



**Statement of the G-77 and China
during the March Board of Governors meeting
of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
06-10 March 2023,
delivered by H.E. Aftab Ahmad Khokher,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Pakistan**

Agenda item 3: Nuclear and Radiation Safety: Nuclear Safety Review 2023

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group expresses its gratitude to the Secretariat for preparing the Nuclear Safety Review 2023, as contained in document GOV/2023/2. The Group also thanks the Director General for his introductory statement, as well as Deputy Director General Lydie Evrard for her remarks and for the technical briefing offered to Member States on 20 February 2023.

Mr. Chair,

2. The Group is pleased to note the Agency's continued assistance to Member States has led to progress in the area of nuclear safety in 2022. While the Group reaffirms that the responsibility for nuclear safety within a State rests entirely with that Member State we reiterate that the Agency has a central role in coordinating international efforts to strengthen Nuclear Safety globally, by providing assistance through expertise and advice to Member States, upon request and through promoting Nuclear Safety standards globally.

3. In accordance with this belief, the Group welcomes the issuance of two General Safety Guides and fifteen Specific Safety Guides, the endorsement of eighteen draft Safety Guides and the approval of eight Safety Guides document preparation profiles for Safety standards in 2022.

4. The Group recalls the adoption, in February 2015, of the "Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety", which aims to strengthen nuclear safety worldwide through agreed principles to guide the Contracting Parties, as appropriate, in the implementation of the objective of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) with the focus on preventing accidents with radiological consequences and by mitigating such consequences should they occur. We call on the Agency to continue to assist Member States, upon request, in the implementation of the principles of the Vienna Declaration.

5. The Group reiterates the need for the Agency to uphold the principles of equitable geographical representation, workforce diversity and gender mainstreaming in all its activities. In this regard, the Group emphasizes the importance of the Agency continuing to support the participation of experts from developing countries, with a special focus on gender mainstreaming, particularly in the Safety Standards Committees, the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee, as well as the Interface Group.

6. The Group takes note that the report covers trends and priorities for all the nuclear safety related topics. In this regard, the Group would like the Secretariat to clarify their methodology in identifying the trends and determining the priorities in future Nuclear Safety Reviews.

8. The Group expresses its appreciation for the issue of guidance on the management of radionuclides in food and drinking water in nonemergency situations, requests the Secretariat to continue work to develop a technical document to set out radionuclide activity concentration values for non-food commodities, in consultation with Member States and relevant international organizations. We also welcome the growing awareness created through Agency webinars.

9. The Group recognizes the importance of and appreciates the assistance provided by the Agency to its Member States, upon request, in strengthening their national nuclear safety architecture, for both power and non-power application including regulatory infrastructure for nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety, and in the field of emergency preparedness and response.

10. Recognizing that around thirty Member States, many of which are members of the Group, are at different stages of initiating new nuclear power programmes, we encourage the Agency to increase support to such embarking Member States and recognize the importance of strengthening and expanding nuclear safety standards in this regard.

11. The Group emphasizes that capacity-building, including the development of human resources, expert training and the up-scaling of knowledge and capabilities are key to the establishment, as well as to the safety and sustainability of any nuclear program. The Group also notes that Member States continue to request support regarding their knowledge management and national capacity-building programmes. Therefore, it is essential that the IAEA continue to provide such assistance, upon request, on national, regional and international levels, to developing countries in building their expertise in the relevant technical areas.

12. The Group highlights the importance of the development of a safety culture. In this regard, we note that an increasing number of Member States are requesting assistance in further developing their leadership and management programmes for safety and continuous improvement process, including safety culture assessments. The Group further notes the Agency's activities aiming to assist Member States in their efforts to develop, foster and sustain safety culture.

13. In view of the increasing use of radiation and nuclear material and technologies, in Member States, the Group notes that there is a growing need for assistance in strengthening regulatory oversight, education and training programmes, guidance documents, peer reviews and advisory services from the Agency for the entire life cycle management. The Group encourages the Agency to continue to provide assistance, upon request, to Member States in these important areas and welcomes the regular organization by the Agency of national, regional, and international workshops, webinars and training courses for Member States on all relevant issues.

14. The Group appreciates that in 2022 the Agency conducted 58 peer review and advisory services across all aspects of nuclear safety including safety of nuclear installations, research reactors, fuel cycle facilities as well as regulatory effectiveness, infrastructure development programmes, and ageing management, among others. The Group also encourages the Agency to enhance the participation of experts from the developing countries in conducting such peer reviews and advisory services.

15. In view also of the increasing interest of Member States in small and medium sized or modular reactors (SMRs) on account of their potential contribution, in the fight against climate change, for States which choose to have a nuclear power programme and bearing in mind the

need to decrease greenhouse gas emissions, the Group notes the development of a new interregional TC project that aims to support Member States build their capacity on SMRs and calls on the Agency to continue supporting interested countries in the development and deployment of this emerging nuclear power technology. In this regard, the Group welcomes the development by the Agency of the Platform on Small Modular Reactors and their Applications, as well as the launch of the Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative (NHSI), which reflects Member States' interest in the harmonization of safety requirements and regulatory and licensing approaches as well as in the standardization of industrial approaches for SMRs.

