



**G-77 and China Statements during the IAEA Board of Governors, 13-17
September 2021, delivered by H.E. Ambassador Alejandro Solano Ortiz, Permanent
Representative of Costa Rica**

Agenda Item 2: Nuclear and Radiation Safety

Madam Chairperson,

1. The Group of 77 and China wishes to thank Deputy Director General Lydie Evrard for her remarks under this agenda item, and commends the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security for the preparation of document GOV/2021/32-GC(65)/7, as well as for the work carried out between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, pursuant to the General Conference resolution GC (64) RES/10.

Madam Chairperson,

2. The Group attaches great importance to nuclear safety, a key element in any nuclear programme. While recognizing that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety rests with the States, the Group believes that the Agency plays an essential role in this field, as provided for in Article III of the Statute. The Group reiterates its emphasis that the Agency must retain a central role in nuclear safety, owing to its mandatory functions, its broad membership and its longstanding expertise.

3. The Group also stresses its principled position that nuclear safety and nuclear security considerations must not hamper the utilization of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

4. The Group highlights the importance of maintaining, improving and promoting nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety, and emergency preparedness and response worldwide, including during the challenges and restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Group appreciates the Agency's continuous efforts aimed at supporting Member States in sharing knowledge, expertise, technology and information on all aspects of nuclear safety. The Group also welcomes the Agency's activities aimed at supporting nuclear safety infrastructure development in Member States, upon their request. The Group requests the Agency to adapt itself to this new situation and to continue these activities, in spite of the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. The Group emphasizes the importance of building and strengthening capacities in all Member States, especially the developing countries. In this regard, the Group appreciates, in particular, the assistance provided by the Agency, upon request, to developing countries operating, expanding or embarking on nuclear power and radiation technology programmes in establishing or enhancing their national safety infrastructure. We value the activities related to building competence in the regulatory functions, improving leadership and management for safety and promoting safety culture. The Group requests the Secretariat to continue its efforts in assisting interested Member States in the development of capacities and technical skills in nuclear safety, as well as in strengthening the regulatory system and infrastructure needed for the development of nuclear energy.

6. The Group notes the importance of incorporation, where appropriate, of lessons learned from the 2011 Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, the experience of States in implementing the Action Plan, as well as the observations and lessons contained in the IAEA Fukushima Report and the principles of the Vienna Declaration, into the Agency's programme of work. In this

regard, the Group supports the continuation of the Secretariat's cross-departmental activities concerning strengthening nuclear safety.

Madam Chairperson,

7. The Group welcomes the continued assistance provided by the Agency to the activities of regional forums and related networks, including the Global Nuclear Safety and Security Network (GNSSN) and events focused on strengthening collaboration among national authorities, specialists, international organizations, forums and working groups. The Group requests the Secretariat to further pursue activities aimed at strengthening regional safety forums and related networks, as mandated by the General Conference.

8. The Group commends the Agency for the activities carried out in the field of radiation safety and environmental protection, including, *inter alia*, the organization of regional workshops, and appreciates, in particular, the Agency's continued activities aimed at strengthening radiation protection in medicine.

9. The Group attaches high importance to transport safety, and appreciates the involvement of the Secretariat in international efforts to discuss issues related to the transport of radioactive material. The Group supports continued efforts by the Agency to address problems related to denials of and delays in the shipment of radioactive material, particularly shipment by air and urges Member States to facilitate the transport of radioactive material, and to identify, if they have not done so, a national focal point on denials on shipment of radioactive materials to achieve a satisfactory and timely resolution of this issue.

10. The Group notes that the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated the challenges related to delays and denials of shipment of radioactive sources including medical isotopes, the Group calls on all Member States to facilitate to the highest extent possible, the shipment of these materials through their sea ports and airports and to minimize delays and denials even during this difficult period.

11. The Group takes note of the virtual Technical Meeting the Agency held on the Denials of Shipment – Issues and Solutions in March 2021, which provided a forum to discuss the options for addressing this denials of, and delays in, the shipment of radioactive material, as well as the virtual meeting held in May 2021 to define the Terms of Reference of a working group on this topic.

