



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA STATEMENT DURING THE IAEA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE, STARTING ON 19 NOVEMBER 2018
DELIVERED BY MS. VERÓNICA GOMEZ, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I., PERMANENT MISSION OF ECUADOR

Vienna, 19 November 2018

Agenda Item 2: Technical Cooperation: The Agency's proposed Programme for 2019

Madam Chair,

1. The Group would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing the Agency's Proposed Technical Cooperation Program for -2019, as contained in documents GOV/2018/44, as well as Deputy Director General, Mr. Dazhu Yang, and the staff of the Department of Technical Cooperation for the briefing provided to Member States on October 30th. We also thank DDG Yang for his introductory remarks under this agenda item. [not to be read]

Madam Chair,

2. The Group reiterates the paramount importance of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Program (TCP) as the main vehicle for the Agency's statutory function of encouraging and assisting research on, and development and practical application of, atomic energy for peaceful uses throughout the world. The Technical Cooperation Program plays an important role for the sustainable socioeconomic progress in developing countries and contributes towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. The Group also reiterates that the Technical Cooperation Program is a shared responsibility and that, as such, it has to be the result of the combined efforts mainly of the Department of Technical Cooperation, of the technical Departments and of Member States themselves. These efforts are crucial for the planning and successful implementation of the Technical Cooperation Program, which is based on the needs and evolving priorities of those Member States in which TC projects are implemented. In this regard, the Group reiterates that "the nature, extent and scope of technical assistance to be provided to the requesting State or group of States shall be defined by the Government or Governments concerned", as is the established practice and is reflected in paragraph (f) of the Revised Guiding Principles and General Operating Rules to Govern the Provision of Technical Assistance by the Agency (INFCIRC/267), and in preambular paragraph (k) of Resolution GC(62)/RES/8. The Group is of the view that this important principle should continue to guide the provision of Technical Cooperation by the Agency and requests the Secretariat to reflect it explicitly in future proposed Programmes, in particular in the section on the programming process.

Madam Chair,

4. The Group notes that the implementation of the 2019 portion of the 2018–2019 TC programme remains unchanged from the budget figures provided in documents GOV/2017/45/Add.1 and GOV/2017/45/Add.2. The Group further notes that Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) target for 2019 is €86.2 million, as per the recommendation submitted to the Board of Governors (GOV/2017/27). The Group also notes that a rate of attainment of 92% has been used as a basis for calculating the resources that are expected to be available and that this Committee is consequently expected to recommend the sum of up to €81,515,252 to the Board for approval. The Group emphasises the importance of the TCF in the implementation of the TCP and while appreciating the continued commitment of Member States over the years, reiterates its call on all Member States to pay their contributions in accordance with the indicative scale of assessment in full and on time.

The Group welcomes the rate of attainment of 97.7% for 2017 and requests the Secretariat to continue working closely with Member States to achieve high-level rates of attainment on payments to the TCF.

5. The Group reiterates its view that the resources available for the TC Programme should be sufficient, assured and predictable to meet the objectives mandated in Article II of the Statute, and should be increased taking into account the Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs), the increasing number of Member States with a national TCP, the evolution in the level of the regular budget, the Board's decision of June 2016 to place the appropriate emphasis on the Agency's activities directly related to the implementation of the SDGs in Member States, the large unfunded components of TC projects in Member States, also termed as footnote a/ projects, the price increases and other relevant factors.

6. The Group notes that the total Footnote-a/Activities amounted to almost €64.7 million in 2018 and to over €56.2 million in 2019, which shows that the current level of resources available falls far short of the resources needed. The Group further stresses the importance of maintaining an adequate balance between the Agency's promotional and non-promotional activities.

7. The Group emphasizes the importance of the activities directly related to the implementation of the SDGs, in accordance with national priorities during the preparation of the Programme and Budget Proposal 2020–2021, and aware of the need for sufficient, assured and predictable resources. The Group requests the Secretariat, when presenting the draft Budget Update for 2020/2021. The Group also requests the Secretariat to provide information on efforts to address the gap between needed resources and available resources for 2020 and beyond.

Madam Chair,

8. The Group recalls the report of the Director General entitled Addressing the Challenges Facing Least Developed Countries in the Peaceful Application of Nuclear Energy through the Technical Cooperation Programme (GOV/INF/2016/12), which was published in October 2016, and reiterates the request to the Secretariat to continue examining in depth the specific characteristics and problems of the LDCs with respect to the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and, in this regard, also to continue to address this matter and to report accordingly in the TC Reports.

