



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA AT THE IAEA BOARD OF GOVERNORS - 10-14 SEPTEMBER 2001 DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SAMEH H. SHOUKRY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF EGYPT

Agenda 2(a): Nuclear Installation Safety

Mr. Chairman, The Group of 77 & China wishes to express its appreciation to the Director General for the report contained in document GOV/2001/28-GC(45)/11 on the safety of Nuclear Research Reactors. Following are our comments:-

The report of the Working Group, referred to in the document, reveals succinctly the current status of 651 research reactors included in the research reactor data base of the Agency, and based on the outcomes of recent missions and on-going programmes addresses various safety issues, including the effect of ageing. The Group of 77 and China agrees with the concern expressed by the working group about the loss of expertise, control and lack of operating and regulatory infrastructure associated with the problem of ageing of research reactors.

The Group takes note that the Working Group Report itself concluded that after examining several options, it recognizes that international legally binding agreements on the safety of nuclear research reactors would put an excessive burden on countries without necessarily improving the safety.

We note that the Agency has suggested a number of mechanisms to address the safety of research reactors. Establishing a Code of Conduct for research reactors and following such other accepted good operating practices are positive steps for ensuring the safety of research reactors. Moreover, the IAEA activities aimed at providing assistance to Member States to improve research reactor safety should continue and be further strengthened.

With these comments, the G-77 & China take note of the document.

Thank you.

Agenda Item 2(b): Radiation Safety

Mr. Chairman, The Group of 77 and China notes with interest the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Málaga Conference held last March, and the intention of the Secretariat to convene a meeting of a group of experts to formulate an Action Plan for Future International Work Related to the Radiological Protection of Patients.

The Group also recognizes the continuing efforts of the Secretariat in establishing appropriate safety standards, as well as improving security of radiation sources and revising Plan of Action related to radiation safety.

As stated by the Group in the March Board, it supports the expansion of Model Projects for upgrading radiation protection infrastructure. In the context of sustainability and TCDC, the Group requests the Agency to continue to support the long-term training courses in radiation protection conducted in Member States of this Group such as Argentina, Malaysia, South Africa and Syria, leading to post-graduate diplomas. The Group is also pleased to note that an additional course is to be established in French in Morocco.

Mr. Chairman, The Group also notes that some of the events of the Agency including those in radiation and waste safety, where there is limited or no funding available, there has been little participation by qualified participants from Member States of this Group. The problem is further compounded by limited invitation to

only some Member States from developing countries resulting in participation mainly from developed countries. For instance, the Technical Committee Meeting which was held in July 2001 on the Scope of Regulatory Control of Radiation Exposure had minimal participation of members of this group even though the findings of this TCM would have possible future implications in international commerce of commodities in developing countries. Given the limited regular budget funding available, the Group requests the Secretariat to encourage extra-budgetary funding to support wider participation of developing Member States in such activities.

Agenda Item 2(c): Transport Safety

Mr. Chairman, The Group of 77 and China commends the Secretariat for the preparation of document GOV/2001/30, this being the first time this important issue is discussed as a separated agenda sub-item.

The Group has stated its concern over the risks involved in the possible non-adherence to adequate safety standards and IAEA regulations during international maritime transport of radioactive materials. In this sense, the G-77 and China shares the concern expressed by Member States, Regional Groups and international Organizations through various statements regarding this item, of the potential harmful effects for human life and the ecosystems of coastal transit states.

Mr. Chairman, at the moment there are many issues to be clarified by the international community regarding the transport safety of radioactive material, such as, for instance, the legal aspects involving responsibility for liability mechanisms in case of accidents that could affect human health, environment as well as the risk of economic loss. All these issues could be studied with the technical support of the Agency in order to make effective progress and to advance in such matters.

Mr. Chairman, Finally, the Group welcomes the intention of the Secretariat to convene a Conference on the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material early in 2003, as well as other positive steps mentioned in document GOV/2001/30.

Item 3(a): Plan for producing potable water economically

Mr. Chairman, The increased world-wide scarcity of potable water is a major concern of the international community because of its vital importance for all mankind. This was emphasised in Agenda 21 of the Rio summit on Development and environment and subsequently recalled at the 19th special session of the United Nations General Assembly. Since 1993, the Agency has developed a frame work program to address this issue through the Nuclear seawater desalination. In this respect, the Director-General has established an International Nuclear Desalination Advisory Group (INDAG) which ended its first term in the year 2000. The INDAG has recommended inter-alia, that seawater desalination using nuclear energy is technically feasible and in general cost effective. The G77 and China notes with interest that this advisory group held the first meeting of its second term in July 2001. We are looking forward to receiving a report on the progress made in this field and the action program of the Agency relating to the seawater desalination.

Mr. Chairman, Several Member States are conducting feasibility studies on the production of potable water economically through interregional projects of the Agency. Nevertheless the G77 and China is concerned by the delay in these studies and would like to see as soon as possible the practical implementation through establishment of integrated nuclear power and desalination system design. In our view, the feasibility studies should include, besides the technical aspects, economic and social impacts on the end users. The safety standards are also to be considered.

Mr. Chairman, Some key studies whose publication is announced by Document GOV/2001/32 are not yet issued by the Secretariat such as "Design concepts of nuclear desalination Plants ", "Market Potential for non-electric Applications of Nuclear Energy".