12. The Group notes the activities developed by the Agency in the area of decommissioning and environmental remediation, such as in support to Member States' decommissioning programmes by providing guidance and training material on safe decommissioning and the development of TECDOCs.

13. The Group commends the Agency for conducting advisory missions on the regulatory infrastructure for radiation safety, as well as for addressing radiation safety infrastructure in Member States that have expressed an interest in establishing or enhancing their cancer control capacity through integrated missions of the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (imPACT) review missions.

Madam Chairperson,

14. The efforts of the Agency in the area of education and training, and knowledge management in nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety are of foremost importance to the Group. We reiterate our support for the Agency's efforts to acquire, preserve and transfer knowledge and organizational memory in nuclear safety to Member States.

15. The Group appreciates the Agency's activities in the area of Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) and encourages the Agency to continue them. The Group highlights the

importance of supporting the work of regional forums and networks through the conduct of regional EPR workshops in Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

16. The Group takes note of the Formalized Process for the Sharing of the Information as States' Implementation of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its Supplementary Guidance (2019 edition) as well as the virtual technical briefing held in February 2021 to facilitate consultation on the formalized process. The Group underlines the voluntary nature of the Code of Conduct. The Group requests the Secretariat to brief Member States regarding its implementation.

17. The Group highlights the important role the Commission on Safety Standards (CSS) plays in providing guidance on the approach and strategy for establishing the Agency's safety standards and in endorsing for publication standards on nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety, in addition to emergency preparedness and response. The Group takes note of the virtual meetings the Commission and the affiliated Committees held during the reporting period, and looks forward to a return to physical format for future meetings, as soon as appropriate.

18. With these remarks, the Group of 77 and China takes note of document GOV/2021/32-GC(65)/7.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson

Agenda Item 3(a): Nuclear Security Report

Madam Chairperson,

1. The Group of 77 and China wishes to thank the Secretariat for preparing the Nuclear Security Report 2021, which covers the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, as contained in document GOV/2021/35-GC(65)/10. The Group also expresses its thanks to Deputy Director General Lydie Evrard for her introductory remarks under this agenda item, as well as to the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security for the technical briefing provided to delegations on 6 September 2021.

2. The Group reiterates its view that the responsibility for nuclear security within a State rests entirely with that State. The Group urges the Secretariat to always reflect this important principle in full in accordance with the Nuclear Security Resolutions.

3. The Group remains of the view that nuclear security considerations should not hamper the utilization of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and international cooperation in that regard, including through the Technical Cooperation Programme.

4. The Group recognizes the importance of coordination among the Agency's departments in development and implementation of its activities, and calls any effort in this regard to be done in full respect of all the positions presented by the Group in particular regarding the allocation of resources for the Technical Cooperation Programme.

5. The Group concurs with the notion that the role of the Agency in enhancing nuclear security and the scope of its activities must be determined by Member States, as reflected in the Board decisions and General Conference resolutions, with due account of the need to ensure an appropriate balance between activities in the promotional and non-promotional areas. The Group notes that successive General Conference resolutions have affirmed the Agency's central role in assisting Member States for strengthening the nuclear security globally and in coordinating international activities in the field of nuclear security. The Agency has responded to these GC resolutions by organizing or participating in a number of major meetings and coordination efforts. The Group appreciates the Agency's efforts in this regard and requests

the Secretariat to provide more information in this respect in its future Nuclear Security Reports.

6. The Group appreciates the Agency's continued efforts to assist Member States, upon their request, to build and develop their nuclear security capacity which include facilitating adherence to and implementation of relevant international legal instruments, developing nuclear security guidance and supporting States in the voluntary implementation of the guidance, and helping States in the establishment of effective, sustainable and comprehensive national nuclear security infrastructure.

7. The Group welcomes the voluntary reporting of Member States to the Agency's Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB). The Group notes that the Agency does not have the mandate or capability to verify such reporting. The Group also notes the information provided by the Secretariat on external users of the ITDB and their access level and on the occasions where the Agency shared the information from the ITDB to States.

