



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA AT THE IAEA BOARD OF GOVERNORS - 20 MARCH 2000 DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR LUIS GARCIA PERAZA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA ON BEHALF OF H.E. AMBASSADOR FRUCTUOSO PITTALUGA-FONSECA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF URUGUAY

Item 3(a) Nuclear Safety Review for the year 1999

The Group of 77 and China commends the Secretariat for the preparation of document GOV/2000/5 entitled "Nuclear Safety Review for the year 1999" and thanks the Deputy Director General of the Department of Nuclear Safety for introducing it. 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. In particular, it appreciates the strong commitment expressed by the Contracting Parties of the Convention on Nuclear Safety in its first review meeting to the overall objectives of the Convention.

The Group of 77 and China commends the role of IAEA in updating and expanding the safety standards, and the publication and approval of a number of Safety Requirements and Safety Guides during the year. The application of safety standards is primarily a national obligation of the Member States but could have transnational consequences. Hence, the Agency should continue to provide all possible assistance in their implementation in the Member States. The support extended to the developing Member States by the Technical Cooperation programme in safety related activities, and the progress, in particular, on the Model Project on upgrading radiation and waste safety infrastructure, is highly appreciated.

The Group is concerned about further accidents resulting in the exposure of non-radiation workers to radiation sources left abandoned or unattended. It indicates that the management of the institutions using these sources requires further education, specially strict compliance with the regulations, regarding their safe-keeping or disposal after use. Similarly, lessons must be learnt from the accident at Tokaimura which resulted in the exposure of workers and members of the public to high neutron doses. It underscores the need for the extension of rigorous safety procedures to nuclear installations of all types.

The Group has always emphasized that exchange of information is most crucial for the development of safety culture. It is, therefore, happy to note that the Secretariat has taken cognisance of its recommendation last year regarding an increase in meetings and training activities. The organization of four international conferences, one more than the last year, and 80 national, regional and inter-regional training events, 12 more than the previous year, on various safety related issues is highly appreciated.

The number of Coordinated Research Projects in the area of safety remains about the same as the last year. The Group firmly believes that these should continue at least at the same level in the year 2001 and that there should be no reduction in the outlay for this activity in the budget for that year.

The Group would urge the Secretariat to continue its work on the safety of the small and medium size reactors as well as the safety of reactors used for the generation of electricity and desalination of sea water.

The Group of 77 and China is also glad to see a reference in the document to the inherently safe High Temperature Gas-cooled Reactor designs. It would encourage the Agency to accelerate work on the safety aspects of innovative reactor designs, such as the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor as well as reactors for coupled co-generation. Such an activity is most essential for the early design and fabrication of prototype systems which are of importance to the developing countries in view of their smaller size, in-built safety and economic viability.

As a result of the proposal by G-77 the Secretariat has belatedly brought out Part 1 of an INF document on Nuclear Technology Review comprising the subjects of Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Sciences and Applications. However, the Group would emphasize that it considers these issues at the same footing as Nuclear Safety and Safeguards. It is, therefore, recommended that Nuclear Technology Review be given the status of a full-fledged Board document and discussed as a separate agenda item in the Board meeting and the General Conference.

With these observations the Group takes note of the Nuclear Safety Review for the year 1999.

Comments of the G-77 & China on the DG's Introductory Statement

The G-77 and China would like to express its appreciation to the Director-General Dr. El Baradei on some of the subjects mentioned in the statement. The G-77 & China welcome the MoU between IAEA and OECD/NEA as a measure for enhancing efficiency and reducing costs for research and development activities in which both organizations have a stake. The Group also appreciates the efforts of the DG in enhancing transparency on the issue through the briefing by the Secretariat and by raising this issue in his statement and recognizes his prerogative in arriving at such understandings. However, the G-77 and China feel that not enough time has been provided for an in-depth study of the MoU and particularly for obtaining comments and instructions from our respective capitals. The Group would therefore like more time to present its response to the document. While reassured in the briefing by the Secretariat that the results of all activities would be available to all, the group is still concerned as to whether the NEA/OECD would address the activities of importance to our members. The Group notes the need to ensure that the MoU is implemented faithfully, and in full, and that it does not in any way dilute the essence of the work of the IAEA which is the sole international organization with broad membership set up for the promotion of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Moreover, in the view of the Group, this MoU is a very important issue which should be discussed at a future meeting of the Board before any decision is taken to approve such cooperation between the IAEA and the NEA/OECD.

As a result of the proposal by G-77 and China the Secretariat has brought out Part 1 of the INF document "Nuclear Technology Review". We welcome the initiative of the DG in the regard. Based on an initial reading of the document GOV/INF/2000/5/Part 1, the Group appreciates the contents and layout of the document which has clearly brought out the nuclear picture worldwide and addressed all issues, particularly sustainable energy management apart from a perspective view to the future. However, this document could include more scientific input and analytical review to help policy makers in our capitals to arrive at appropriate energy mixes for their respective countries. As stated earlier, the Group recommends that Nuclear Technology Review be given the status of a full-fledged Board document and discussed as a separate agenda item in the Board Meeting. The comments could then be forwarded to the General Conference on an annual basis as is being done in the case of the Nuclear Safety Review.

The Group would like to extend its appreciation to the Director-General for his report on "the development of integrated safeguards". The Group would like to mention that due to the important elements contained therein which merits careful reflection by the group, and due to the late issuance of the report, the Group would therefore wish to comment in detail on the report during the coming June Board.