



International Atomic Energy Agency

Statement

70th Session of the Regional Committee for Africa of the World Health Organization (WHO).

IAEA's Head of Delegation: Mr Shaukat Abdulrazak, Director for Africa,
Department of Technical Cooperation

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Honourable Ministers,

Dear Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

It is my honour to lead the delegation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the seventieth session of the Regional Committee for Africa of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The IAEA is a technical organization that seeks to promote the safe, peaceful and secure application of nuclear science and technology to address major sustainable development priorities at the national, regional and interregional levels, and promote tangible socioeconomic impact. We help countries gain access to technologies that can save lives by working closely with key partners such as the WHO, leading NGOs and international financial institutions.

Through its Technical Cooperation programme, the IAEA transfers nuclear technology to Member States, helping them to address key development priorities in a number of areas including health and nutrition. 45 African Member States are supported in building and strengthening their capacities related to prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease. The IAEA contributes to effective cancer control by addressing gaps, including, limited national coverage, insufficient capacity, an under-skilled workforce, inadequate equipment or a lack of a safety regulatory infrastructure. The IAEA works closely with its Member States to enhance the capacities of medical staff through education and training in radiation oncology, radiology and nuclear medicine.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Cancer in Africa is a priority health issue. We are doing all we can to help Member States to achieve SDG 3.

Through the IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) we help countries develop comprehensive cancer control programmes. In 2020, cancer control assessments (imPACT Reviews) will be conducted together with WHO and IARC through a hybrid modality in Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Senegal.

Our work covers cancer diagnosis and treatment, as well as ensuring the safety of patients and medical staff. We help countries to use nuclear medicine to diagnose and treat cancer

and other conditions. We are working to improve the availability of radiotherapy and medical imaging services in Africa. Safety is crucially important when nuclear technologies and radioactive materials are being used.

The IAEA is also able to respond quickly to health emergencies. From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IAEA is providing assistance to IAEA Member States from Africa by delivering diagnostic equipment and personal protective equipment.

In June 2020, the IAEA launched the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) to strengthen global preparedness for future pandemics contributing to establish a worldwide network to help national veterinary laboratories in monitoring, surveillance, early detection and control of animal and zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19, Ebola and Zika.

We give high priority to partnerships; we work closely with the WHO AFRO Regional Office and Country Offices on the above work in communicable diseases, cancer and COVID-19 support.

In 2019, the IAEA signed an MoU with the Islamic Development Bank and launched the Women's Cancers Partnerships Initiative. Ten African Member States could initially benefit from this partnership, starting with Burkina Faso and Benin.

In 2020, the IAEA signed an MoU with UNAIDS for collaboration on the global effort for the elimination of cervical cancer, which is a major killer of women in Africa. Kenya will be the first country to benefit from this partnership.

We look forward to working with AFRO on the above partnerships.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We will continue supporting countries to meet their development needs in the coming decades and will remain WHO's steadfast partner in their noble endeavour of promoting healthcare in Africa.

Thank you.