16. The Group reiterates its concern, voiced at previous Board of Governors meetings, regarding the reference to applying a holistic approach to safety-security-safeguards by design for nuclear installations, in particular for SMRs. In this regard, the Group looks forward to conducting consultations with the Secretariat on this concept, while taking into consideration their various positions and legal commitments, and in accordance with the IAEA Statute and the GC resolutions

17. The Group notes the issuance of the Safety and Security Glossary (interim edition), which combines for the first time the Safety and Security activities. The Group understands that the Glossary is an internal document for the benefit of the Secretariat with no legal value, and underlines that such a combination shall be in line with the relevant GC resolutions, which recognise the distinction between Nuclear Safety and Nuclear Security.

18. Regarding the Radiation Protection of Patients, Workers and the Public, the Group notes that the Agency will assist Member States in their efforts to apply the principles of justification and optimization in circumstances where actions are being considered to reduce radiation exposure. The Group urges the Agency to continue to assist Member States in providing guidance, as well as in strengthening their processes for communicating of radiation risk to the public in planned and existing exposure situations and during an emergency.

Mr. Chair,

19. The Group notes that Member States show increasing interest in the Global Nuclear Safety and Security Network and IAEA CONNECT platforms, which allow for the exchange of information and various materials and publications among Member States. The Group reiterates that knowledge networks should always remain a core component of the nuclear safety capacity-building initiatives with the support of the Agency. The Group appreciates the Agency's continued support to regional networks, which include the Arab Network of Nuclear Regulators, the Asian Nuclear Safety Network, the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa, and the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies, as well as to thematic networks such as the Small Modular Reactor Regulator's Forum.

20. The Group is of the view that strengthening global nuclear safety depends on the full cooperation among Member States and relevant stakeholders. Vendors of nuclear technologies also have a responsibility to provide users with access to all information, know-how and tools necessary for safe operation.

21. The Group expresses its support for the Agency's work in continuing to build upon the 2011 Action Plan and Member States' experience in its implementation, as well as the IAEA Report on the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident, and the principles in the Vienna Declaration and take them into consideration for defining its programme of work in close

consultations with Member States. The Group requests the Secretariat to report periodically to the Board of Governors, in accordance with section 1 of Resolution GC(66)/RES/6.

22. The Group notes that the number of published Emergency Preparedness and Response Information Management System (EPRIMS) self-assessment modules increased in 2022 and that the regular analysis of the new information uploaded on EPRIMS allowed the Agency to review the progress made in technical cooperation projects and to identify global trends in national EPR arrangements based on Agency safety standards. Despite the meaningful work done by the Agency in the field of emergency preparedness and response, the Group notes that more work needs to be done. It, therefore, encourages continued cooperation and coordination between the Secretariat and interested Member States, in this regard.

23. 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. In this regard, the Group welcomes the establishment of a Working Group on “Denials of Shipment — Issues and Solutions” in 2022.

24. The Group welcomes the growth in the number of Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management (Joint Convention). In this regard, the Group welcomes the hosting in Vienna of the postponed 7th Review Meeting of the Joint Convention in 2022. The Group also encourages the Agency to continue preparations for the Joint 8th and 9th Review Meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety later this month, with the active participation of Contracting Parties.

Mr. Chair,

25. With these remarks, the Group takes note of the Nuclear Safety Review 2023, as contained in document GOV/2023/2.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Agenda Item 4: Nuclear Security: Nuclear Security Review 2023

Mr. Chair,

1. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to thank the Director General for his introductory statement and the Secretariat for preparing the draft of the Nuclear Security Review 2023 as contained in document GOV/2023/4 and for the informal briefing provided on 20 February 2023.

2. The Group notes that the second edition of the Nuclear Security Review reflects the global trends in 2022 and presents planned Agency activities for 2023 and priorities, as identified by the Agency and Member States, including through the Nuclear Security Plan 2022-2025, for strengthening nuclear security.

3. In this regard, the Group would like to reiterate the following principled positions.

- Firstly, the Group emphasizes that the responsibility for nuclear security within a State rests entirely with that State and that the Agency provides support to Member States in strengthening their national Nuclear Security capacity, upon their request.
- Secondly, while the Group recognizes the central role of the Agency in strengthening the nuclear security framework globally and in coordinating international activities in the field of nuclear security, it emphasizes that priorities of the Agency and scope of its activities in this field must be determined by Member States based on their needs and must be guided by the General Conference Resolutions on Nuclear Security. In this connection, the Group recalls and encourages the Secretariat to implement the provisions of paragraph 20 of the 2022 General Conference Resolution - GC(66)/RES/7 – which requests the Secretariat to assess, in collaboration with Member States, the value and complementarity of the Nuclear Security Review with the Nuclear Security Report, while taking into account available resources, and recommends that the Review be coordinated with the Report and the Nuclear Security Plan 2022-2025;
- Thirdly, the Group reiterates that nuclear security considerations should not hamper international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities, the production, transfer and use of nuclear and other radioactive material, the exchange of nuclear material for peaceful purposes and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy; and that it should not undermine the established priorities of the Agency's technical cooperation programme.

