



STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA DURING THE IAEA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE (TACC), 26-28 NOVEMBER 2001 DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VICTOR G. GARCIA III, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PHILIPPINES, ON BEHALF OF H.E. AMBASSADOR S.H. SHOUKRY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF EGYPT

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to thank the Director General for his very useful introductory statement. I am also grateful to the DDG of the Department of Technical Co-operation for introducing the documents on the issue of Technical Co-operation. In addition, the Group records its appreciation for the preparation and submission of the documents GOV/2001/47, GOV/2001/47/Add.1, GOV/2001/48 and GOV/INF/2001/11.

The area of Technical Co-operation is of greatest importance to the Group of 77 & China. We appreciate the support provided by the Department in various areas of nuclear power and non-power applications, which contribute to the socio-economic development of members of the Group.

Agenda Item 2: Technical Co-operation - The Agency's proposed Programme for 2002

Mr. Chairman,

We have studied the document GOV/2001/47 and Add.1 containing the Agency's proposed Technical Programme for 2002. We are concerned about the number of Foot-note a projects which amount to almost 45% of TC programme and awaiting financial support. Some measures need to be taken to improve the situation.

Regarding the financial resources of the TC programme, we note that as at 31st October 2001, the rate of attainment is 78.3% as compared to minimum rate of attainment of 80%. We hope that the set rate of attainment of 85% of the TCF for 2002 will be met. We urge Member States and especially the developed countries to pledge and contribute to the TCF for 2002 at least amounts proportionally corresponding to the rate of attainment.

The Group takes note of the increased interest given to the regional projects in the core activities in the technical cooperation programme of the year 2002.

We appreciate Secretariat's efforts in increasing TCF income through recovery of Accumulated Assessed Programme Costs (APCs) from Member States who have not paid their APC contributions. We agree with the Secretariat's suggestion of a recovery plan similar to the plan for the payment arrears of assessed contributions to the Regular Budget.

We support the Secretariat's efforts to ensure optimum use of resources by the mechanism of over programming.

We hope that the due account principle would be applied by the Secretariat also to donor countries when placing orders for equipment, recruiting experts and selecting host for TC related events.

Our Group takes note with appreciation on the SAGTAC III recommendations on Country Programme Framework (CPF).

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China attaches great importance to the safety of radioactive and nuclear materials, which is fundamental to protect the public and reassure the concern of public opinion and thus help promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In this connection, the Group supports the efforts currently undertaken within the Agency in the field of safety and security of radioactive and nuclear materials.

Notwithstanding the high priority the G-77 and China attaches to nuclear safety and security, the Group strongly believes that the implementation of activities in these areas should take into account the need to avoid hampering the Technical Cooperation Program, whose priorities are defined by Member States, and which should be implemented according to the Statute and to the guiding principles established in INFCIRC/267 (1979).

As for the safety missions such as Operational Safety Review Team (OSART), Integrated Safety Assessment of Research Reactors (INSARR), International Regulatory Review Team (IRRT), and Transport Safety Appraisal Service (TransSAS), the G-77 and China believes that it would be more convenient if such missions could be financed from the regular budget, and not from the Technical Cooperation Fund.

Also with regard to financial aspects, the G-77 and China wishes to recall its initiative to modify the financial rules on the acceptance of voluntary contributions of money to the Agency, which was approved in resolution GC(45)/RES/9. The Group firmly believes that such extra voluntary contributions should be primarily directed to projects and activities that promote socio-economic development of Member States.

In this connection, the Group urges the Secretariat to undertake consistent efforts with a view to seeking extra-budgetary contributions, which, under the relevant financial rules, could be directed to the promotion of sustainable development. With regards to the target for 2003-2004 the Technical Cooperation Fund, the Group requests the Chairman of the Board of Governors to facilitate to find agreement among Member States for it to be endorsed in the next General Conference in 2002.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Item 3: Report on the implementation of Model Project for upgrading Radiation Protection Infrastructure

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China has studied carefully the Document GOV/2001/48 and would like at the outset to commend the Secretariat for its effort in assisting interested Member States to comply with international Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources (the BSS).

The G-77 and China is convinced that Radiation Protection is among the most important activities of the Agency and the Model Project provides an adequate tool for enhancing Member States capabilities to prevent and face any radiological hazard. However, since its inception in 1994, the Model Project has been implemented in 52 countries but the radiation protection law has been promulgated in 40 countries. In this regard, and while being aware of the difficulties that prevent its generalization such as lack of Member States Commitment and other factors, the Group believes that all Member States should be ideally able to implement Milestones 1 to 5 in order to comply with the International Basic Safety Standards. Nevertheless, the human dimension should not be left over while the Agency's experts are in the process of evaluating whether the recipient country asking for assistance for a radiation sources is in conformity or not with the requirements of BSS. In this regard, the G77 and China attaches a great interest to the peer review missions in requesting Member States of radiation sources and the ability of the country to use in a safe and secure manner such sources should be taken into account.

