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Pakistan and IAEA Accelerate Nuclear Cooperation to Address Climate, Food and Health

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(https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/styles/original_image_size/public/whatsappimage2023-02-15at105156.jpeg?itok=TsrFxFZq)

IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi met with Pakistan's Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. (Photo: Pakistan Prime Minister's Office)

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the IAEA will increase collaboration in peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, particularly in agriculture and medicine, to the benefit of the country and its neighbours. That was the outcome of Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi's two-day trip to Pakistan this



week, during which he met with the country's leadership — including its Prime and Foreign Ministers — and visited numerous nuclear facilities across the country, some of which he inaugurated.

Mr Grossi began his visit by meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The two spoke about the worsening effects of climate change on Pakistan and how nuclear science and IAEA support is helping the country.

For decades Pakistan has been ranked as one of the 10 most vulnerable countries (<https://www.germanwatch.org/en/19777>) to climate change, and last summer, was inundated with climate-change linked flooding which caused mass displacement of people and economic damages to the tune of USD 40 billion. The IAEA and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in coordination and consultation with Pakistani authorities developed an emergency support package (</zh/newscenter/news/iaeafao-emergency-support-to-help-flood-hit-pakistan-with-soil-fertility-and-animal-diseases>) to assist the country in applying nuclear science to better understand the flood's impact on soils, crops and the potential spread of animal and zoonotic diseases.

The Prime Minister expressed his desire to strengthen collaboration with the IAEA in agriculture and medicine and his support to the Agency's efforts to promote peace and development worldwide. The two also discussed nuclear safety and security Ukraine, where Mr Grossi is championing efforts to establish a protection zone around Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant, a facility beset with nuclear safety and security challenges caused by the war in the country.

In a meeting with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Mr Grossi said opportunities for the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology in Pakistan were plentiful, emphasizing how nuclear applications and IAEA initiatives are addressing climate change and issues of access to cancer care (<https://iaea.shorthandstories.com/raysofhope/>). Mr Bhutto Zardari said that Pakistan and the IAEA will further enhance cooperation (<https://twitter.com/BBhuttoZardari>) and grow the role of nuclear applications in dealing with climate change, water, energy and food security.



In Islamabad, Mr Grossi met with the Minister of Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal, to discuss the role of nuclear applications in addressing Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change. The Director General also met with Pakistani fellows of the IAEA Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, an initiative seeking to help build gender-balanced capacities in the nuclear sector.

Nuclear for energy, food and health



Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi inaugurates the new spent fuel dry storage facility at Chashma Nuclear Power Plant. (Photo: D. Candano/IAEA)

Pakistan currently operates six nuclear power reactors at two sites, that generate about 10 per cent

(<https://pris.iaea.org/PRIS/CountryStatistics/CountryDetails.aspx?current=PK>) of the country's total and almost a quarter of its low-carbon electricity. During his trip, Mr Grossi visited one of those sites, Chashma Nuclear Power Plant, 250 kilometres south of Islamabad. Inaugurating the site's new spent fuel dry storage facility, Mr Grossi highlighted the importance of managing spent fuel safely and securely.

Mr Grossi was welcomed at the Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PINSTECH), an IAEA partner in work related to human health, nutrition and water analysis. At PINSTECH, Mr Grossi inaugurated a dosimetry laboratory. Mr Grossi also visited the Pakistan Centre of Excellence in Nuclear Security (PCENS), saying he was impressed by the high standard of the facility and that he looked forward to further collaboration.

At the Nuclear Medicine Oncology and Radiotherapy Institute in Islamabad, Mr Grossi inaugurated Cyberknife, a new cancer treatment facility that he described as a milestone for the country. He said Pakistan would be able to support its neighbours with regards to cancer treatment access by becoming a regional centre under Rays of Hope — an IAEA initiative seeking to increase cancer care access in low- and middle-income countries by helping to introduce and improve radiation medicine capacities and build the cancer care workforce.

In Faisalabad, Mr Grossi visited the Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology (NIAB), designating it as an IAEA Collaborating Centre in agriculture and biotechnology. In a special ceremony, Mr Grossi planted a Sago Palm at the site and spoke about the IAEA's collaboration with the facility in developing climate change resilient cotton varieties. NIAB is also a national laboratory under the IAEA's ZODIAC initiative for combating zoonotic diseases and future pandemics.

Mr Grossi toured another IAEA Collaborating Centre, the National Institute of Safety and Security, when visiting the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority and meeting with its Chairman Faizan Mansoor. He was also honoured to inaugurate the National Radiation Emergency Coordination Centre (NRECC) in Islamabad.

Visiting the headquarters of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), Mr Grossi had a meaningful exchange with the Commission on the comprehensive and cohesive nature of the country's peaceful nuclear programme. Mr Grossi's visit to Pakistan was on the invitation of PAEC Chairman Raja Ali Raza Anwar, whom he thanked for Pakistan's hospitality during the two days. The Director General concluded his visit in Islamabad with a seminar on climate change



mitigation, during which he highlighted the role of the IAEA in supporting climate-vulnerable countries in addressing the climate crisis with nuclear science and technology.

Related resources

- [Director General \(https://www.iaea.org/about/rafael-grossi\)](https://www.iaea.org/about/rafael-grossi)
- [Pakistan Nuclear Power Profile \(https://cnpp.iaea.org/countryprofiles/Pakistan/Pakistan.htm\)](https://cnpp.iaea.org/countryprofiles/Pakistan/Pakistan.htm)
- [Power Reactor Information System \(https://pris.iaea.org/PRIS/CountryStatistics/CountryDetails.aspx?current=PK\)](https://pris.iaea.org/PRIS/CountryStatistics/CountryDetails.aspx?current=PK)
- [Rays of Hope \(https://www.iaea.org/services/rays-of-hope\)](https://www.iaea.org/services/rays-of-hope)
- [ZODIAC \(https://www.iaea.org/services/zodiac\)](https://www.iaea.org/services/zodiac)
- [IAEA Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme \(https://www.iaea.org/services/key-programmes/iaea-marie-sklodowska-curie-fellowship-programme\)](https://www.iaea.org/services/key-programmes/iaea-marie-sklodowska-curie-fellowship-programme)

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