



**Opening Remarks of Her Excellency  
Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy**

**H.E. DR AMANI ABOU-ZEID**

**DURING THE AFCONE-IAEA Webinar**

**on**

**Nuclear Power in Africa**

**Thursday 24 February 2022**

**At 14h 00 (GMT +2/ Pretoria Time)**

**Distinguished Participants  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

**Good Afternoon,**

I. I would like, to first of all congratulate the AFCONE and the IAEA for organizing this great session, and I must say I am highly honored for being considered to deliver this speech and contribute my insights in Promoting Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy in Africa.

II. Even before the Covid-19 Pandemic, the energy poverty remains a serious obstacle to economic and human development in most parts of the African continent. Africa continues to face critical challenges related to its energy sector, which is characterized by a lack of access to modern energy services (especially in rural areas), poor infrastructure, low purchasing power, low investments and over dependence on traditional biomass and fossil fuel as a means to meet the basic energy needs.

III. It is not a myth, the continent's energy supplies are not meeting the needs and aspirations of its people. About 600 million people in Africa do not have access to electricity and approximately 730 million people rely on traditional uses of biomass. A better system would promote economic diversification, raise productivity, and improve the health and well-being of citizens.

IV. The AU Agenda 2063: Specify energy as an enabler and a pathway towards addressing social, environmental and economic challenges through an integrated approach by providing equal energy access and consumption levels; leapfrogging the dirty fuels of the past with a future of clean renewable energy development; and balancing the demand and supply of energy, notably through programmes such as energy efficiency, to enhance economic growth.

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V. The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly compromised Africa's future development agenda. However, 62 years after the first nuclear weapons tests in Africa were conducted, the continent is rapidly exploring the various advantages that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy can bring in its response to the pandemic. Alongside these existing initiatives, African governments and regional nuclear governance institutions prepare strategies for the use of nuclear energy to contribute to the continent's developmental agenda, Agenda 2063.

VI. It is obvious that Nuclear Power Plant is one of the Cheapest, clean and reliable means of electricity generation. And developing and implementing the appropriate infrastructure to support the successful introduction of nuclear power is a central issue for many AU Member States.

VII. Furthermore, Nuclear science and technology can play a decisive role in helping countries in Africa tackle some of their most urgent problems and challenges. The AU's regional expertise and reach will enable the AUC to bring these benefits to many more

people in Africa, in areas including cancer care, water management, food security and the solution to the climate emergency, both in mitigation and adaptation.

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VIII. We all believe that, development and operation of a nuclear power programme is a major undertaking requiring careful planning and preparation. We all know that, the safe operation of a nuclear power plant relies on the establishment of a strong owner/operator, it also includes capacity building so that the operator is fully involved in the project design, including during construction in order to develop an organizational culture that promotes the appropriate attributes, values, standards, morals and norms of acceptable behaviour that are necessary at a nuclear facility.

IX. Similarly, Strong leadership is important, in addition to the ability to manage growth and change, technical and commercial competence, and clear procedures for internal and external communication. The owner/operator has to engage with stakeholders including national, regional and local authorities, regulatory bodies, the vendor, emergency response and technical support organizations, the grid operator and the public and assign each with particular responsibilities and capabilities in order to achieve the optimum attainable safety.

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X. The AUC DIE is coordinating most of the transformative actions needed to foster Energy solutions and reduce Carbon emission at the continental, regional and national levels including the new energy paradigm of “decentralized, decarbonized, de-risked and democratized” energy services that will enable Africa to realize the Agenda 2063 aspirations.

XI. Recall that in June, 2021, the AUC Launched AfSEM, which is set to be the largest electricity market in the world covering 55-Member state of the AU and population of over 1.2 billion people. AfSEM is considered to be the policy organ of another major continental AU energy goal, the Continental Power System Masterplan CMP being coordinated by the AUDA-NEPAD. with the technical and financial support of the European Union (EU), aimed at establishing a long-term continent-wide planning process.

XII. And part of the ongoing work to develop the CMP by AUDA NEPAD and the EU-TAF is the selection of the continental Energy Modelling Partners and thus, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) have been selected as modelling partners for the development of the African Continental Power Systems Master Plan (CMP).

XIII. The IAEA Energy modelling software MESSAGE has now been adopted and the five Power pools were trained by the IAEA on how to use the software to support the development of the CMP and help in identifying surplus and deficit regions/countries in Africa in terms of electricity generation and demand. This will also help identify the most cost-effective ways of expanding clean electricity generation and transmission infrastructure across the African continent.

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XIV. The AUC in collaboration with AFCONE will continue to work together in supporting African Member States embarking on a nuclear power programme, through providing all available opportunities for the exchange of information among countries as well as for learning relevant lessons from case studies and current global practices within the Nuclear industry.

XV. The Africa Union Commission will also pave for more ways to strengthen cooperation with the IAEA and the AFCONE. It is also expected that AFCONE should formalise a working relationship with the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat to collaborate on securing investment into the African nuclear industry.

XVI. I would like to assure this session of AUC's determination to do everything in its capacity to strengthen the relationship with the IAEA. We highly value the AFCONE and IAEA's works and outstanding contributions in Mitigating the Climate change and ensuring cleaner, secured, reliable means of energy production and in providing support through technical cooperation programmes.

I look forward to a fruitful and productive session today.

Thank you