



**G-77 and China Statements during the IAEA Board of Governors, 13-17 September 2022,
delivered by H.E. Mr. Azzeddine Farhane, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of
Morocco**

Agenda Item 2: Programme Performance Report for 2020-2021

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group of G77 and China, would like to thank the Director General for his introductory statement and the Secretariat for preparing the Programme Performance Report 2020-2021, contained in document GOV/2022/36, and reaffirms that the Agency's programmatic activities should continue to be implemented in accordance with the objectives of its Statute.

2. The Group is pleased to note that the Secretariat continues to take various measures to strengthen the implementation of results based approach to programme planning and looks forward to the implementation of actions based on Agency-wide lessons learned. The group notes that all Major Programmes, in the operational portion of the Regular Budget for 2021, had a utilization rate from 97.9% to 100%, demonstrating high usage of the funding provided. The Group further notes that the Agency met 74 of 86 target indicators, or 86%, at the programme level for 2020-2021, while seven are slightly below target and five are far below. The Group notes that some targets not fully reached were a result of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and in this regard, encourages the Secretariat to take further actions to ensure business continuity and institutional resilience to cope with similar challenges in the future, taking into account the lessons learned and experience gained during the pandemic.

3. On Major Programme 1, the Group appreciates the Agency's continued assistance to Member States considering, planning or operating nuclear power plants, research reactors, small and medium-sized or modular reactor (SMRs), other advanced reactors, and fuel cycle facilities, as well as in nuclear science through various means of delivery, and looks forward to further refinements as brought out in the report. The group notes with satisfaction that the Agency's participation in COP26, contributed to the understanding of the role of nuclear power in addressing climate change. The Group looks forward to the Agency's participation in the upcoming COP27 in Egypt and COP28 in the UAE.

4. On Major Programme 2, the Group is pleased to note the continued support to Member States in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in the areas of food and agriculture, human health, water, the environment, and radioisotope production and radiation technology. The Group welcomes the significant progress in the Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories (ReNuAL). The Group particularly notes the contribution of the Joint FAO/IAEA Programme of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture in the development and deployment of nuclear applications for food security as well as in the Agency's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Group also notes the Agency's support in the fight against cancer, cardiovascular diseases, malnutrition and other diseases; in nuclear medicine and radiology; in water resources management; in marine monitoring and assessment; in the production and use of medical radioisotopes and radiopharmaceuticals; and in the application of radiation technologies,

radiotracers, non-destructive testing (NDT) and nucleonic gauges in health, industry, cultural heritage and environment.

5. On Major Programme 3, the Group notes the support to Member States in their efforts to improve nuclear safety and security. The Group notes that the work will continue to strengthen the global safety and security framework through the publication and revision of standards and guidance, as needed, and promoting their application. The Group appreciates the Agency's activities supporting adherence to and implementation of relevant international instruments. The Group remains of the view that nuclear safety and nuclear security considerations should not hamper the utilization of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

6. On Major Programme 4, the Group notes the Agency's application of the relevant safeguards agreements, the updating and development of State-level safeguards approaches, and the Modernization of Safeguards Information Technology project. The Group notes the launch of the IAEA Comprehensive Capacity-Building Initiative for State Systems of Accounting for and Control of Nuclear Material (SSAC) and State or Regional Authorities Responsible for Safeguards Implementation (SRAs) (COMPASS).

7. On Major Programme 5, the Group notes the continued efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programme delivery. The Group stresses the importance of enhanced transparency and communication with Member States in the implementation of policy, management and administrative changes. The Group notes that the launch of the Ethics function contributes to promoting an ethical culture at the Agency while the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) provides recommendations for improving the Agency's work.

8. The Group notes that the Major Programme 6 continued to transfer nuclear and related technology to Member States through human and institutional capacity building and supported Member States in the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. The Group also notes that the rate of attainment on the payments to the TCF for 2020 and 2021, were 91.1% and 95.2% respectively. The Group emphasizes the importance of the TCF in the implementation of the TCP and 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 reiterates that the Technical Cooperation Programme is a shared responsibility and that its success depends on the combined efforts of the Department of Technical Cooperation, other relevant departments and Member States. These efforts are crucial for the planning and successful implementation of the Programme, which should be based on the needs, evolving priorities and ownership of Member States implementing TC projects.

