



Statement of the Group of 77 and China during the IAEA Informal Programme and Budget Committee Meeting, on 3 February 2022, delivered by H.E. Mr. Azzeddine Farhane, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Morocco

Mr. Chairperson,

1. The Group would like to thank the Secretariat for the Agency's Draft Budget Update for 2023 contained in GOV/2022/1 and for the presentation provided today.
2. The Group maintains its principled position with regard to the Regular Budget, which calls for a balanced distribution of the budget so as to reflect the equal importance of the three pillars of the Agency, namely (a) the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear technology, including technical cooperation, (b) safety and (c) safeguards.
3. The Group notes that the draft budget update for 2023 proposes no changes to the Agency's programme for 2022-2023 biennium as approved in the Agency's Programme and Budget 2022-2023 and that it represents zero real growth over 2022 with a 1.7% price adjustment in the regular budget. The Group further notes that the update envisages no changes to the Major Capital Investment Plan (MCIP). The Group welcomes that cost saving and efficiencies worth €10.7 million are expected through reductions in staff and travel costs. We appreciate the efforts by the Director General and the Secretariat to uphold the commitment to maintaining staff costs at 75% of the operational regular budget, as a means to address the trend of increasing staff costs observed in the last decade. At the same time the Group underscores the need to ensure equitable geographical distribution and gender balance among the Agency's staff, or the participation of experts. The Group also reiterates its view that cost savings measures and efficiencies should not negatively impact promotional activities of the Agency in particular delivery of the Technical Cooperation Programme, or the participation of experts from the developing countries in the Agency's activities.
4. Concerning possible options for the ASHI liability funding mechanism, the Group looks forward to further update from the Secretariat in the first quarter of 2022.
5. The Group welcomes the allocation of €1.6 million from the Regular Budget to the ReNuAL 2 initiative. The Group supports the efforts to complete the initiative in 2023 and calls on the Secretariat to continue to pursue a project-specific resource mobilization strategy. We welcome the vital role that the Nuclear Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf play in providing support to Member States.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.