



**G-77 and China Statement during the Technical Assistance and Cooperation
Committee, 22 November 2021, delivered by H.E. Ambassador Alejandro Solano Ortiz,
Permanent Representative of Costa Rica**

Agenda Item 2: Technical Cooperation, The Agency's Proposed Programme for 2022-2023

[Not to read] The Group would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing the Agency's Proposed Technical Cooperation Program for 2022-2023, as contained in documents GOV/2021/45, Add 1, Add 2 and Mod. 1 as well as Mr. Hua Liu, Deputy Director General, and the staff of the Department of Technical Cooperation for the briefing provided to Member States on November 4th. We also thank DDG for his introductory remarks under this agenda item.

Mr. Chair,

1. Firstly, the Group would like to express its appreciation for the active participation of the IAEA and DG Grossi in the recent United Nations 2021 Climate Change Conference (COP26) held in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November 2021. The Group welcomes the efforts of the Agency during the Conference in promoting peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy and other nuclear applications and techniques as a means to help mitigate and adapt to Climate Change and achieve zero carbon emissions.

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. The Group commends in this regard the important role the Technical Cooperation Department plays in carrying out the TCP as mandated by the IAEA Statute.

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 (l) of Resolution GC(65)/RES/10. 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.

Mr. Chair,

4. The Group notes that Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) target for 2022 is € 91.075 million, as decided by the General Conference in September 2021, and that for 2023 it is €92.6 million as per the recommendation submitted to the Board of Governors (GOV/2021/25). The Group also notes that a rate of attainment of 94% 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 €85,610,500 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 also requests the secretariat to work 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 amount to almost €53.3 million in 2022 and to over €44.2 million in 2023. This is in addition to Footnote-a/Activities related to the recent proposed Interregional TC project on 'Strengthening Member State Capacities to Combat Banana Fusarium Wilt (TR4) which amounts to almost €5 million, as well as Footnote-a/Activities for the TC project on Supporting National and Regional Capacity in Integrated Action for Control of Zoonotic Diseases", which amounts to over €16.1 million in 2022 and almost €16.7 million in 2023. All these figures show that the current level of resources available falls 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 welcomes the efforts exerted by the Secretariat to adapt to challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the increase of procurement activities u, as per the requirements of Member States with national TCP, to ensure a high implementation rate. The Group also requests the extension of the implementation of the outstanding projects of the TCP cycle 2020-2021 beyond their lifetime, with a view to ensure that the planned outcomes and objectives of these projects are achieved.

8. The Group stresses that the implementation rate of the current TC cycle, which is impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, should not affect future budget considerations and that the goal of achieving sufficient, assured and predictable resources shall be always a priority.

9. The Group also welcomes the decision taken by the 65th Session of the General Conference, as mandated in GC(65)/RES/10 on convening a follow-up to the 2018 Ministerial Conference on nuclear science, technology and applications and the Technical Cooperation Programme in 2023 with a view to convening it every four years thereafter, and requests the Secretariat to commence consultations with Member States in preparation for the Conference as soon as possible.

10. The Group appreciates the important steps taken to enhance representation of women in the Secretariat, reaffirms its principle of equitable geographical distribution and gender balance,

and reiterates that this principle should be reflected in all the Technical Cooperation activities of the IAEA. The Group takes this opportunity to continue requesting the Secretariat to significantly improve equitable geographical distribution and gender balance within the Agency at all levels of responsibility.

Mr. Chair,

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/2021/45, as well as Add 1, Add 2 and Mod. 1, and requests that its views and comments be duly reflected in the official records of the TACC meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Agenda item 3: Evaluation of technical cooperation activities in 2021

Mr. 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 2021, as contained in document GOV/2021/46. The Group also thanks the OIOS for the technical briefing held on November 2nd.

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 takes note of the evaluation results of the four CLEAs undertaken in 2021, with the intention of helping to strengthen the management of TC activities through systematic solutions. In this regard, the Group takes note of the increase of number of countries covered by CLEAs from three in 2020 to four in 2021 given that they were partly undertaken in a virtual format, and due to the difficult circumstances brought by COVID-19, and underlines the need to further increase the country coverage from four to six as previously agreed. The Group would also like to reiterate the importance in receiving information on the criteria used by OIOS to select countries and thematic areas for evaluation.

4. The Group welcomed the continued decrease of the overall cost of OIOS's TC-related evaluation activities in 2021 (€517 475 in relation to €569 371 in 2020). 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.

5. 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 evaluation, 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.

6. The Group further notes that the Report on the evaluation of technical cooperation activities in 2021 has made 17 recommendations, which were all accepted by the Secretariat. The Group would like to draw attention, on the matter that specific efforts are needed to be taken to incorporate a gender equality perspective within outcomes and indicators and requests the Secretariat to continue its efforts to improve this situation. The Group takes note that the Secretariat is already working on the implementation of the 17 recommendations made.

7. The Group takes positive note that only 2 Programme Evaluation Recommendations are overdue this year in comparison to 9 overdue recommendations last year. We note that 44 Internal Audit Recommendations were also overdue this year. It is pertinent to note that the overdue recommendations for both the Programme Evaluation and Internal Audit are not related to TC activities and that they are Agency wide activities. Such a fact underlines the importance of striking a balanced approach in evaluating all the activities of the Agency. The Group requests the Secretariat to continue working towards the implementation of these recommendations, as appropriate.

Mr. Chair,

8. The Group takes note of the key cross-cutting findings and recommendations highlighted in the synthesis report on the TC projects design phase, which outlines, inter alia, that the majority of the funding support for Member States was used for the procurement of equipment. The Group underscores the importance of ensuring the sustainability of the TC procurement process, with a view of avoiding a negative impact on the delivery of the TCP. The Group underlines that such support under the TCP is Member States driven and shall be based on their needs and priorities. Furthermore, the Group requests the Secretariat to start activities aimed at migrating iVetNet to a Secretariat-managed infrastructure.

9. The Group notes that the CLEAs conducted in 2021 highlight the need for enhanced strategic coordination and cooperation between the Agency and other relevant UN organizations. The Group welcomes the partnership agreements signed with relevant organizations with a view to address this issue.

10. The Group appreciates the important steps taken to enhance representation of women in the Secretariat, reaffirms its principle of equitable geographical distribution and gender balance, and reiterates that this principle should be reflected in all the Technical Cooperation activities of the IAEA. The Group takes this opportunity to continue requesting the Secretariat to significantly improve equitable geographical distribution and gender balance within the Agency at all levels of responsibility.

11. With these comments, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the Evaluation of Technical Cooperation Activities in 2021, as contained in document GOV/2021/46, and requests that its views and comments be duly reflected in the official records of the TACC meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.