International Atomic Energy Agency

Statement

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Read by: Dr. May Abdel-Wahab, Director of the Division of Human Health, Department of Nuclear Science and Applications

Agenda Item 7 Expanding access to effective treatments for cancer and rare and orphan diseases, including medicines, vaccines, medical devices, diagnostics, assistive products, cell- and gene-based therapies and other health technologies; and improving the transparency of markets for medicines, vaccines, and other health products

Dear Chair,

2020 revealed itself to be one of the most difficult years ever experienced and the pandemic has presented significant setbacks in cancer care; even before the pandemic spread globally, access to nuclear and radiation medicine was limited in many low-and middle-income countries, with inadequate or non-existent cancer prevention, screening, early diagnosis and treatment services.

Jointly with WHO and IARC, through the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT), the IAEA is helping countries advance comprehensive cancer control programmes by assessing their needs, planning and mobilizing partnerships and resources. Over the past year, we have strengthened our cooperation for imPACT Reviews despite COVID-19.

The IAEA supports key global initiatives on cervical and childhood cancer, and the forthcoming breast cancer initiative. The IAEA is part of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force for NCDs and the "UN Joint Global Programme on Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control". In 2019, the IAEA partnered with the Islamic Development Bank and launched the Women’s Cancers Partnerships
Initiative, which aims to significantly increase resources and expertise for improved access to cancer diagnostics and treatment.

Through day-to-day assistance to developing countries, the IAEA provides training for radiation oncologists, medical physicists, radiologists and other professionals. We assist countries in setting up facilities for radiotherapy and nuclear medicine and to acquire equipment for diagnosing and treating cancer. We also support fellowships, education and training workshops and foster the exchange of scientific and technical information through Coordinated Research Projects, including clinical trials.

While trying to minimise the harm the double burden of COVID-19 and cancer poses on patients in low- and middle-income countries, we need to ensure our work on NCDs like cancer reaches those in need. Our efforts contribute to achieving the targets of various WHO-led global efforts and the 2017 WHA resolution reaffirming the importance of an integrated approach to cancer control and to achieving the SDGs. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with partners like WHO.

I thank you Chair.