



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA AT THE IAEA BOARD OF GOVERNORS - 19 MARCH 2001 DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SAMEH HASSAN SHOUKRY SELIM, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF EGYPT

Item 3(a) Nuclear Safety Review for the year 2000

The Group of 77 and China commends the Secretariat for the preparation of document GOV/2001/2 entitled "Nuclear Safety Review for the year 2000" and thanks the Deputy Director General of the Department of Nuclear Safety for introducing it. We note that the review has the same format as the last year. The Group welcomes various Conventions and Agreements on Nuclear, Radiation and Waste Safety which are expected to contribute to the development of safety culture in the Member States.

The Group takes note with appreciation of the new emergency response framework developed by the IAEA in consultation with other relevant international organizations and Member States. The Group encourages Member States to make use of the new framework, a step that would assist in dealing with radiological consequences of events at an early stage.

The Group notes with satisfaction that of the issues to be addressed by INSAG in its current term are: higher safety culture and international coherence of nuclear safety standards.

The Group of 77 and China commends the role of the IAEA in upgrading and expanding safety standards, and the publication and approval of a number of safety requirements and safety guides during the year. Though these safety standards are non-binding, in many Member States they do serve as a basis for guidelines for national regulation and are reflected in their regulatory documents. Hence, the Agency should continue to provide all possible assistance to promote their implementation in the Member States.

The Group expresses its concern over the risks involved in the possible non-adherence of adequate safety standards and IAEA regulations during international maritime transport of radioactive materials, in particular because of the potential harmful effects for human life and the ecosystems of the coastal transit states. In this sense, the Group urges Member States to strengthen the safety standards and follow IAEA regulations, as applicable, for the transport of radioactive materials.

The support extended to the developing Member States in safety related activities, in the various areas of nuclear, radiation and waste safety through the technical cooperation programme, is highly appreciated. We note that the Agency supported 110 such projects during 2000.

The Group also appreciates the Agency's support through the Model Project on upgrading radiation and waste safety infrastructure and Peer Reviews conducted to evaluate and quantify the progress achieved so far under the Model Project.

The Group has studied the various significant safety events with potential long-term consequences that have taken place at reactors and other nuclear facilities. These events highlight the need for continuous efforts to maintain and improve nuclear safety even in countries with long established nuclear programmes. From these events one should incorporate appropriate remedial measures to ensure that they do not recur. The importance of maintaining and enhancing safety culture in all human activities involving radiation has been reinforced by these events.

The Group appreciates the Agency's efforts in initiating an International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO). The Innovative reactors designed for such fuel cycle could also be used to transmute existing weapons grade materials with benefits for both non-proliferation and radioactive waste management. The Group appreciates that due consideration will be given, to technology, safeguards and proliferation, economic and safety issues, while developing Innovative Reactors.

The Group has always emphasized that exchange of information and technology is most crucial for the development of safety culture. However, there is a decrease in the training courses and workshops on safety related topics from 80 in 1999 to 60 in 2000. We once again request the Secretariat to give more importance to these training events and increase their number in the future.

The Agency sponsored three major International Conferences in 2000, which were useful and provided an opportunity for information and technology exchange.

The number of co-ordinated Research Projects in the area of safety has come down to 14, as compared to 25 in 1999. These projects provide a very important forum for technology transfer of direct relevance to Member States. The Group firmly believes that there should be an increase in the number of CRPs and in the outlay for this activity in the budget.

The number of co-ordinated Research Projects in the area of safety has come down to 14, as compared to 25 in 1999. These projects provide a very important forum for technology transfer of direct relevance to Member States. The Group firmly believes that there should be an increase in the number of CRPs and in the outlay for this activity in the budget.

With these observations, the Group takes note of the Nuclear Safety Review for the Year 2000.

Item 3(b): Action Plan for the Safety of Radiation Sources and the Security of Radioactive Materials

Speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 & China, I wish to express support for the action plan proposed by the Secretariat for enhancing the safety of radiation sources and the security of radioactive materials. The Group further notes that this was in response to the request made by the March 1999 Meeting of the Board to prepare an action plan taking into account the conclusions and recommendations made and in which the subsequent 1999 General Conference endorsed the Board's decision.

The Group also takes note of the major findings of the Buenos Aires Conference, in particular, the importance of education and training as key factors in achieving the objectives set. To this end and in the context of TCDC, the Group is pleased to inform the Meeting that long term IAEA training courses are being conducted in Argentina, Malaysia, Syria and South Africa leading to postgraduate diplomas in radiation protection. With regard to effective independence of the regulatory authority, the Group recalls that for some developing countries, regulatory authority independence from users and promoters of radiation techniques is sometimes subjective but practical. What is more important is the effectiveness and the provision of necessary enforcement powers, support and resources. The Group also lauds the call for raising the level of awareness of users regarding the responsibility for safety and security of radiation resources as also critical to increasing enforcement and regulatory powers of authorities.

In connection with technical assistance, the Group supports the further expansion of the Model Projects for the upgrading of radiation protection infrastructure and regional co-operation programmes related to radiation safety to cover all developing States receiving Agency technical assistance. The Group also agrees with the continuation through 2 new Model Projects in the years 2001 and 2004.

The Group also takes note of the Immediate future actions demanded on the States to ensure the safety and security of radiation sources but reminds the Board of the need to bear in mind, the immediate needs of developing countries and the unique problems faced.

To that end, the Group takes note of the major findings of the Buenos Aires Conference and the request for the Secretariat to assess its implications, to fine tune the Action Plan in its light and taking into account relevant comments, as requested in the Board action as contained in document GOV/2001/3.

