



STATEMENT OF THE G77 AND CHINA DURING THE THIRD MEETING OF THE INFORMAL OPEN-ENDED PROCESS OF MEMBER STATES TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THE IAEA, DELIVERED BY ARGENTINA ON 29-30 APRIL 2009

Madam Chairperson,

The main points raised in the Group's statements during the previous two sessions regarding the general discussion and the discussions on the role of the Agency in promoting nuclear science and technology for development and environmental protection remain relevant for this session.

The Group has already expressed that it will focus on the promotional role of the Agency through technical cooperation during the discussions related to the first pillar, and that the financial and administrative requirements of enhancing this role will be a central and integral aspect.

Madam Chairperson,

The IAEA is the only international organization that is sufficiently equipped to foster international cooperation in the field of nuclear power. Due to obvious reasons related to the conditions of the fossil fuel resources and the challenges of climate change, the reliance on nuclear power is expected to grow exponentially in the future, especially in developing countries where the need for industrialization and growth will continue to increase considerably. The Agency must be in a position to properly respond to the growing needs of Member States, especially developing countries.

All Member States joined the Agency on the understanding that it aims to promote nuclear technology for peaceful uses. Nuclear power is not an exceptional case of nuclear technologies and the Statute does not distinguish between nuclear power applications and other applications.

While the Group is fully aware of the central importance of nuclear safeguards and safety as integral elements of the peaceful use of nuclear technologies, it strongly rejects the attempts by some Member States to reverse the order of priorities of the Agency by giving primacy to safeguards and safety considerations in a manner that leads to the restriction of the promotional role of the Agency. This is why the developing countries believe that some new terms such as the so-called "3Ss" are an attempt to undermine the priority that should be given to the primary promotional role of the Agency.

In this context, we expect that this session shall focus on substantial recommendations and proposals for the possible venues related to the development of the Agency's role in enhancing the contribution of nuclear power to development and environmental protection in the future.

In this connection, the Group is of the view that if the Agency is to enlarge the contribution of nuclear power to human well-being, TC funding must become more assured and predictable, and these resources must also increase substantially. Technical cooperation projects, including those related to this central and core statutory function, totally rely on extra-budgetary funding. This largely undermines the capabilities of the Agency in planning and implementing projects and responding to the growing needs of Member States. It is about time to see how to reverse this mistake of the past. Removing the voluntary nature of TC funding will be the best approach to tackle this long-standing issue.

Madam Chairperson,

There is a clear chronic lack of necessary funding for particular activities, especially those needed to assist

developing countries in assessing launching or expanding their national nuclear power programmes. In the same context, there are many attempts to minimize and reduce the capabilities and resources available to the Agency for activities related to the first pillar including MP1 based on arguments pertaining to streamlining, building partnerships, outsourcing, or "delivering as one". While a certain degree of streamlining could be achieved, the Agency has to maintain and enlarge activities related to its core competences to be able to implement its statutory functions and respond to the requests of Member States without being dependent on external factors. Therefore, the Group finds it necessary to maintain a sufficient level of in-house expertise and capabilities.

On the other hand, those Member States who have national policies against the reliance on nuclear power are in many cases trying to restrict and minimize the role of the Agency in this area in a manner that contradicts the Statute and the sovereign right of other Member States to cooperate in any peaceful activities. It should be recalled that the involvement of the Agency in national nuclear power programmes, upon request, provides a common benefit in the sense that it contributes to greater transparency and better assurances that these programmes are conducted in a safe and safeguarded manner.

It has also become obvious during the works of the TACC and the BoG that some Member States aim at restricting the Statutory functions in the areas related to actual capacity building through the provision of material, equipment and facilities.

Madam Chairperson,

The Group strongly rejects any attempts aiming at interfering in the order of development priorities set by the recipient Member States. Neither "donors" nor the Secretariat should interfere in the order of these priorities. Nonbinding instruments such as CPFs are solely meant to help the recipient State itself in assessing and revising its own priorities.

Another important question is whether the Agency is doing enough to spread the knowledge of what benefits nuclear power can provide for developing countries and what outreach activities are being done to raise awareness of the benefits of nuclear power.

Madam Chairperson,

The Group stresses that the role of the Agency under the first pillar, especially when it comes to nuclear power, has to visibly evolve beyond the black-box model of technology transfer. What is more needed is actual capacity building by transferring the know-how and developing the necessary infrastructures and human resources.

The Group wishes to highlight that out of the 31 countries that currently possess and operate nuclear power plants, 8 are developing countries. The existing power plants, including those in developing countries, have thus far established a remarkable safety and security record, indicating the significant contribution nuclear energy can have in the future energy mix.

The Group stresses that while some guidance documents provided by the Agency 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 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 the requirements of nuclear programmes should not be meant or perceived as the condition for introducing uniform nuclear policies in each and every Member State planning to launch or expand its nuclear power programme.

The future projections for global growth in nuclear power are encouraging, especially within the framework of the global efforts to reduce carbon emissions and to tackle the challenges of climate change. This calls for an enhanced role for the Agency in the future and it must have the human, technical and financial resources to deal with this projected surge. The Agency must strive to enlarge the contribution of nuclear power, as a clean, environment-friendly, safe and sustainable energy option, in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

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 the recently reported high levels of public acceptance of nuclear power in the developing countries where surveys were carried out. In fact the Agency can play a major role in enhancing public awareness and acceptance of nuclear power and its potential benefits.

The Group notes the growing reliance on evolutionary reactor designs. The Group values the efforts of the Secretariat to periodically assess and update the pros and cons of each type of reactor design and the different generations in order to disseminate this information to all Member States.

On the issue of 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 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 by the policy-making organs before the various unresolved aspects and concerns have been adequately examined.

In this regard, the Group further stresses that concerns related to nuclear proliferation shall 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 attempts aimed at discouraging certain peaceful nuclear activities, in particular those related to the fuel cycle on the grounds of their alleged "sensitivity".

Thank you Madam Chairperson.