



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE IAEA BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING
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Agenda Item 2: Measures to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation and transport safety and waste management: Nuclear Safety Review for the year 2008.

Madam Chair,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like at the outset to thank the Director General for his comprehensive introductory statement.

The Group also wishes to thank the Director General for issuing the Nuclear Safety Review for 2008, as contained in document GOV/2009/2, and its related notes. The Group also thanks DDG Taniguchi for his presentation of this agenda item and for the technical briefing on 27 February.

The Group takes note of the Secretariat's efforts to support nuclear safety worldwide. As stated on several occasions, the Group attaches great importance to the issue of nuclear safety, which constitutes one of the elements of any nuclear programme and believes that the Agency plays a key role in this field, as provided for in Article III of the Statute. The Group therefore notes with satisfaction that the safety performance of the nuclear industry in recent years has remained at a high level and that international cooperation in 2008 continued to result in improvements.

The Group concurs with the view that as the uses and the introduction of nuclear technologies expand, vigilance and concrete actions to enhance nuclear safety must continue. The Group, however, recalls that the primary responsibility for the safety and security of nuclear and other radioactive materials rests entirely with the State. The Group also reiterates its position that nuclear safety and security considerations should not be used to hamper the utilization of nuclear technology for peaceful uses.

Madam Chair,

An adequate nuclear safety infrastructure is essential for any nuclear power program, and, as called for in the related GC Resolutions, the assistance the Agency provides in this regard is of utmost importance, especially for developing countries. While noting other international initiatives in the area of nuclear safety infrastructure, the Group would like to stress the central role the Agency plays in this field, owing to its mandatory functions, broader membership and long-standing experience.

The Group notes with concern the global shortage of specialized human resources in the nuclear field, including nuclear safety experts, which is deepened by the current nuclear power renaissance and may pose challenges for the maintenance and possible improvement of current levels of safety performance. In this regard, the Group reiterates its support for the Agency's activities related to developing strategies for sustainable education and training in nuclear safety.

In regard to the changing technology, the Group concurs with the view expressed in the report that vendors of new technologies have a responsibility to ensure that users have access to all information and resources necessary for safe operation, and that both, countries using those technologies and vendor countries need to collaborate so that nuclear safety knowledge is transferred effectively.

In relation to incident and emergency preparedness and response, the Group notes with concern that during 2008 the Agency was informed or became aware of 183 events involving or suspected to involve ionizing radiation and took action in 43 cases, which represents a considerable increase compared with the 140 events of 2007, from which the Agency took part in 25. The Group takes note of the results of the emergency exercise conducted in Mexico, in July 2008, known as ConvEx3. The Group hopes that the lessons learned from the exercise will contribute to improve the systems that would be required in an actual emergency, so as to enhance the preparedness of the Agency.

The Group reiterates its support to the work of INLEX. However, the Group wishes to highlight that the issue of nuclear liability may not be directly related to nuclear safety. The Group therefore finds it inappropriate to tackle the issue of nuclear liability in the nuclear safety report.

The Group takes note with satisfaction that research reactors around the world continued to be operated safely in 2008.

The Group notes that plans for new research reactors and upgrading of existing ones are being developed in many Member States. In this regard, the Group looks forward to receiving information on the work programme established by the Secretariat to assist Member States in establishing the technical and nuclear safety infrastructure related to building their first research reactors.

The Group takes note of the activities conducted by the Agency on the application of the non-legally-binding Code of Conduct of Research Reactors in 2008, particularly the international meeting held in October 2008, which was an important opportunity for an exchange of views in light of the renewed interest in nuclear technologies today. While recalling the voluntary nature of this Code, the Group commends the Secretariat for its efforts in bringing together representatives from different Member States to share their experience in the areas of operating and using research reactors and identifying those areas in which Member States need assistance.

Regarding the fuel cycle facility safety, the Group reiterates its interest in the benefits of the service of Safety Evaluation During Operation of Fuel Cycle Facility (SEDO).

The Group takes note of the launching of the web-based version of the Fuel Incident Notification and Analysis System (FINAS) in 2008.

Concerning the issue of occupational radiation exposure, the Group notes that the collective dose due to occupational radiation exposure continues to rise, primarily due to the growing use of radiation as reported by the United Nations Committee on Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR). In this regard, the Group shares the views regarding the need of proper tools and techniques for radiation protection is effective in ensuring safety in the medical field where more than half radiation exposure occur. The Group welcomes the holding of international activities relating to this issue namely the 12th International Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association in Argentina and the technical meeting on radiation protection guidance for medical workers held in Vienna in November 2008.