We are convinced that the dissemination of the available information among Member States is one of the

important ways to accelerate the establishment of a network program leading to the alleviation of the scarcity of potable water.

Mr. Chairman, The G77 and China is aware that small and medium size reactors are of interest for desalination in many developing Member States because the thermal energy required to produce fresh water is considerably less than the amount of heat produced by large reactors. For this reason we note with appreciation the efforts of the Secretariat on this topic and look forward to seeing the progress foreseen for this activity.

Mr. Chairman, The steering committee meeting of May 2001, has defined the organisational chart for INPRO and approved the structure and preparation of the report on " Innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles ". Many activities of the Agency were carried out during the year 2001, but here again, reports on these activities are still under process of preparation in the Secretariat. We look forward to the report.

Coming back to financial aspects, the group is happy to note that some Member States and regional Organisations have made extra budgetary contributions to the work of the Agency in relation to the Nuclear desalination, SMRs and INPRO and hopes that this trend will continue in the years to come through addition of new contributors to the list.

Item 3(b): Servicing immediate human needs

Mr. Chairman, The Group of 77 and China wishes to express its appreciation to the Director-General for the report contained in document GOV/2001/34 - GC(45)/17 pursuant to resolution GC(44)/RES/24. We also wish to thank the Deputy Directors-General of Technical Cooperation and that of Nuclear Sciences and Applications for the various measures taken on the implementation of the topics that came under this resolution.

The effective development and application of the SIT for the control and eradication of mosquitoes would contribute to improve the socio-economic conditions in Member States, as capacity building in radiation therapy for the treatment and curing of Solid Cancers would ensure that the gains made by the increase in life expectancy is not lost. Similarly, the application of nuclear techniques for the detection of landmines would further the cause of alleviating devastating effects of landmines.

Mr. Chairman, On the development of SIT for the Control or eradication of mosquitoes, the Group notes the expert meeting held to formulate policies and develop a draft project document, the upgrading of the status of the project from CAURBS to a core project with an allocation of US\$100,000 seed money and complemented by extra-budgetary resources. However, in view of the high incidence of annual death caused by mosquitoes and its implications for the socio-economic development of affected developing member states, we urge the Secretariat to increase the Regular Budget allocation to this project in view of the fact that the field applications of the SIT on mosquitoes is yet not existent and would require adequate resources other than extra budgetary resources which is neither reliable nor predictable. It should be added that this project falls directly under the mandate of the Agency. We further urge the Secretariat to continue to pursue further research and development activities in this direction as well as extend its collaboration with concerned regional and international organizations in solving this problem.

Mr. Chairman, We acknowledge with appreciation those Member States who have already made extra-budgetary contributions to this project and we would work closely with those who are contemplating to do the same.

With these comments, the Group authorizes transmission of this report to the General Conference.

Agenda Item 6(c)(i): Staffing of the Agency's Secretariat

Mr. Chairman, The Group of 77 and China expresses its appreciation for the report contained in document GOV/2001/38-GC(45)/21 entitled Staffing of the Agency's Secretariat.

We take cognizance of the various measures taken in response to the 1999 GC resolution on this subject and note with satisfaction the increase in application and selection from developing Member States, as compared to the previous reporting period (i.e., August 1997-99). We regret, however, that due to staff turnover the number of P-level posts held by staff from developing countries is practically the same as in July 1999.

The Group of 77 and China is particularly concerned that the representation of developing Member States at senior staff level of the Agency appears to be declining rather than improving. We hope that this decline, particularly in comparison to August 1996 and 1997, will be addressed in the ongoing recruitment process mentioned in para. 21 of the document.

The Group 77 and China regrets the fact that despite all the Director-General's and the Secretariat's efforts, under-representation of developing countries still persist and the Group urges the Director-General to continue his efforts to find ways for overcoming the problem.

With these brief comments, the Group of 77 and China takes note of document GOV/2001/38-GC(45)/21 and reaffirms its readiness to continue working constructively with the Secretariat to encourage recruitment of well-qualified applicants from developing countries.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Item 6(c)(ii): Women in the Secretariat

Mr. Chairman, The Group of 77 and China expresses its appreciation to the Director-General for his report on the agenda item under consideration, as contained in document GOV/2001/39-GC(45)/22, and commends the quality of the document.

The Group takes note of the various measures taken in response to the 1999 GC resolution on this subject. However, the Group notices that the document does not report on the work done regarding Integration of the Platform for Action developed at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, nor does it report on the Secretariat's participation in the Fifth World Conference on Women as requested in the second operative paragraph of the resolution.

The Group notes with concern that the gender imbalance is still prevailing at the senior staff level in the scientific and engineering, and administrative occupational groupings. Despite the rise, though marginal in the number of well-qualified women applying for posts in the scientific and engineering fields over the past two years, the present percentage of women in the professional and higher category staff is the lowest as compared to previous four years.

While recognizing the scarcity of women with nuclear specialization world-wide, the Group still foresees that more should be done to attain a better balance in the gender percentage.

The Group would like to thank the Secretariat for the measures taken in the previous two years for recruitment of women in particular those from developing countries, and encourages the Secretariat and Member States to continue to pursue their efforts in this direction.

With these observations, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the report.