c.f.: Preamble of the RCA Agreement*)

(pp4) Recognizing the important role of science, technology and innovation in addressing the current challenges and, particularly in combating the Covid-19 pandemic and meeting the common goals of achieving sustainable development, (*c.f.: Declaration of NA Ministerial Meeting in 2018*)

(pp5) Acknowledging the contribution of, and potential for the applications of nuclear science and technology to meet a wide variety of basic socio-economic and human development needs and achieving United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), (*c.f.: Declaration of NA Ministerial Meeting in 2018*)

(pp6) Reaffirming that the use of nuclear technology must be accompanied, at all its stages, by commitments to and ongoing implementation of the highest standards of safety and security, consistent with GPs' national legislation and respective international obligations, (*c.f., GC(64)/RES/12*)

(pp7) Recognizing the achievements the RCA has accomplished for the Asia and the Pacific region during the past 50 years, in the field of Food and Agriculture, Human Health, Industry, Environment, and others, and welcoming the result of the socio-economic impact assessment of the RCA projects initiated by the Agency, (*c.f. <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/20/11/social-and-economic-impactassessment-of-mutation-breeding-in-crops-of-the-rca-programme-in-asia-and-the-pacific>*).

*Brief achievements of socio-economic impact assessment of RCA projects on mutation breeding, NDT and Radiotherapy.,*

(pp8) Recognizing the importance of project outcomes in designing and implementing the RCA projects, which are key to enhancing its achievements,

(pp10) Mindful of regional needs, which also need to consider those of the Least Developed Countries and the Small Island Developing States, so that every GPs is able to benefit from the RCA,

(pp11) Acknowledging that South-South cooperation is an essential tool in addressing common challenges of developing countries efficiently and effectively, as well as fostering the exchange of best practices and encourage networking, and welcoming the Agency's participation and contribution with respect to it, (*c.f. TC resolution GC(64)/RES/11, Sec.5, (3)*)

(pp12) Commending the RCA GPs, National Representatives, Lead Country Coordinators, National Project Coordinators and other experts who have contributed to significant and notable achievements made in individual GPs as well as in the region,

(pp13) Appreciating the work done by the Agency, the Programme Advisory Committee, relevant Working Groups and Task Forces in optimizing and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the RCA activities,

(pp14) Acknowledging the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the RCA Regional Office, and recognizing its contribution in promoting and expanding the RCA through the implementation of various cooperative activities for the region,

(pp14) Stressing the importance of the ownership of the GPs for the continual success of the RCA, we have decided to:

1. Reaffirm the vital role of the RCA in facilitating the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology, contributing to addressing the regional challenges and enhancing socio-economic wellbeing of the region, and assure its continued proactive role, as an exemplary regional agreement under the IAEA, in leading the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies, achieving the sustainable development of the region and beyond,
2. Reaffirm the importance of the ownership of the RCA on strengthening regional cooperation and solidarity that accelerates the technology development through effective and efficient implementation of the RCA Programme,
3. Express further commitment and regional cooperation to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme by encouraging activities and seeking complementarities between national projects and the RCA programme, and find innovative ways to meet regional needs, including those of the new GPs, to make the RCA more sustainable,
4. Request the Agency, within available resources, to further assist the RCA GPs in the peaceful, safe and secure application of nuclear science and technologies and to continue its support to GPs' development efforts, including the attainment of the SDGs,
5. Emphasize the valuable contribution by the IAEA on fostering the regional cooperation through the RCA, and call upon the IAEA to continue its strong technical and financial support, in close cooperation with the RCA GPs, to further expand regional activities and enhance the impact of the RCA.

6. Encourage, thus, the proactive engagement and contribution by the RCA GPs through extra-budgetary and in-kind contributions that would further expand the RCA Programme in addressing the regional priority needs.

7. Undertake every effort to explore strategic and innovative approaches for building strong regional coordination, cooperation, and solidarity to effectively address new trends including digital transformation and adapt to new challenges such as global pandemic and climate change, and maximize the impact of the RCA Programme.

8. Recognize the special challenges and needs of the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, and encourage various kinds of collaboration and cooperation under the RCA to ensure that all GPs benefit from the RCA and inclusive development is in place.

9. Commit to scale up our efforts to strengthen partnerships, an effective instrument for expanding the RCA Programme, to build a firm network with various stakeholders for sharing knowledge and expertise and mobilizing human and financial resources on the basis of common interest and mutual benefit, facilitating the RCA Programme meeting the regional needs and responding to regional challenges.

10. Stress the importance of a high-level forum on strategic solutions and initiatives that would contribute to achieving sustainable and resilient Asia and the Pacific through the RCA, and encourage continued commitment of the relevant stakeholders through appropriate occasions.