

NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY SESSION ON NUCLEAR AND RADIOLOGICAL SECURITY OPENING REMARKS: BY HON BRIG GEN (RTD) LEVI MAYIHLOME, DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Ambassador of Canada to Zimbabwe H.E. Mr. Ardler Aristilde,

Hon Speaker of Parliament, Adv Jacob Mudenda,

Honourable Members of Parliament,

Distinguished delegates,

Esteemed experts and stakeholders,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you today to deliver the opening remarks on this PGA National Parliamentary Session on Nuclear and Radiological Security. This esteemed event has been successfully organised by PGA in cooperation with the Parliament of Zimbabwe and supported by the Government of Canada. This gathering brings together various experts, policymakers and stakeholders who share a common goal which is to ensure the safety and security of our world in the face of nuclear and radiological threats.

The significance of this session cannot be exaggerated. Nuclear and radiological security is a matter of utmost importance to

global peace, stability, and the well-being of our societies. The potential consequences of a nuclear or radiological incident are catastrophic, affecting not only human lives but also the environment which the very fabric of our civilization. Therefore, it is crucial that we come together to address the evolving challenges and strengthen our collective efforts in this critical area.

Zimbabwe has been playing part and is at the fore front of Nation States that have been heeding the call to join a raft of international conventions and agreements regulating nuclear and radiological security. In addition to being a member of the IAEA since 1986, Zimbabwe is also a party to the following International Legal Instruments among others:

- Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement in connection with the Treaty on NonProliferation of Nuclear Weapons.
- Additional Protocol to the Agreement on Safeguards in connection with the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.
- Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CBTB).
- African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba).
- Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and currently working on the Amendment.
- Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste

- Convention on Assistance in the Case of Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.
- Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident.

However the focus of this National Parliamentary Session is to highlight the importance of implementation and giving full effect into national law to three treaties namely:

- The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM).
- The Amendment to the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM/A) and,
- The international Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT).

The international community has taken significant strides in developing frameworks, conventions, and mechanisms to promote cooperation, information sharing, and best practices in the field of nuclear and radiological security. Initiatives such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism have played pivotal roles in enhancing security and preventing illicit activities related to nuclear and radiological materials.

However, despite these achievements, we cannot afford to be complacent. The world is witnessing rapid advancements in technology, globalization and threats posed by non-state actors. These factors pose new challenges that require our constant vigilance and adaptability. The emergence of cyber threats, the potential for nuclear terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear and radiological materials demand that we remain proactive and responsive in our approach to security.

This session serves as an opportunity for us to deliberate on these issues, exchange knowledge and expertise to address security threats being posed by the evolving landscape in the nuclear and radiological materials arena. It is a platform for fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and strengthening the legislative frameworks necessary to mitigate risks and respond effectively to potential threats.

We must consider the role of national legislation in enhancing nuclear and radiological security, the importance of international cooperation and information sharing, the development of robust regulatory mechanisms and the promotion of public awareness and education. By addressing these aspects comprehensively, we can move closer to a world where the threat of nuclear and radiological incidents is minimized and the safety of our citizens is ensured.

The role of national legislation in enhancing nuclear and radiological security should be taken seriously. Laws and regulations play a crucial role in establishing a comprehensive legal framework that governs the safe and secure use, storage, transportation and disposal of nuclear and radiological materials. In short effective regulations should cover all stages of the nuclear and radiological lifecycle, from production, use, waste management and decommissioning. By enacting and enforcing robust legislation, we can ensure that our nations are better prepared to prevent and respond to potential security breaches.

The legislation mechanisms should also include rigorous inspections, monitoring systems and accountability measures to ensure compliance with international standards and obligations.

Furthermore, international cooperation and information sharing are vital in the realm of nuclear and radiological security. No single nation can effectively address the complex challenges posed by this domain on its own. It is essential to establish strong partnerships and mechanisms for sharing knowledge, experiences, and best practices among countries. Platforms such as the IAEA, regional organizations, and bilateral agreements can facilitate this exchange of information,

enabling us to learn from each other's successes and challenges.

In addition to formulation of robust legislative and regulatory measures, as parliamentarians it is our role to create public awareness through educating members of our communities on the dangers of lackadaisical approach in managing nuclear and radiological materials. It is imperative to engage and educate the public about the risks, benefits, and safety measures associated with nuclear and radiological technologies. By fostering a well-informed society, we can dispel misconceptions, alleviate fears, and promote responsible behaviour.

Moreover, it is essential to recognize that nuclear and radiological security is not solely the responsibility of governments or specialized agencies. It is a collective responsibility that requires the active engagement and cooperation of all stakeholders such as the academia, industry and the media. Each sector has a unique role to play in enhancing security, whether it is through research and development of advanced technologies, implementing stringent safety protocols, or raising public awareness. By working together in a multi-stakeholder approach, we can establish a

strong and resilient global security architecture that safeguards our shared future.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the participants of this National Parliamentary Session on Nuclear and Radiological Security. Your presence and commitment to this cause are a testament to our collective determination to combat nuclear and radiological threats. Let us utilize this platform to exchange ideas, so as to strengthen our security apparatus against nuclear and radiological threats.

I encourage you all to actively participate in this session by sharing your perspectives and insights. Let us challenge the conventional thinking, explore new approaches and strive for breakthroughs in the field of nuclear and radiological security.

I thank you.