The Group takes note of the considerable increase in medical radiation exposure. However, the Group is concerned with the difficulties that developing countries face in managing and controlling medical exposure because of poor equipment and insufficiencies in dosimetry and radiation protection guidelines as well as the lack of training. The Group, therefore, encourages the Secretariat to continue enhancing efforts through providing assistance and guidelines to Member States, in particular developing ones, to enhance their capacities of monitoring the risks of radiation exposure. Furthermore, the Group notes that the third meeting of the steering Panel for International Action Plan for the Radiological Protection of Patients was held in Vienna in 2008 and looks forward to receiving the results of this meeting.

The Group notes the role of the non-legally-binding Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of

Radioactive Sources in providing the guidelines and foundations for the safety and security of radioactive sources. The Group takes note of the assistance provided by the Agency to developing Member States in particular in Africa in 2008 with a view to enhancing their capabilities to search for secure orphan radioactive sources.

The Group notes that a designated concept for the control of Disused Sealed Sources (DSRSs) and aimed at providing Member States lacking an adequate disposal system has been developed within the Agency. The Group also commends the assistance provided by the Secretariat to developing countries in this area.

Furthermore, the Group notes the launching of the Regulatory Authority Information System (RAIS) Web Portal in 2008, as a mean to support Member States in improving their regulatory control and inventory of radiation sources.

With regards to the denials and delays of shipment of radioactive material, the Group appreciates various initiatives of the international steering committee aimed at regional solutions. However, the group expresses its concern that despite the international efforts, the denials and delays continue to occur in all parts of the world and that the increased monitoring and recording will result in an apparent increase in denials. The Group believes that having recognized the effective communication with the transport personnel and authorities of Member States to be an essential tool to combat this issue, more concerted effort should be applied to address this problem.

Turning to the safety of radioactive waste management and disposal, the Group shares the view that confidence in the safety of radioactive waste management and disposal arrangements are among the important factors contributing to the public acceptance of nuclear energy. In this regard, the Group notes the publication of the updated safety standards on classification of radioactive waste which covers all types of radioactive waste.

With these remarks, the Group takes note of the Nuclear Safety Review for 2008.

Thank you Madam Chair.

Agenda Item 3: Nuclear Technology Review - 2009

Madam Chair,

The Group would like to express its sincere appreciation for the Secretariat for preparing the Nuclear Technology Review contained in document (GOV/2009/3), which provides a detailed account of the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications, as well as the major international developments in this area.

The Group also thanks both Mr. Sokolov and Mr. Burkhart for introducing this agenda item and for the technical briefing arranged on 24 February to present the contents of the report.

The Group of 77 and China notes that while there were no new reactors connected to the grid in 2008, there were ten construction starts in the same year, compared to only eight construction starts in 2007.

The Group wishes to highlight that the existing power plants, including those in developing countries, have thus far established a remarkable operational safety and security record, indicating the significant contribution nuclear energy can have in the future energy mix, especially in developing countries where the need for industrialization and growth will continue to increase considerably.

The Group highly commends the Secretariat for its efforts in assisting interested Member States to analyze energy options and to prepare for the introduction of nuclear power or uranium production. The Group notes

with satisfaction that the TC project cycle starting 2009 marks a significant increase in the number of approved TC projects on analyzing energy options, uranium exploration and mining, and the introduction of nuclear power. The Group stresses that for the Agency's TC activities to be effective and successful they have to actively respond to the needs and priorities of the recipient Member States.

The Group welcomes the launching of a new service providing integrated advice to countries considering the introduction of nuclear power, and notes with satisfaction that in 2007 and 2008 such missions took place in a number of developing countries.

The Group also notes that the Secretariat has provided some guidance documents during the past two years on important topics relating to the launching of nuclear power programmes. In this context, the Group stresses that while these documents may provide useful guidelines, they should not be considered the only reference for Member States embarking on a nuclear power programme. The Group reiterates its view that these documents are not binding and should not be used to restrict technical cooperation activities or interfere in the technical work of the Secretariat.