8. The Group requests the Secretariat to continue to provide further reassurance that the information, including on the ITDB, is handled with care, especially those with sensitivity and confidentiality.

9. With regard to public communication, while the Group welcomes the ongoing efforts by the Secretariat to improve communication with the public and Member States about its Nuclear Security activities, the Group stresses the importance of preserving and protecting the confidential information relevant to such activities.

10. The Group appreciates the continued efforts of the Agency to develop and implement Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plans (INSSPs) to assist Member States, upon request, in applying a structured and holistic approach to nuclear security improvements including through capacity building and increased coordination, while also stressing that such information should be handled with care, especially those with sensitivity and confidentiality.

11. The Group welcomes the continued improvement of the Nuclear Security Information Portal (NUSEC). The Group also notes improvements made to NUSEC including the continued enhancements of the IPPAS Good Practice Database, the International Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres (NSSC Network) database, and the common calendar to provide information on all training courses and other events hosted by NSSC Network members.

12. The Group further notes the continued maintenance and update of the Nuclear Security Information Management System (NUSIMS), a web-based platform for States to perform nuclear security self-assessment on a voluntary basis.

13. Recognizing the growing requests of Member States for the Agency's support in information and computer security, the Group appreciates the Agency's efforts in responding to those requests through developing additional nuclear security guidance and providing a number of training courses.

14. The Group also reiterates its appreciation to the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee, the Interface Group, the Advisory Group on Nuclear Security, the International Nuclear Safety Group and the Secretariat for their work on and contributions toward the Agency's Nuclear Security Series publications. The Group notes the Secretariat's efforts to facilitate the participation of Member States in the process of development and review of the Agency's Nuclear Security Series publications. The Group reiterates its call on the Secretariat to facilitate a broader participation of representatives from developing countries in its meetings to ensure greater transparency and consensus in the development and review of such publications.

15. Concerning the Agency's advisory services, the Group notes that the Agency's International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) mission was conducted, upon request, in Member States and that the Agency began implementing the new guidelines for International Nuclear Security Advisory Service (INSServ) mission.

16. Regarding human resource development, the Group appreciates the Agency's continued support of comprehensive human resource development activities to ensure the sustainability of national nuclear security regimes, including the International Nuclear Security Education Network (INSEN) and International Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres (NSSCs).

17. The Group notes that, during this reporting period, many training and capacity building activities were converted to virtual format, not just to offset COVID-19 related travel restrictions, but also with an aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these activities via the use of webinars and other virtual tools, which are expected to continue when normal levels of international travel resume. The Group also notes that the Agency has provided instructor-led training to over 5400 participants from 114 States and e-learning modules to 1200 users from 126 States. The Group further encourages the Secretariat to enhance its activities oriented at capacity-building in Member States, particularly developing countries, thus helping to ensure their adequate human resources.

18. The Group takes note of the Agency's activities, undertaken at the request of Member States, in the area of risk reduction and security improvement. The Group calls on the Secretariat to continue its efforts aimed at strengthening the capabilities of Member States in this regard, including in the areas of threat characterization and assessment, the promotion of nuclear security culture, nuclear material accountancy and control, transport security, and nuclear forensics, among others.

19. The Group takes note of the Agency's continued efforts to prepare for the establishment of a training and demonstration centre in Seibersdorf, which will be used for the demonstration of equipment and technologies related to nuclear security, as well as the organization of training activities on the implementation of nuclear security systems and measures. The Group underscores the need to maximize the potential benefits of this centre, while avoiding duplication and overlap with the activities of Nuclear Security Support Centres (NSSCs) in Member States. The Group requests to be kept abreast of the planning of extra budgetary resources needed for the long-term sustainability of the centre.

20. The Group is of the view that the Secretariat should avoid ambiguous language in its reports that can be interpreted in different ways and requests the Secretariat to use a language that reflects the broader views of the Agency's Member States.

