

IAEA. SCIENTIFIC FORUM
KEYNOTE SPEECH BY H.E. BENTO ALBUQUERQUE,
MINISTER OF MINES AND ENERGY OF BRAZIL
VIENNA, 22 SEPTEMBER 2020

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I WOULD LIKE TO START BY THANKING DG GROSSI FOR INVITING ME TO ADDRESS THIS SELECT AUDIENCE.

ACHIEVING SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN THE DECARBONIZATION OF THE GLOBAL ENERGY MIX IS A KEY CHALLENGE OF OUR TIME. DESPITE GROWING AWARENESS SINCE THE 92 RIO CONFERENCE, THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE SHARE OF FOSSIL FUELS IN THE GLOBAL ENERGY SUPPLY, CURRENTLY AT 81%.

THE MAIN SUBJECT OF THIS YEAR'S SCIENTIFIC FORUM IS THEREFORE VERY TIMELY.

THERE IS GROWING TECHNICAL CONSENSUS THAT NUCLEAR ENERGY PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE IN PROMOTING A CLEAN GLOBAL ENERGY MIX.

THE MOST RECENT IPCC REPORT ARGUES THAT ONLY WITH MASSIVE INVESTMENT IN ENERGY TRANSITION - INCLUDING NUCLEAR - IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THE EMISSION REDUCTION TARGETS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT.

ACHIEVING THIS GOAL WILL REQUIRE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, REASSESSING COMMONLY-HELD PREJUDICES AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY. WE MUST OVERCOME A TRADITIONAL VIEW THAT CLAIMS IT IS AN EXPENSIVE, RISKY AND POLLUTING ENERGY SOURCE.

ADVANCES IN THE FIELD, LIKE IMPROVEMENTS IN SAFETY AND SECURITY STANDARDS, NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY ARE PART OF A NEW AND PROMISING REALITY.

THE "FAST BREEDER REACTORS" UNDER DEVELOPMENT, FOR INSTANCE, WILL BURN FUEL MORE EFFICIENTLY, REDUCING STORAGE COSTS. SMALL MODULAR REACTORS ARE ANOTHER EXCITING NEWS. THEIR SMALL SIZE AND MASS-SCALE INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION OFFER ADVANTAGES IN TERMS OF COSTS AND STANDARDIZATION.

THESE INNOVATIONS WILL ALLOW NUCLEAR GENERATION SYSTEMS TO INTEGRATE COMPETITIVELY WITH OTHER ENERGY SOURCES IN HYBRID SYSTEMS.

THESE ARGUMENTS ARE NOT TO QUESTION THE IMPORTANCE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES, NOTABLY WIND AND SOLAR.

DEAR FRIENDS,

THE FUTURE IS CLEAR: HYBRID POWER SYSTEMS THAT COMBINE NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGIES WITH RENEWABLE INTERMITTENT SOURCES FOR POWER GENERATION AND INDUSTRIAL HEATING.

TAPPING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF NUCLEAR ENERGY REQUIRES LONG-TERM PLANNING THAT REDUCES UNCERTAINTY AND VOLATILITY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

BRAZIL IS RENOWNED FOR HAVING ONE OF THE CLEANEST POWER MIXES.

OUR HYDROPOWER AND BIOENERGY POTENTIAL HAS HISTORICALLY ENSURED THAT RENEWABLES PLAY A SUBSTANTIAL ROLE IN KEEPING THE COUNTRY'S ELECTRIC GRID CLEAN AND SUSTAINABLE. THIS TRANSLATES INTO GUARANTEED ENERGY SECURITY WHILE MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE.

OUR ENERGY PLANNING RELIES ON THE DIVERSITY OF OUR SOURCES. WITH A POPULATION OF 210 MILLION AND A VAST TERRITORY, BRAZIL MUST USE ALL AVAILABLE OPTIONS: BIOMASS, BIOFUELS, HYDRO, WIND, SOLAR, HYDROCARBONS AND, OF COURSE, NUCLEAR.

IN 30 YEARS, ENERGY DEMAND IN BRAZIL WILL INCREASE UP TO 2.5 TIMES AND NUCLEAR CAPACITY WILL INCREASE ABOUT 10 GW.

IN ORDER TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA, DURING THE PANDEMIC, THE NUCLEAR SECTOR WAS EXTREMELY RESILIENT. IT WAS KEY IN HELPING MAINTAIN SATISFACTORY LEVELS IN OUR RESERVOIRS. THE NUCLEAR PLANT OF ANGRA 2 PLAYED A SPECIAL ROLE, BEATING ITS OWN RECORD IN POWER PRODUCTION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

DG GROSSI HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THAT NEITHER HE NOR THE AGENCY IS A LOBBYIST FOR THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY. BUT HE RIGHTLY INSISTS THAT IT IS OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE THE FACTS CONCERNING NUCLEAR ENERGY BETTER KNOWN AND TO ENCOURAGE A RATIONAL, WELL-INFORMED DEBATE ABOUT ITS POTENTIAL.

IN THE FACE OF THE MOUNTING IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO IGNORE THE NUCLEAR SECTOR'S SOLID TRACK RECORD.

THIS FORUM PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT THE CONTRIBUTION THE IAEA CAN MAKE TO THE GOAL OF MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE. LIKE IN ITS PAST EDITIONS, BRAZIL IS KEEN ON TAKING AN ACTIVE PART IN THE UPCOMING SESSIONS.

WE WARMLY WELCOME DG GROSSI'S COMMITMENT TO ENSURE THAT THE AGENCY IS PRESENT AND ENGAGED IN THIS CRUCIAL DEBATE.

THANK YOU.