Furthermore, it should be emphasized that the nuclear policies of any Member State evolve to suit its social, legal and economic specificities. Hence, the harmonization and standardization of nuclear policies should not be meant or perceived as a requirement for the introduction of uniform nuclear policies in each and every Member State planning to launch or expand its nuclear power programme.

The Group is encouraged by the increase in the future projections for global growth in nuclear power, especially within the framework of the global efforts to reduce carbon emissions and to tackle the challenges of climate change.

Turning to the area of fuel cycle, in order to support the sharing of educational resources and the promotion of technical educational opportunities and identify some common challenges, the Group urges the Secretariat to study the feasibility of initiating an IAEA resource library of references, programmes, tools and pooled resources. In this area also, the Group stresses the necessity of maintaining the role of the Agency as the leading vehicle promoting the transfer and development of technology and knowledge related to all peaceful nuclear applications including nuclear power and nuclear fuel cycle.

Given the crucial importance it attaches to the issue of human resource development, the Group finds the efforts of the Agency to be crucial in identifying the required policies on the national and international levels for human resource development and availability in the field of nuclear science and technology.

The Group recognizes the importance of public acceptance of nuclear energy and the possible role of public opinion surveys in this regard. The Group notes that the report refers to a generally high level of public acceptance of nuclear power in the developing countries where surveys were carried out.

The Group notes the growing reliance on evolutionary reactor designs. The Group requests the Secretariat to periodically assess and update the pros and cons of each type of reactor design and the different generations. This can assist countries that are embarking on nuclear power programs in their endeavors to choose the optimal technology.

In this context, the Group notes with satisfaction that the Agency's International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO) completed an extensive manual on methods to assess innovative nuclear energy systems. The Group also notes that there were studies completed using INPRO's methods to identify priority areas in each case for further research and development. The Group is looking forward to receiving the report on Common User Considerations by Developing Countries for Future Nuclear Power Plants.

The Group notes the holding of the 22nd IAEA Fusion Energy Conference (FEC 2008), where over 500

scientific papers were presented, and where a cooperation agreement was signed between the Agency and the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor Organization. In this connection, the Group is looking forward to analyzing the results of the exchange of information on the activities of the ITER and a thorough analysis of fusion's contribution to future nuclear power scenarios, as well as fusion safety and security. The Group is pleased to note that the abovementioned agreement is designed to facilitate interactions between ITER parties and other Agency Member States interested in fusion research.

With rising expectations for nuclear power, and a new generation of fission reactors, the Group encourages the efforts of the Agency to meet the need for new and updated fission and capture cross section data for actinides, the need to reduce uncertainties, and the need for data required for spent fuel recycling.

The Group is highly concerned with the problems posed by the unavailability of the few large ageing reactors used for isotope production and the effects of such problems on the continuity of radioisotope supplies (molybdenum-99 in particular) for vital medical and industrial applications. The Group requests the Secretariat to undertake a detailed study on the possible frameworks that could strengthen international cooperation and national capabilities to ensure the availability of radioisotope supplies, including through the enhancement of the utilization of reactors in developing countries for isotope production.

Madam Chair,

40. The Group attaches great importance to the role of nuclear and related technologies in improving livestock productivity and supports the efforts of the Agency in this area. The Group also commends and supports the Agency's efforts aiming at enhancing the use of isotopes in assisting developing countries in areas which would enhance the prospect of their livestock products to access export markets. The Group requests the Secretariat to provide a thorough assessment of the main obstacles and challenges facing the Agency's work in this domain.

The Group commends the efforts to evaluate X-ray radiation as an alternative to gamma radiation in the areas of insect pest control and is encouraged by the preliminary results. However, it is a matter of great concern that even for such an important activity, difficulties are encountered in obtaining and shipping isotopic irradiators. The Group therefore urges the Secretariat to increase its efforts to tackle the obstacles confronting the supply and shipping of isotopic irradiators, including those of denials of shipment.

The Group strongly commends the Agency's efforts to support African Member States with the transfer of Sterile Insect Technique against tsetse flies.

The Group highly appreciates the major contribution of isotopic techniques in managing and mitigating the risks associated with the use of agrochemicals in the field of agricultural production, especially given the need for increased productivity to respond to the current global food crisis. The Group also wishes to underscore the important role of isotopic techniques in promoting international trade by helping in identifying the origin of agricultural products where such procedures are required.

The Group also commends the work of the Agency in the area of boosting the production of various food crops and enhanced mutation induction.