21. The Group notes the Agency's main goals and priorities concerning nuclear security for 2021-2022, which include preparations for the next International Conference on the Safe and Secure Transport of Nuclear and Radioactive Materials to be held in December 2021, and the continued preparations for the Review Conference of the CPPNM and its 2005 Amendment to take place in March 2022.

22. With these remarks, the Group takes note of the Nuclear Security Report 2021.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Agenda Item 3(b): Nuclear Security Plan

Madam Chairperson,

1. The Group of 77 and China underscores the great importance it attaches to nuclear security as well as the Nuclear Security Plan 2022-2025, as it will set the tone for the IAEA's engagement on Nuclear Security for the next four years. We look forward to its adoption during the current session of the Board.
2. The Group wishes to express its appreciation to you Madam Chairperson, and to your team, for the efforts exerted in response to the Group's letter dated 13 August 2021, and the concerns outlined therein. We appreciate the effort to achieve the desired consensus on the Nuclear Security Plan (NSP), by convening an additional round of consultations to ensure that the document before us reflects the views of Member States and enjoys consensus. The Group wishes also to thank the Secretariat for its efforts in implementing the current NSP 2018-2021, and for the work done in drafting the initial NSP 2022-2025.
3. The Group commends the constructive and open approach that Member States have taken, in particular in the run-up to and during the final round of consultations, which was a perfect display of an overwhelming desire to uphold the Vienna Spirit of Consensus, and to reach an agreement on the NSP 2022-2025 ahead of adopting it today.
4. The Group underscores the significance and value of the NSP, which is why it is important that the document reflect consensus agreed by Member States, given that ultimately the IAEA is a member state-driven organisation. We therefore hold the deep conviction that the NSP must be the result of a thorough consultation process. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case and therefore the Group is of the view that the process of developing the NSP requires further adjustment and improvement, in order to bring it more in line with all the other policy development processes of this organisation. While the Group acknowledges the pivotal role the Secretariat plays in preparing the NSP drafts, it is of the strong view that future consultations must be led by Member States – similar to how the programme and budget is developed every year. The Group will therefore present a proposal to this end in the Nuclear Security Resolution next year.
5. With these remarks, the Group Approves the Nuclear Security Plan 2022–2025, and the continuation of voluntary funding for the activities included therein, as well as its transmission to the 65th General Conference.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Agenda Item 4: Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications

Madam Chairperson,

1. The Group of 77 and China thanks the Secretariat for the report on Agency activities in the area of nuclear science, technology and applications, as contained in document GOV/2021/27-GC(65)/3, in response to General Conference resolutions GC(64)/RES/12 and GC(63)/RES/10. (Not to be read).
2. The work done by the Agency in nuclear power and non-power applications highlights the need to continue increasing the transfer of nuclear technology and the sharing of nuclear knowledge to developing countries so as to enhance their capabilities and thus contribute to maximizing the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Group urges the Agency to continue to provide training and education, to support national and regional laboratories and institutions and to further enhance the coordinated research activities. The Group also welcomes the contributions made by Member States to various Agency projects, and encourages all Member States, in a position to do so, to continue providing such support through the Agency.

3. On Annex 1, related to the ‘General’ part of the non-power nuclear applications, the Group recalls the successful outcomes of the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology, co-chaired by Costa Rica and Japan in November 2018 and its Ministerial Declaration. The Group reiterates its position that the Agency should organize a follow-up International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme in 2023. In this regard, the Group looks forward to participating in consultations due to start as early as possible, with a view to holding the conference as scheduled.

4. The Group welcomes the assistance provided by the Secretariat during the COVID-19 pandemic, in response to requests from more than 300 medical and veterinary laboratories in 128 countries and territories, through providing them with relevant kits and equipment, as well as conducting webinars and virtual training events. The Group also welcomes the ongoing cooperation with the World Health Organisation in this regard.