9. The Group remains concerned that the resources available to the TC Programme are still not sufficient, assured and predictable (SAP) to meet the objectives mandated in Article II of the Statute, as called for by the General Conference repeatedly in its resolutions on technical cooperation. The Group also reiterates its call for sufficient human resources and adequate funding to be assigned to Major Programme 6, in order to facilitate the successful delivery of the Technical Cooperation Programme.

10. The Group takes note of Agency activities in cross-cutting issues such as resource mobilization, building partnerships and gender equality, as well as the launch of cross-cutting projects such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme (MSCFP), Zoonotic

Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC), and Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution (NUTEC Plastics).

11. The Group remains concerned over the asymmetry between the promotional and nonpromotional activities of the Agency, and therefore believes that sufficient funding from the regular budget must be secured for Major Programmes 1, 2 and 6 in order to respond to the growing needs of developing countries.

12. With these comments, the Group takes note of the Programme Performance Report for 2020-2021 as contained in GOV/2022/36.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Agenda Item 4: Nuclear and Radiation Safety

Mr. Chair,

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/2022/35-GC(66)/10, as well as for the work carried out between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022, pursuant to the General Conference resolution GC (65) RES/8.

Mr. Chair,

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 challenging circumstances such as those witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Group appreciates the Agency's continuous efforts aimed at supporting Member States, especially the developing countries, in capacity building and sharing of 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 build on the lessons learnt and experiences gained during the COVID-19 pandemic and enhances its resilience to continue these activities in the face of similar challenges in future.

5. 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.

Mr. Chair,

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 takes note of the virtual Technical Meeting held in August 2021 which discussed the situations that lead to the problem of delay or denial of shipment and developed draft Terms of Reference for the newly established Denial of Shipment Working Group (DoS WG).

11. 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.

12. The Group commends the Agency for conducting advisory missions on the regulatory infrastructure for radiation safety.

Mr. Chair,

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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. The Group also takes note of the Secretariat's efforts to optimize and streamline the processing times for publications within existing resources keeping in view the expected increase in safety standards publications over the coming three years.

16. With these remarks, the Group of 77 and China takes note of document GOV/2022/35-GC(66)/10.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Agenda Item 5: Nuclear Security

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China wishes to thank the Secretariat for preparing the Nuclear Security Report 2022, which covers the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, as contained in document GOV/2022/31-GC(66)/8. The Group also expresses its thanks to Deputy Director General Lydie Evrard for her introductory remarks under this agenda item.

2. The Group reiterates its view that the responsibility for nuclear security within a State rests entirely with that State. The Group expresses its strong concern that this important principle has not been reflected in the Nuclear Security Report in accordance with the Nuclear Security Resolutions and requests that this omission be rectified.

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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. The Group welcomes the voluntary reporting of Member States to the Agency's Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) and notes the ninth Triennial Technical Meeting of States' Points of Contact for the Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) was held in Vienna in April 2022 to exchange information between the Agency and ITDB points of contact. The Group notes that the Agency does not have the mandate or capability to verify such reporting.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. The Group appreciates the Agency's efforts in responding to requests of Member States for support in information and computer security through developing additional nuclear security guidance and providing training courses.
13. 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.

14. Concerning the Agency's advisory services, the Group notes that the Agency's International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) missions were conducted, upon request, in six Member States and that the Agency has begun implementing the new guidelines for International Nuclear Security Advisory Service (INSServ) mission.

15. 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).

16. The Group notes that during the reporting period, the Agency continued its training and train-the-trainers programmes which resulted in 6999 participants taking part in training and related events and that 1728 new users completed 3548 e-learning modules. 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.

17. 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.

18. The Group takes note of the progress towards the establishment of the Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre (NSTDC) at Seibersdorf. 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 takes note of informal technical briefings by the Secretariat on the progress related to the NSTDC and requests that the Member States may continue to be kept abreast of the planning of extra budgetary resources needed for the long-term sustainability of the centre.

19. 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.

20. The Group takes note of the International Conference on the Safe and Secure Transport of Nuclear and Radioactive Materials held virtually in December 2021 and the Conference of the Parties to the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material held from 28 March to 1 April 2022.

21. The Group notes the Agency's main goals and priorities concerning nuclear security for 2023 and beyond, as identified by the Agency and its Member States and in line with the Nuclear Security Plan 2022-2025, for strengthening nuclear security globally.