Mr. Chairman,

No matter how the Safety Standards are applied by a given country it might be meaningless if it does not have at its disposal the required expertise and trained personnel to handle the radiation sources in a safe and secure manners.

For these reasons, the Group is still convinced that training courses are as important as the 5 milestones of the Model Project. We call the Secretariat to continue assigning high priority to the area of promoting regional training centers and getting long-term commitment from Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

In this regard, the G-77 and China attaches great importance in peer review missions in Member States requesting the use of radiation sources and the ability of the country to use it in a safe and secure manner.

Mr. Chairman,

With these comments we take note of the documents GOV/2001/48 and adopt the required action in parag.32.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Agenda Item 4: Technical Co-operation Evaluation

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 & China has carefully studied the document GOV/INF/2001/11 and taken note of its contents. The Group is pleased that in spite of the recent substantial re-organization of the management structure and the loss of experienced evaluation personnel, all the tasks for 2001 as defined in last year's evaluation report was undertaken.

The Group takes special interest in the comprehensive evaluation of the Agency's TC activities from 1994 to 2000 related to education and training in radiation protection; and which had also included the activities funded by both Technical Co-operation Fund (TCF) and the Regular Budget (RB). The Group agrees to the importance of this particular area in addressing the needs of Member States and to identify the "best practices" and "lessons learned" that would strengthen future activities. It is gratifying to note that the Agency had achieved a good measure of success in transferring essential radiation protection skills and techniques. Although significant improvements have occurred relative to radiation protection infrastructure and good progress noted to establish basic safety standards in Member States, the Group supports the call for still much more work to be done to accomplish the objectives in particular in Member States of the Group. The Group also calls for a balance use of funding sources because of the fact that radiation protection is an activity to be funded also from the Regular Budget.

Some members of the Group themselves are hosts to post-graduate educational courses on radiation protection and safety of radiation sources viz. Argentina, India, Malaysia, Morocco, South Africa and Syria. In the establishment and development of sustainability in carrying out education programmes in regional training centres, the Group requests the continued sending IAEA trainees and requested experts annually to support the establishment of these identified centres. The Group fully supports all the 10 specific findings and recommendations contained in the report regarding this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

On a related note, the Group also wish to record its disquiet that beginning January 1, 2002, the personnel performing evaluation function for the Department of Technical Co-operation will move formally into a common, integrated unit under the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

The evaluation section of TC would be sadly missed but the Group also acknowledges that this move will not only lessen the responsibilities of the TC Department but also most importantly strengthen the evaluation function of the Agency's programme by ensuring independence and providing better coverage.

However, the move also spells further loss of personnel by the TC Department. The Group therefore requests assurance that this action will not affect the earlier reinforcement of personnel to efficiently and effectively manage TC programmes. With similar arguments, the Group suggests that the Director General should consider if the evaluation section of the Safeguards Department should now also come under OIOS to increase cost efficiency and strengthen the "one-house" approach.

This evaluation section which was then in TC Department was in the past instrumental in designing the current "Request form for Projects under the IAEA Regular Programme of TC" and associated request forms, simplified to facilitate its use by IAEA Member States requesting assistance and inter-alia to ensure that the almost all the appropriate data for a future project evaluation is recorded, flagged or collected. In this respect, the Group request that this new unit will continue to be participating to assist Member States from the beginning and not only participating in end-of-project evaluation. This request is on the basis that evaluation starts right from the beginning during the application stage.

Mr. Chairman,

On another issue but still related to evaluation, the Group wishes to focus on TC request forms and in this particular case, fellowship request forms. It has come to the Group's attention that many Member States in this Group experience that the specific section certifying the language proficiency of applicants has become a subject of non-recognition and that Member States receiving fellows for training require applicants to sit for additional established language proficiency examinations before consideration on the application could begin. This situation adds to many unnecessary late implementations. To many developing Member States, payments for such tests are not Member State's responsibility but of the applicants' because of its relatively high costs and the fact that its success may not even determine that the fellowship application will be placed anyway. TC recipient Member States are also stakeholders in ensuring that fellowship applicants are proficient in the language the training is requested to ensure full impact and benefit. In resolving this issue, it is therefore requested that all Member States recognize the language certification requirement stipulated in this form. Nevertheless, if further proof of language proficiency is required, the Group requests that the TC Department develops or adopts a language proficiency test system, which could be recognized by all and to be administered by National TC Liaison Officers on would-be applicants. Such a system would save time and costs and also provide a minimum standard for early language instruction intervention, if necessary, to ensure maximum benefit of the training and rapid consideration of the applicant. Such a test system is being run by current Agency's language courses for personnel to place them at the appropriate level for instruction.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.