5. The Group notes with appreciation the progress made in the area of human health and medical radioisotopes and radiopharmaceuticals production, as well as the strengthening of Agency’s relationship with WHO. The Group also appreciates the Agency’s continued efforts to work with Member States’ Collaborating Centres, to implement its programmatic activities and promote the practical use of nuclear techniques, requests the Secretariat to increase the number of Collaborating Centres from developing countries. The Group further appreciates the Agency’s support in facilitating effective research through Coordinated Research Projects (CRPs) to allow research institutes in both developing and developed Member States to collaborate. Recognizing the positive impact of CRPs in the Technical Cooperation Programme, and their resulting publications, the Group urges the Secretariat to further ensure benefits from possible synergies and avoiding duplication in this regard.

6. On Annex 2, related to the “Support to the African Union’s Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign (AU-PATTEC)”, the Group appreciates the Agency’s continuous efforts to support the AU-PATTEC Plan of Action through TC projects providing training, expert services and equipment to countries in the African region affected by this problem. The Group takes note of the assessment that tsetse flies and the trypanosomosis problem constitute one of the greatest constraints on the African continent’s socio- economic development, affecting the health of humans and livestock, limiting sustainable rural development and thus causing increased poverty and food insecurity. The Group encourages the continuation of the Agency’s support toward the AU PATTEC initiative to eradicate tsetse and Trypanosomosis from the African continent through the creation of sustainable tsetse and trypanosomosis free areas. The Group encourages Member States to contribute additional funds in order to ensure the sustainability of the programme.

7. On Annex 3, in relation to the “Renovation of the Agency’s Nuclear Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf”, the Group commends the efforts of the Secretariat, Friends of the ReNuAL and Member States of the Agency, in mobilizing resources from traditional and nontraditional donors, including through an initiative to seek further private sector partners utilizing the UN Global Marketplace portal. The Group takes positive note of the conclusion of the Concept design planning for the main elements of ReNuAL 2, including the FML-2 building, greenhouses, and Dosimetry Laboratory refurbishment, and looks forward to launching the construction of FML-2 building in early 2022. The Group also welcomes the operationalization of the new Yukiya Amano Laboratories (YAL) at the IAEA laboratories in Seibersdorf. The Group is further pleased to note that the YAL building, which houses the Animal Production and Health Laboratory has continued to provide invaluable support to Member States in fighting transboundary and zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19. The Group encourages Member States in a position to do so, to contribute to ReNuAL 2.

8. On Annex 4 related to the “Development of the Sterile Insect Technique Package for the Management of Disease Transmitting Mosquitoes”, the Group appreciates the Agency’s continued efforts, in particular the Joint FAO/IAEA and the IPCL in Seibersdorf, to develop, validate, and optimize the sterile insect technique (SIT) package as a complementary tool for the management of mosquito populations. The Group notes that mosquito-borne diseases remains among the most severe threats to the health of millions of people worldwide. In this regard, the Group encourages the Agency to continue to pursue its efforts to develop SIT package for mosquitos to effectively combat disease-transmitting mosquitos. The Group encourages Member States to contribute additional funds in order to ensure the sustainability of the programme.

9. On Annex 5, “Strengthening the support to Member States in food and agriculture”, the Group commends the Agency for the work carried out in response to a demand of technical assistance from Member States that remains high in the area of nuclear applications in food and agriculture delivered including through CRPs and technical cooperation projects. The Group appreciates the efforts done in development and enhancement of laboratory networks including the VETLAB, RALACA, AFoSaN, FSA and MBN networks. The Group further welcomes the Agency’s securing of extrabudgetary funds for this important area.

10. The Group commends the signing of the Revised Arrangement for the FAO–Agency partnership in February 2021, which upgraded the Joint FAO/IAEA Division to a Centre and expanded the horizons of their cooperative work, including the improvement of monitoring and controlling of transboundary animal, zoonotic and plant diseases” as a key area of the partnership between the two organisations that will contribute the IAEA’s ZODIAC project. The Group encourages the new Joint Centre to continue its efforts to increase the contribution of nuclear science and technology to raising agricultural productivity and sustainability, and also to respond major global trends framing agriculture development, including the adaptation to and mitigation of the effects of climate change.