Madam Chair,

9. The Group would like to seize this opportunity to note ongoing consultations with Member States on the preparation of the 2018 Ministerial Conference on nuclear science, technology and applications for peaceful uses, and their delivery to Member States through the Agency's TC programme, while highlighting their future contribution to sustainable development. In this regard, the Group welcomes the efforts of the Co-chairs, the Ambassadors of Costa Rica and Japan and looks forward to continue working with the co-chairs, the Secretariat and other Member States to deliver a Conference that is consistent with the spirit and intention of the processes that called for the Conference. The Group is of the view that this Ministerial Conference, organized and coordinated jointly by the Department of Technical Cooperation and the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications, in collaboration with any other relevant technical Departments, should reflect the gains and challenges of the Agency's Peaceful Uses activities while reaffirming the shared aspiration of Member States to support the Agency in meeting the objectives mandated in Article II of the Statute.

10. With regard to the issue of the due account mechanism, the Group is of the view that, in striving to achieve the goal of increasing the rate of attainment, the principles of fairness, neutrality and universality should be preserved. The Group also believes that the application of the Mechanism should be done in a manner that does not adversely affect the TC Programme. In this regard, the Group notes the ongoing consultations led by the Co-facilitators, the Ambassadors of Morocco and Slovenia, the Group will continue to follow the work closely. The Group is of the view that any progress on this subject should depend on

dialogue, consensus and the decisions of the Policy Making Organs and the Group highlights the need for additional information on this issue and is of the view that the organization of technical briefings would contribute to the consideration of the matter.

11. With these remarks, the Group joins the consensus in having the Committee recommend to the Board the actions listed in the Agency's proposed Technical Cooperation program as contained in document GOV/2018/44, and requests that its views and comments be duly reflected in the official records of the TACC meeting.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Agenda item 3: Evaluation of technical cooperation activities in 2018

Madam Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China wishes to thank the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for presenting its evaluation of the Agency's technical cooperation activities in 2018, as contained in document GOV/2018/45. The Group also thanks the OIOS for the technical briefing organized on November 13th.
2. The Group continues to attach great importance to the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to strengthen the Agency's ability to ensure management efficiency and programme effectiveness, and to enhance accountability.
3. The Group of 77 and China notes that, every year, approximately one third of OIOS's evaluations focus on technical cooperation (TC) related activities and thematic areas. The Group further notes that the overall cost of OIOS's TC-related evaluation activities in 2018 amounted to €546 288 and that this was equivalent to 0.64% of the Technical Cooperation Fund target for 2018. The Group stresses that the OIOS should, in the course of their regular work and within resources allocated to these offices from the Regular Budget, evaluate projects, in a balanced manner across all major programmes.
4. In this regard, the Group encourages the OIOS to perform evaluations of the activities of the other departments in the Agency, so that evaluation activities are applied in a balanced manner across all major programmes. The Group stresses the importance of a balanced allocation of resources for evaluation purposes between TC-related activities and other activities of the Agency, which require similarly intensive evaluations, since these activities account for a larger portion of the Agency's budget. Given the increasing demands on the Agency's budgetary, human and other resources, the Group encourages the OIOS to carry out its audit and evaluation functions in an effective and judicious manner, utilizing opportunities for synergies presented by other existing audit, evaluation and assessment mechanisms in the Agency and in the Member States.
5. The Group notes that three of the TC-related assignments completed in 2018 were based on the Country-level Evaluation and Audit (CLEA). The Group would appreciate receiving information on the added value of CLEAs for the work of the OIOS. The Group would also like to receive information on the criteria used by OIOS to select countries and thematic areas for evaluation.
6. With regard to Part B of the document, on "Common Findings across Evaluations Completed in 2018", the Group notes that the Department of Technical Cooperation has worked on past OIOS recommendations that focused on the need to improve the timeliness, quality and value of project monitoring and that, in response, it has introduced an electronic PPAR system for counterparts, replacing the previously paper-based submission process. The Group further notes "the significant improvement in the Project Progress Assessment Reports (PPAR) submission rate for national projects, as evidenced across this year's CLEAs".

7. The G-77 appreciates that across all OIOS reports completed in 2018 and in preceding years capacity building activities were deemed to have filled pertinent knowledge gaps, with the enhanced capacity relevantly applied by participants upon their return to their workplaces. The Group also appreciates that, in several cases, this enhanced capacity has resulted in new services being offered in Member States.

8. The Group notes that the Report on the evaluation of technical cooperation activities in 2018 has made 30 recommendations which were accepted by the Secretariat. The Group took note of the evaluation that women continued to be underrepresented in Agency activities and requests the secretariat to continue its efforts to improve this situation. . The Group encourages the Secretariat to carefully examine these recommendations, and, where relevant, take necessary corrective measures. The Group notes with concern that: “the three CLEAs conducted in 2018 found that the Agency did not adequately seek or strengthen partnerships with relevant country offices’ of other UN organizations”.

9. With these comments, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the Evaluation of Technical Cooperation Activities in 2018, as contained in document GOV/2018/45, and requests that its views and comments be duly reflected in the official records of the TACC meeting.

Thank you, Madam Chair.