

## Press Release Note

**Guest: Director General International Atomic Energy Agency, His Excellency Rafael Mariano Grossi & Delegation**

**Date: October 26, 2023**

**Venue: Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer (ACTREC), Tata Memorial Centre**

A distinguished delegation from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) led by its Director-General, His Excellency Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, visited the Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research & Education in Cancer (ACTREC), Tata Memorial Centre, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai, on October 26, 2023. He was accompanied by Mr. Jaideep Mazumdar, Ambassador of India to Austria, Montenegro and the Holy See and Permanent Representative to UN and International Organizations in Vienna, Governor on Board of IAEA.

The Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy and chairman of Atomic Energy Commission of India, Dr Ajit Kumar Mohanty, the Director of Tata Memorial Centre, Dr Rajendra Badwe, and members of the TMC Collegium welcomed the Director-General and Ambassador to ACTREC/TMC.

*Secretary DAE, Dr Ajit Kumar Mohanty* welcomed the Director-General IAEA and emphasized the historic role of DAE in cancer care in India since 1962 when TMC was included as one of its aided institutions. He apprised the delegation about the health-related and cancer care activities of DAE and its support for the establishment of TMC hospitals in various states of India. *Director TMC, Dr Rajendra Badwe*, welcomed the Director-General IAEA and briefly described the role of TMC, under DAE as the apex cancer centre in India with an 80-year history of service to the nation in the domains of clinical care, education and training, clinical and basic research, and public health in cancer. He emphasized the vision of TMC and DAE in establishing a hub-and-spoke model of cancer care delivery in India so that affordable and high-quality services are available to all citizens near their homes. He also apprised the delegation about the crucial role of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine in providing cost-effective cancer care. In India, there has been a steady increase in Radiation Oncology Centers (609) with 714 Linear Accelerators and 370 HDR Brachytherapy Units as of Sept. 2023 which shows the overall commitment and improvement in radiation facilities towards tackling cancer burden in India. He also thanked the IAEA for various collaborations between TMC and IAEA, including expert missions, Quality Assurance programs like QUATRO, training / fellowship programs for member states, Co-ordinated Research Programs (CRP's), developing technical documents related to radiation safety and treatments for common cancers, etc. *Director ACTREC, Dr. Sudeep Gupta*, made a presentation to the delegation about the clinical case load, services, research activities, public health, and preventive aspects and future plans of TMC. He also pointed out that one of the world's largest hot-bed nuclear medicine facilities, the Radiological Research Unit (RRU) has been created in ACTREC in collaboration between Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and TMC. This facility will be able to simultaneously treat more than 40 patients with routine and novel radioisotope-based treatments.

*The Director-General IAEA, Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi* lauded the commitment of DAE and TMC and their commitment to improving the delivery of high-quality cancer care in India. He was particularly delighted to learn about the successful commencement of India's first public-sector proton therapy unit in ACTREC/TMC, which will provide this advanced radiation treatment at a very affordable cost or no cost to almost 500 patients annually. Mr. Grossi emphasized the contribution of IAEA towards 'Cancer Care for All' through the 'Ray of Hope' Program. Launched in

2022, 'Ray of Hope' aims to assist LMICs with their urgent needs to introduce and improve radiation medicine capacities and to build the cancer care workforce. Through 'Ray of Hope' initiative, the IAEA will identify and define **Anchor Centers** – cancer centres which have shown resilience through decades of experience working with the IAEA to support their respective regions, said DG IAEA. The Anchor Centres will train fellows, organize training courses for healthcare providers, participate in IAEA Coordinated Research Projects, promote networking, and provide experts and mentorship to other radiotherapy and medical imaging centres in the neighbouring LMICs. Mr Grossi said that through the RoH initiative, IAEA intends to support equipment, training, research/innovation, and the activities through the Regional Anchor Centres to maximize the delivery of high-impact interventions to cancer patients in LMIC.

## **PROPOSED SCOPE OF TMC AS AN “ANCHOR CENTRE” for RAY OF HOPE PROGRAM**

The activities will be coordinated and executed through all the TMC centres in India.

**A. Education & Training:** Training modules and e-learning tools will be developed in accordance with the IAEA guidelines and technical documents for the following:

1. Hospital-Based Cancer Registry: Technical Support to develop/strengthen these registries
2. Common Cancer Management Protocols and Resource Stratified Guidelines
3. Multi-disciplinary Tumour Board, including Virtual Tumour Board and Tata Memorial Centre Navya Opinion platforms
4. Screening for Common Cancers
5. Onco-Pathology, Telepathology and Travelling School of Pathology
6. Nuclear Medicine and Radiology including Radionuclide therapy
7. Radiation Oncology
  - Training and accreditation of Radiation Therapy Technologists, Medical Physicists and Radiation Oncologists including Ph.D. and Mentorship
  - Principles and treatment protocols for common cancer management
  - Capacity building for teletherapy, brachytherapy and nuclear medicine
8. Palliative & Hospice Care
9. Patient Navigation program to improve treatment compliance

### **B. Quality Assurance Programs:**

1. Development and Improvement in Quality Management Systems - Nuclear Medicine and Radiotherapy
2. Audits and Interventions to improve existing Radiation Standards, including dosimetry audits
3. QUATRO, QUANUM & QAADRIL programs

### **C. Technical co-operation & Expert Missions:**

1. Technical assistance towards the development of infrastructure
2. Procurement and maintenance of radiation-related equipment
3. Technical Assistance towards implementation of radiation technologies – Radiation Therapy Technologists, Medical Physicists and Radiation Oncologists
4. Technical assistance and mentorship – nuclear medicine, medical physics, radiation oncologists

### **D. Research:**

1. Development of a Research Secretariat and its basic components, including clinical research methodology modules, clinical trial databases, etc.
2. Co-ordinated Research Projects (CRP): Development, Execution and Participation.
3. Assist in data evaluation and analyses and conduct research studies.