11. On Annex 6, the Group appreciates Agencies activities related to the “Use of Isotope Hydrology for Water Resources Management”. The Group notes the Agency’s efforts to strengthen isotope hydrology activities, with a focus on research, training, protocol development and analytical services to expand the use of groundwater age dating with isotopes to map water resources. These efforts include the upgrading of isotope hydrology laboratories (IHL), expanding activities related to the IAEA Water Availability Enhancement (IWAVE) Project, and strengthening activities which contribute to the understanding of climate and its impact on the water cycle. The Group commends the Agency for its activities aimed at expanding access to isotope techniques and capacity building.

12. On Annex 7 related to the “Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) Project”, The Group reiterates its support for this project as approved by the 64th General Conference in its resolution GC/64/RES 3, and underscores its deep belief that it shall be Member States driven, in line with their needs and priorities. The Group welcomes the Secretariat’s decision to devote the General Conference Scientific Forum this year to the topic of enhancing the role of nuclear science in preparing for zoonotic outbreaks. The Group stresses the need to focus on inclusivity through the involvement of Member States in the development and implementation of the Project. In this regard, the Group takes note of the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action updated document issued on 1 September as well as the informal technical briefing held on 9 September 2021 on the progress in the implementation of the project, and underlines the importance of continuing the dialogue and engagement with Member States on the important topic. Moreover, it is essential that the Resolution of the General Conference is fully implemented, including the call for regular technical briefings and engagement with the Board of Governors, as well as a separate and detailed, Progress Report on the development and implementation of project.

13. The Group is fully convinced of ZODIAC's positive implications, however, it would like to comment on the possible impact of its implementation on other Technical Cooperation Projects, including unfunded projects in footnote a/. In this regard, we call on the Agency to focus on strengthening its efforts at mobilization of additional resources.

14. On Annex 8, "Plan for Producing Potable Water Economically Using Small and Medium Sized or Modular Reactors", the Group supports the various activities undertaken by the Agency to assist Member States in developing sea water desalination using nuclear energy and to collaborate with international organization in this area. The Group appreciates the comprehensive compilation of activities in this regard in various Member States of the Agency. The Group encourages the Secretariat to continue to support Member States in the conduct of innovative projects involving non-electric applications of nuclear power.

15. The Group takes note of the Secretariat's NUTEC Plastics initiative, which aims at assisting Member States in integrating nuclear and isotopic techniques to address challenges related to plastic pollution, through providing them with science-based evidence to characterize and assess marine microplastic pollution and demonstrating the use of ionizing radiation in plastic recycling to transform plastic waste into reusable resources. The Group also notes the ongoing TC projects and CRPs related to this initiative and welcomes the virtual events and roundtables that the Secretariat has held with Member States, in order to provide them with an important platform to discuss the IAEA ongoing efforts in this field.

Madam Chairperson,

16. The Group believes that nuclear energy will make an increasing contribution to the sustainable development of human kind throughout the 21st century and beyond. The Group further notes the role played by nuclear power in reducing greenhouse gas emissions while ensuring a reliable source of energy, and its contribution to addressing climate change issues and to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Group also welcomes the Agency's growing contributions to support interested Member States in mitigating the challenges of climate change through Nuclear Power and Nuclear Techniques, and takes note of the IAEA preparation to participate in the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26).

17. The Group notes with appreciation the efforts exerted by the Secretariat in supporting interested Member States in the field of nuclear power application, and its continuous engagement with stakeholders in charge of Nuclear Power Program, in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Group also highlights the work done by the Secretariat in providing guidance and capacity building to interested Member States in managing the nuclear fuel cycle, and radioactive waste, as well as enhancing the different aspect of the research reactor life cycle, and strengthening excellence for the safe, secure, efficient, and sustainable operation of nuclear power plants and their life management, including decommissioning.