Item 4 (a): Nuclear Technology Review 2001

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the addition of the item "Nuclear Technology Review 2001" in the agenda of the March Board and would like to thank the Secretariat and the Director General for inclusion of a comprehensive review of Nuclear Technology as a regular agenda item in meetings of the Board. The Group appreciates its suggestion for the inclusion of both power and non-power applications of nuclear energy as being incorporated in the present document.

The Nuclear Technology Review - Update 2001 presents a fairly good picture of technological development and global status of nuclear power and provides Member States with information about developments on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy as well as highlighting a number of central issues in a realistic and balanced manner. The document has clearly illustrated an overview of nuclear energy worldwide including a perspective view of the future and has addressed all issues, particularly sustainable energy management. While noting, that the greatest increase in the utilization of nuclear power would take place in certain developing countries, the Group is of the view that issues of financing and technology development in developing countries needs to be addressed with a view to making available the option of nuclear power to more developing countries.

The Group notes the positive mention of the future role of nuclear power in several analyses, including, inter-alia, the November EC Green Paper and Belgium's Ampere Commission Report. The Group also notes that nuclear power plays a major role in most of the sustainable scenarios associated with the two major new international studies of long-term energy prospects; the IPCC - Special Report on Emission Scenarios and the World Energy Assessment. The Group calls on the Agency and interested Member States to address public concerns and participate in improvements in safety and proliferation resistance, through innovative reactor designs. The Group welcomes the Agency's efforts to reinforce national initiatives through the new International Project on Innovative Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO). The Group would also like to see more in the next review document about the relation between the Agency and other international organizations that are involved with Nuclear Energy.

The Agency may play an important role in international efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission pursuant to the Kyoto Protocol. It is suggested that this document compares the advantages of nuclear energy with all other sources to highlight the role of Nuclear Power as a clean and sustainable technology at appropriate international meetings in this regard. The Group takes note with appreciation the Agency's activities for establishing a regional TC Project to evaluate the possible role of Nuclear Energy in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

The Group notes that Research Reactors and accelerators are powerful tools of nuclear science and serve as sources of ionizing radiation for materials investigation and radioisotope production. They have had a significant impact on economic and industrial development in many countries and have facilitated the development of high technology products. They have also contributed significantly to health care, through the use of radioisotopes. The Group finds the information contained in the document very useful and also had highlighted some important facts, particularly about the present situation of research reactors in the world. The Group notes that 86 out of 292 operating research reactors are in developing countries, therefore, the Agency should continue its active role in supporting the sustainability of the research reactors in developing countries. The Group supported the Agency's activities relating to more utilization of research reactors in developing countries and also the Agency's efforts to changing the HEU research reactor fuel cycle to LEU fuel.

Nuclear Technology Review 2001: Desalination

We have studied carefully the document on desalination and our comments on the issue are as follows. The estimated lack of safe water for 1.1 billion people particularly in developing countries is one of the major concerns of the Group.

Although desalination technologies are well established since the mid 20th century, almost 60% of the deployed capacity is located in the Middle East and based on fossil-fuel. This may not be an adequate solution for non-oil producing countries. In this regard, the Group commends the Secretariat for its effort in the dissemination of desalination technology using nuclear techniques. We believe that nuclear desalination is not only environmentally benign but also makes sound economic sense for certain developing countries. With these comments, the G77 and China is willing to see the outcome of the second phase of consultations of the INDAG the only regular, comprehensive, world wide forum for the exchange of information on nuclear desalination technologies and programmes, and the Group commits itself to co-operate with the Secretariat through this body in order to enhance the nuclear desalination programme in conformity with the latest internationally recognized safety standards. The estimated funding for the execution of the INDAG recommendations for 2001 of US\$ 241,000 is not included in the Agency's regular budget, and the Group calls upon the donor community to contribute to this programme which is of utmost importance to the promotional activities of the Agency.

The Group of 77 and China feels there is need for more effort to develop large-scale commercial application of irradiation of food items as a process to enhance food safety, security and trade and also to promote its acceptance. In view of hunger and malnutrition affecting its members, the Group stresses the importance of the Agency as a technology carrier in human nutrition areas through emphasis on isotopic techniques as tools to evaluate the nutritional status and the equality of foods in context of national development programmes. In this regard, the Group calls for increased co-ordinated Research Projects and Technical Co-operation Projects in the areas of health, nutrition and environment to improve the quality of life to members of the Group.

Item 4(b): Use of Isotope hydrology for water resources management

The G-77 and China recognizes that sufficient potable water supplies for all mankind are of vital importance, as it is emphasized 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. In this regard, the G-77 and China takes note with appreciation of the activities undertaken during the period 1999-2000 towards fuller utilization of isotope techniques for water resources development and management and for providing technical assistance to developing countries for the application of proven methodologies. The use of isotope techniques in the assessment of submarine ground water discharge within a framework cooperation between the Agency, UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission are of great socio-economic impact to coastal areas of developing Member States which are suffering from the increasing scarcity of freshwater resources.

With these comments the G-77 and China encourages the Director-General to fulfill the implementation of the resolution GC(43) Res.16 and to report on the progress to the 45th regular session of the General Conference. Also, the G-77 and China calls upon the donor community to assist the Secretariat in carrying out this task.

Item 8: Appointment of the Director-General

The Group of 77 and China has noted with satisfaction the wealth of experience of Dr. Elbaradei, acquired over the years in the Agency, dealing with nuclear and management issues. These experiences have been brought to bear on the conduct of the affairs of the Agency, since his assumption of the leadership of the Agency.

In particular, the Group commends his innovative and efficient style of functioning, as well as his leadership skills and looks forward to continue to benefit from these qualities in the future.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.