Thank you Chairperson,

My delegation associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Chairperson,

Along with the legal commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons and measures to prevent proliferation, the NPT reaffirms the inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy pursuant to Article IV of the Treaty. Peaceful nuclear co-operation and access to the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, pursuant to Article IV of the NPT, constitute one of the core objectives of the Treaty. In giving effect to Articles IV (1) and IV (2), we should therefore exercise caution not to seek to reinterpret, or restrict this inalienable right.

The inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology which is at the heart of Article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is of particular relevance and importance in attaining sustainable and accelerated economic growth in Africa. In addition, nuclear power and the peaceful applications of nuclear technology, if optimized to the fullest, can meaningfully contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In his Nuclear Technology Review report for 2017, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) indicated that the demand for nuclear power and the application of nuclear technology will continue to increase in the coming years. According to the IAEA 2030 projections, global nuclear power will increase by between 1.9% in the low case scenario and 56% in the high case scenario. In this regard, nuclear power will continue to be a viable option for many countries, including my own, in their quest to address energy security challenges. In addition, nuclear science and technology will in our view continue to contribute significantly to socio-economic development, including the attainment of the SDGs. Through the Director General’s emphasis on "Atoms for Peace and Development", the Agency is now uniquely placed to reinforce the nexus between peace and development.

Chairperson,
The IAEA has a leading role in the development and promotion of nuclear derived technologies that improves food security, human and animal health, environmental management and contributes to socio-economic development. Through the work of the Agency the peaceful uses of nuclear energy has benefited all Member States, especially developing countries. The Agency’s nuclear application Laboratories are unique to the UN system and through these laboratories the IAEA is able to develop and transfer much needed and often lifesaving technologies and skills to Member States to, among others, combat and eradicate animal diseases such as the Ebola and Zika viruses, contribute to human health and the management of water resources.

Of particular value to the African continent has been the vaccines developed by the IAEA/FAO Joint Division at the Agency’s Nuclear Application laboratories at Seibersdorf, as well as the nuclear techniques developed for the early and rapid diagnosis of animal and zoonotic diseases. Similarly, the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT), developed by the Joint Division to suppress pests such as the Tsetse fly and the fruit fly, is another example of the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

The South African delegation attaches great importance to the role played by the Agency’s Nuclear Applications laboratories at Seibersdorf which continues to assist Member States in enhancing their access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies. South Africa supports the renovation and modernization of the Nuclear Application laboratories in Seibersdorf and welcomes the realization of the 31 million Euros required to implement the first phase of the ReNuAL project. We note with appreciation that resource mobilization efforts have now shifted towards the implementation of the second phase of the ReNuAL to ensure the timely and successfully completion of the project. In this regard, South Africa wishes to thank the Member States who have made financial contributions to the first phase of ReNuAL project and encourage Member States to continue to make financial contributions to this project.

Chairperson,

South Africa attaches great importance to the IAEA’s Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme which is the delivery vehicle through which peaceful uses of nuclear technology is made available to countries. As such, it contributes towards addressing the socio-economic needs and sustainable development challenges of developing countries. In our view, the Agency’s TC projects are more than just political commitments, they constitute important building blocks to assist developing countries in their efforts to alleviate poverty and achieve sustainable development goals. We therefore call on all IAEA Member States to pay their assessed contributions to the TC Fund in full and on time.

In conclusion Chairperson,

South Africa believes that the integrity of the NPT rests on the fundamental bargain across the three pillars of the Treaty, each of which must be recognized and upheld. The peaceful use of nuclear energy is an inalienable and integral right that should not be compromised. In this regard, the Treaty must be implemented in all its aspects without prejudice and no aspect should be more strictly enforced or require stricter implementation than any other.

I thank you.