18. The Group values the support provided to Member States embarking on or expanding a nuclear power programme, upon their request, in particular through a variety of advisory and peer review missions, including the Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR) missions. The Group takes note of the rescheduling of some of the advisory and peer review missions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

19. The Group notes the postponement of the next International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century, is scheduled to take place in the United States of America in October 2022. The Group looks forward to a successful conference with a view to advancing the role of nuclear power in meeting future energy demands, contributing to sustainable development and mitigating climate change. The Group attaches importance to regular convening of this Conference and looks forward to interested Member States from the G-77

hosting the Conference in the future, given the growing number of embarking States on Nuclear Power Programmes within the Group.

20. The Group acknowledge with appreciation the organization of the 28th IAEA Fusion Energy Conference (FEC2020), in cooperation with the CEA and the ITER Organization, which gathered over 4200 participants from around the World. The Group notice that, after years of intensive research and development, significant steps have been made towards making fusion a future source of energy and encourage the Secretariat to further strengthen its activities in this area of fusion technology development.

21. On Annex 14 “Agency Activities in the Development of Innovative Nuclear Technology”, the Group reiterates the highest importance it attaches to the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO), as a relevant forum gathering technology holders and users with the aim of achieving innovations in nuclear reactors and fuel cycles. The Group welcomes the growing number of the INPRO Member States from the group, and notes with appreciation the developing of multiple Collaborative projects and CRPs in the framework of INPRO, while reiterating its call for continued support for INPRO from the Regular Budget.

22. On Annex 16, “Small and Medium-sized or Modular Reactors – Development and Deployment”, the Group underscores the important role these reactors as an option for enhancing energy availability in both expanding and embarking countries, as they are better suited to the small electrical grids of some developing countries. This is in addition to the great potential of the use of SMR technology for non-electric applications. The Group take notes the different activities undertaken by the Agency, such as the approval of new coordinated research projects, the organization of technical and consultancy meetings, and the development of related publications and training material.

23. The Group reiterates its support for the initiative launched by the Director General, titled “Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme (MSCFP)” through which the IAEA could accord a 2-year scholarship for up to 100 female graduate, pursuing master degree in nuclear science and technology or non-proliferation, with a view to promoting gender equality and diversity in the context of nuclear knowledge management. The Group reaffirms its commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and hopes that this new initiative will help advance this cause. The Group was also satisfied to see that, as stated in the concept paper of the initiative, geographical balance will be a part of the selection criteria for the fellowship.

Madame Chairperson,

24. The Group welcomes the Director General report on the International Status and Prospects for Nuclear Power 2021, as well as the briefing made by DDG Michael Chudakov in this regard. The Group highlights the importance of this report as an important document to enhance the international visibility of nuclear energy, and reflect the growing global recognition of nuclear energy in achieving net zero emissions and enabling Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

25. The Group takes note of the variety of data and information presented in the report that showcase the status of nuclear power today, its high prospects in the future, the technology advancements that took place over the last four years, as well as the different factors and challenges that impact the future deployment of nuclear power plants and reactors, including the availability of funding, fuel sustainability, human resources development and the regulatory frameworks. The Group looks forward to further discussing how to address these challenges during the upcoming International Nuclear Power Conference scheduled in October 2022. The Group also welcomes the efforts of the IAEA in promoting the role of nuclear power including

through organising the first international Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power.

Madam Chairperson,

26. The Group would like to highlight that as a result of the difficulties and restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic this year, parts of the General Conference resolution on “Strengthening the Agency’s activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications” (annexes 4, 5 and 6) that were scheduled to be presented and adopted at the 64th General Conference have been postponed to the 65th General Conference and requests that they be maintained as its agenda items. In this regard, in the part of the resolution on “non- power nuclear applications” drafted by the G-77 and China, the annexes on “Development of the sterile insect technique for the control or eradication of malaria-, dengue-, and other diseases transmitting mosquitoes”; “Strengthening the support to Member States in food and agriculture”; Use of isotope hydrology for water resources management; and “Plan for producing potable water economically using small and medium-sized nuclear reactors” will be postponed. The Group underscores its keenness to introduce substantive updates to these parts, and enter into through and comprehensive negotiations thereon, in preparation for the 66th General Conference.