In this connection, the Group would like to recall its view that the Joint FAO/IAEA Division has been providing Member States, in particular the least developed countries, with concrete benefits in the fields of crop enhancement, pest control and food and environmental protection, which have a clear and tangible impact in the welfare and economic development of Member States. The Group of 77 and China would like to seize this opportunity to reiterate its firm position in calling for the retention and strengthening of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division in order to enhance its continuing efforts in supporting Member States.

Madam Chair,

Turning to the area of human health, the Group takes note with satisfaction of the reported activities related to finding synergies between nuclear medicine imaging and the pharmaceutical industry. The Group concurs with the finding that innovative approaches to the development of new pharmaceuticals is of key importance. Furthermore, the Group welcomes the reported developments in the area of applying nuclear techniques to support nutrition.

The Group further welcomes and supports the Agency's work and international cooperation initiatives related to enhancing water resources management. Given the increased variability and vulnerability of river flows, and as development drives the need for greater renewable and non-renewable energy production, the Group notes with interest that water for energy will also be an important consideration in water resources planning, which makes the work of the Agency in this area more important.

The Group also underscores that responses to increased demands for freshwater resources would most likely include a greater future dependence on the already stressed groundwater resources. The Agency has a great role to play in this regard, especially in improving groundwater assessment. The Group welcomes the collaborative effort between the Agency's water resources programme and other organizations to collect, collate, and visualize hydrogeological and groundwater information at a global scale.

With these remarks, the Group takes note of the Nuclear Technology Review for 2009.

Thank you Madam Chair.

Item 6: Term limits for the Director General

Madam Chair,

The Group of 77 and China takes note of the request by some Member States to consider the issue of setting term-limits on the position of Director General.

While the Group supports any efforts which could contribute to improving governance and management in the Agency, the Group would like to express that it is not in a position to take any decision or to engage in substantive discussions on this matter at this stage due to the late distribution of the above mentioned request which requires an adequate analysis of the relevant legal and statutory aspects by all Member States.

The Group is of the view that any decision on this matter must be separate from the current process of election of the next Director General of the Agency.

Thank you Madam Chair.

Item 7: Follow-up to decisions on personnel matters taken up by the UN General Assembly

Madam Chair,

The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Director General for his report in document GOV/2009/4 on the Follow up to decisions on personnel matters taken by the United Nations General Assembly and the proposals for changes to the current net base salary scale for staff members in the Professional and higher categories on a no loss /no gain basis.

The Group also wishes to thank DDG David Waller for introducing this agenda item, and notes the suggested changes in order to bring the base/floor salary scale for staff members in the Professional and higher categories into line with the corresponding scale of the comparator, i.e. the United States Federal Civil Service, as the General Assembly approved with effect from 1 January 2009.

The Group notes that to ensure that the consolidation is implemented on a no loss/no gain basis, there will be a corresponding reduction in the post adjustment multipliers.

On this basis, the Group recommends that the Board approves the revised salary scale as shown in the Annex of the document GOV/2009/4 for promulgation by the Director General and approve consequential changes to the annual gross and net base salaries of the Director General as indicated in paragraph 7.

Thank you Madam Chair.

Agenda Item 8: Any Other Business (Fuel Assurances)

Madam Chair,

On the issue of the proposals related to assurances of supply of nuclear fuel, the Group reiterates that there is a need for a cautious approach with a view to addressing thoroughly the associated technical, legal, financial and economic aspects, as well as possible political dimensions of this issue. In this context, the Group remains of the view that it is premature for this subject to be considered before the various unresolved aspects and concerns have been adequately examined.

The Group is of the view that, given the current financial and administrative challenges being faced by the Agency, extreme caution is also required before further burdens are imposed on Member States as a result of the activities that might be carried out in connection with these initiatives.

The Group further stresses that concerns related to nuclear proliferation should not in any way restrict the inalienable right of all States to develop all aspects of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes, in particular given its relevance for the sustainable socio-economic uplift of developing nations.

The Group reiterates its strong rejection, in principle, to any attempt aimed at discouraging certain peaceful nuclear activities on the grounds of their alleged "sensitivity".

Furthermore the Group believes that any decision in this regard, if needed, must be taken by consensus. The Group reiterates that any proposals in this regard should not be contradictory to the inalienable right of States to develop nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes as stipulated in the Statute.

Thank you Madam Chair.