22. With these remarks, the Group takes note of the Nuclear Security Report 2022.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Agenda Item 6: Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications

Mr. Chair,

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/2022/30-GC(66)/9, in response to General Conference resolutions GC(65)/RES/11, GC(63)/RES/10 and GC(62)/RES/9.
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 2024. In this regard, the Group looks forward to participating in consultations due to start as early as possible.
4. The Group welcomes the continued assistance provided by the Agency, as a member of the UN Crisis Management Team, and in coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO), to Member States in fighting COVID-19 through the provision of equipment and training.
5. The Group notes with appreciation the continued 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 and 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.
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 which constitute one of the greatest constraints on the African continent’s socio-economic development. The Group encourages the continuation of the Agency’s support toward the AU

PATTEC initiative and also 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 that the procurement for construction of the new FML-2 laboratories building, Dosimetry Laboratory refurbishment, and foundation for the future greenhouses is ongoing and the tendering process for the third and final element of ReNuAL 2, the replacement of greenhouses will begin shortly thereafter. The Group is pleased to note that the Yukiya Amano Laboratories (YAL) building which houses the Animal Production and Health Laboratory has, since its full operationalization in 2020, continued to provide invaluable support to Member States in fighting transboundary and zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19 and Monkeypox. In light of the 60th anniversary of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories in Seibersdorf, the Group encourages Member States in a position to do so, to contribute to the replacement of greenhouses and finalization of ReNuAL 2 so as to ensure that the laboratories are fit-for-purpose and can meet the needs of Member States, well into future

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 and 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 continued demand-driven research and development activities on various important topics, in response to Member States’ requests. The Group appreciates the efforts done in development and enhancement of laboratory networks including the VETLAB, ZODIAC National Laboratories, RALACA, AFoSaN, FSA,MBN and Tephritid Workers Database networks. The Group further welcomes the Agency’s securing of extrabudgetary funds for this important area.

10. The Group commends the continuation of collaborative work between the Agency and the FAO following the signing of the Revised Arrangement for the both organizations partnership in 2021, which will enable the integration of the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre laboratories’ capacities into FAO’s work on One Health. The strengthened partnership will contribute to the Agency’s ZODIAC project The Group appreciates enhanced work undertaken by the Agency and the FAO on global initiatives, such as the Global Strategy for the Control and Eradication of Peste des Petits Ruminants, the Global Soil Laboratory Network, within the Global Soil Partnership; and the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The Group further encourages the 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 and related activities through the Animal Production and Health Laboratory in Seibersdorf, the VETLAB Network and supporting Member States through interregional TC project INT0098. The Group welcomes the coordination and cooperation with relevant international organizations such the WHO, FAO, WOA and UNEP, and encourages the Secretariat to continue strengthening their cooperation with international initiatives such as One Health and PREZODE relationships further. The Group also notes that over 50 bilateral meetings and 4 regional briefings were undertaken by the Secretariat. The Group further notes the informal technical briefing provided to Member States in May 2022 during which the ZODIAC portal which will serve as a valuable resource for ZNLs was launched. The Group appreciates the prompt response of the Secretariat to the outbreak of Monkeypox and Lassa fever, through a virtual workshop with experts from FAO and WHO, for Zodiac National Coordinators, Zodiac National Laboratories, and Permanent Missions.

13. The Group is fully convinced of ZODIAC’s positive implications and appreciates that over half of the extrabudgetary funds received and pledged towards ZODIAC have been dedicated to capacity building and training and the Group encourages the Secretariat to continue strengthening its resource mobilization efforts in this regard.

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.

Mr. Chair,

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. The Group appreciates the Agency's participation at the 2021 Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) recognizing that the role nuclear technology can play in both effectively mitigating and adapting to the increasingly severe consequences of the climate crisis. The Group encourages the Agency's continued engagement in high-level dialogue on nuclear energy and nuclear techniques and applications at COP27, to be held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt in 2023.

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 next International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century which 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. 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.

21. 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. The Group welcomes that the Agency is developing the Platform on Small Modular Reactors and their Applications, to ensure a cross-departmental approach and to provide the full array of Agency support and expertise on all aspects of the development, deployment and oversight of SMRs.

22. The Group reiterates its support for the initiative launched by the Director General, titled “Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme (MSCFP)” aimed at 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.

Mr. Chair,

23. 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, 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.

Mr. Chair

24. With these comments, the Group takes note of document under this agenda item GOV/2022/30-GC(66)/9

Thank you, Mr. Chair