27. With these comments, the Group takes note of document under this agenda item (GOV/2021/27-GC(65)/3).

Thank you, Madam Chairperson

Agenda Item 7: Other matters arising from the Sixty-third (2019) and the sixty-fourth (2020) regular sessions of the General Conference: (b) Personnel matters: (i) Staffing of the Agency's Secretariat and ii) Women in the Secretariat

Madam Chairperson,

1. The Group 77 and China would like to thank the Director General for his reports contained in GOV/2021/37-GC(65)/18 and GOV/2021/38-GC(65)/19, on Staffing of the Agency's Secretariat and Women in the Secretariat, respectively.

2. The Group notes the Secretariat's continuing efforts to improve, pursuant to General Conference resolutions, its recruitment practices with regard to staff members from developing countries, particularly of women, and from other G-77 Member States, which are unrepresented or underrepresented in the Secretariat.

3. The Group notes that during the period 1 June 2019 to 1 June 2021, 31.6% of all 209 appointments came from developing Member States, and that 29.4% of the senior staff came from developing countries. Both figures represent a decrease with respect to the previous biennium. Therefore, the Group remains concerned that this percentage is still inadequate, and encourages the Secretariat to exert more effort to increase the number of staff, including senior staff, from developing countries.

4. The Group notes the Secretariat's projection indicating that, as a result of staff retirements and the application of the rotation policy, the Secretariat can anticipate 317 vacancy notices over the next 7 years. In this regard, the Group urges the Secretariat to take advantage of this opportunity and work with Member States in order to fully implement General Conference resolutions on recruitment and staffing. The Group welcomes the information that 45.2% of the applications received by the Agency through its new web-based application system for advertised agencies come from developing countries. In addition to proactive measures mentioned in the Director General’s report, the Group requests the Director General to ensure transparency in the Secretariat’s selection process.

5. The Group welcomes the information that the Regular Budget consultant expenditure has decreased by 5.4 % compared to the first year of 2018-2019 biennium as a response to the Group's request that the Agency rationalize the policy of hiring consultants. However, the Group continues to note with concern the relatively low percentage of consultants from developing countries holding Special Service Agreements. In this regard, the Group requests the Agency to continue its efforts to rationalize the policy of hiring consultants, exercise transparency in their selection and, when necessary, to hire them, apply the policy of equitable geographical distribution, and to continue to identify the nationalities of consultants holding Special Service Agreements in future reports.

6. Finally, on the recruitment of women, the Group welcomes the information that the percentage of professional women in the Agency's Regular Staff is now at its highest level in the Agency's history at 35%. The Group welcomes also the significant progress on gender representation at the senior grade levels in DDG, D1 and P5, whereby the percentage of women has increased, now reaching 40% at the DDG level, 36.6% at the D1 level and 23.7% at the P5 level. However, we note with concern that the D2 level has experienced a decrease in the representation of women by one position during the reporting period.

7. The Group appreciates the important steps taken to enhance the representation of Women at the Agency over the reporting period, including the Director General's announcement to establish a goal of achieving gender parity in the Professional and higher categories by 2025, as well the launch of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme (MSCFP), with the aim of helping increase the number of women in the nuclear field, supporting an inclusive workforce within the Agency. The Group welcomes the progress made in implementing this initiative.

8. The Group also takes note of the Secretariat's work with Member States to encourage applications by well qualified female candidates to Professional posts. The Group, however, wishes to emphasize that implementation of the General Conference resolution on Women in the Secretariat should not prejudice the implementation of the General Conference resolution on Staffing of the Agency's Secretariat.

9. With these comments, the Group notes the documents GOV/2021/37-GC(65)/18 and GOV/2021/38-GC(65)/19.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Agenda Item 8: Any other Business

Madam Chairperson,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China to thank you Madam Chairperson for your successful Chairmanship of the Board of Governors between the 64th and 65th sessions of the General Conference. The Group of 77 commends you and your team for your dedication and hard work over the past year. We wish you all the very best in your future endeavors.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson