



International Atomic Energy Agency

Statement

73rd Session of the Regional Committee for WHO Regional Committee for South East Asia
of the World Health Organization (WHO).

IAEA's Head of Delegation: Ms Lisa Stevens, Director of the Division of Programme of
Action for Cancer Therapy, Department of Technical Cooperation,

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Honourable Ministers,

Dear Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

The IAEA is a technical organization that seeks to promote the safe, peaceful and secure application of nuclear science and technology to address major sustainable development priorities at the national, regional and interregional levels, and promote tangible socioeconomic impact. We help countries gain access to technologies that can save lives by working closely with key partners such as the WHO, leading NGOs and international financial institutions.

Through its Technical Cooperation programme, the IAEA transfers nuclear technology to Member States, helping them to address key development priorities in a number of areas including health and nutrition. The IAEA supports its Member States in building and strengthening their capacities related to prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease.

Cancer in South East Asia is a priority health issue. We are doing all we can to help Member States achieve SDG 3. Jointly with WHO and IARC, through our Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT), we help countries develop comprehensive cancer control programmes, by assisting them to assess their needs and formulate evidence-based policies in response. In 2020, we completed the needs assessment for Sri Lanka and already initiated the cancer control assessment (imPACT Review) in Nepal.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We give high priority to partnerships and work closely with the WHO SEARO Regional Office and Country Offices on the above work in communicable diseases, including cancer, and COVID-19 support.

The IAEA is also able to respond quickly to health emergencies. From the outset of this pandemic, we provided assistance by delivering COVID-19 kits including diagnostic equipment and personal protective equipment.

The IAEA and the WHO are collaborating to enhance the coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic through joint webinar series for laboratories that have received PCR-RT equipment and kits from the IAEA as well as for WHO accredited laboratories. Remote

sessions are organized on a) the requirements for establishing the laboratory for the effective use of real-time reverse transcription–polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR); b) on the best practices of sample collection and preparation for real-time RT-PCR; c) the interpretation of results including quality assurance and quality control; d) a 'problem-solving' session during which the technical concerns and challenges of the participating laboratories are addressed.

The webinars are conducted by WHO-WPRO (Western Pacific Regional Office) and the IAEA experts with the scientists from the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (Australia), the Institute Pasteur of Cambodia and the Nagasaki University (Japan). Sessions are recorded and available for viewing at <https://www.iaea.org/tcap-covid-19-webinars>.

In 2019 the IAEA signed an MoU with the Islamic Development Bank and launched the Women's Cancers Partnerships Initiative. A number of Member States in the region could benefit from this Initiative.

We look forward to working with you on the above partnerships.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We will continue supporting countries to meet their development needs in the coming decades and will remain WHO's steadfast partner in their noble endeavour of promoting access to universal healthcare in SE Asia.

Thank you.