4. The Group reiterates its concern, voiced at previous Board of Governors meetings, regarding the reference to applying a holistic approach to safety-security-safeguards by design for nuclear installations, in particular for SMRs. In this regard, the Group looks forward to conducting consultations with the Secretariat on this concept, while taking into consideration their various positions and legal commitments, and in accordance with the IAEA Statute and the GC resolutions.

5. The Group further underscores that language and terminology employed in the Nuclear Security Review must adhere to the consensus achieved in the GC Resolutions and the Ministerial Declarations on Nuclear Security.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Agenda item 5: Strengthening the Agency’s activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications: Nuclear Technology Review 2023

Mr. Chair,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to express its appreciation to the Secretariat for preparing the Nuclear Technology Review 2023, contained in document GOV/2023/3. The Group also wishes to thank DDG Dr. Najat Mokhtar and DDG Dr. Mikhail Chudakov for introducing this agenda item and for the technical briefing provided to delegations on 20 February 2023.

2. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China under this agenda item. The full statement will be available online.

3. The Group attaches great importance to the significant contributions that nuclear technologies can make towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and their role in food security and safety; nutrition and human health, including disease prevention and control; animal health and production; environmental protection; water resources management; as well as in other fields related to the use of radioisotopes and radiation. These, among others, are areas where nuclear, nuclear-derived and isotopic techniques, are beneficial in supporting sustainable socio-economic development in many countries, which requires more efforts to tackle common challenges to promote post COVID recovery for achieving stronger, greener and healthier global development.

4. The Group reaffirms that the Agency, in accordance with Article II of the Statute, has a leading role to play in the promotion of these techniques among interested Member States, and encourages it to continue to provide its valuable support, including further promoting active roles of developing countries in contributing towards the development of equipment and techniques that can meet the needs of many Member States, while taking into account equitable geographical distribution and gender balance.

5. The Group stresses that the work done by the Agency in nuclear power and nuclear applications highlights the need to increase the transfer of nuclear technology and the sharing of nuclear knowledge, expertise and lessons learned to developing countries, including embarking and newcomer countries, to enhance their capabilities and thus contribute to maximize the benefit of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

6. In terms of Nuclear Power Technology, the group takes note with appreciation of the evolving global trends in this field as highlighted in details in the report, including, inter alia, the development of Small and Medium Sized Modular Reactors, advanced large Water Cooled Reactors, New Generations of Nuclear Power Plants, as well as various research reactors, other aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle, and non-electric applications. These developments are yet another important testament to the need to increase the transfer of nuclear technology and the sharing of nuclear knowledge, expertise and lessons learned to developing countries, including embarking and newcomer countries, to enhance their capabilities and thus contribute to maximize the benefit of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Group urges the Agency to continue to provide training and education, and to support national capacity-building efforts and to further support coordinated research activities, in this regard.

7. The Group acknowledges the positive contribution of nuclear power in climate change mitigation, energy security and its non-climatic environmental and socio-economic benefits. These are some of the important reasons why many countries, particularly developing countries, intend to introduce nuclear power in the coming decades, or to expand existing programmes. The Group thus urges the Agency to continue to assist interested Member States to analyze energy options and to support their capabilities to introduce nuclear power, while maintaining its leading role in the promotion of the transfer and development of technology and knowledge related to peaceful nuclear applications, including nuclear power and the nuclear fuel cycle.

8. The Group appreciates the Agency's participation at the 2022 Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) 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 COP28, to be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in 2023.

9. The Group notes that one Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR) mission was hosted in 2022. INIR and related missions provide a useful service in extending cooperation to Member States and the Group encourages the Agency to utilize experts from developing countries in these missions.

10. The Group reiterates its interest in the work of various technical working groups under the auspices of the Agency in the development of nuclear technology and in the dissemination of knowledge to Member States, inter alia, through Coordinated Research Projects, Collaborating Centres and regional cooperative agreements and requests the Secretariat to continue its support.

Mr. Chair,

11. Accelerators and research reactors continue to play an important role in building strong basic capabilities in the nuclear field, and in supporting related education, training and research activities in Member States. The Group appreciates the support provided by the Secretariat in its coordination of projects supporting research, hands-on training and experimental work in the field of accelerators, and encourages it to continue to provide such support, especially by making use of built-in capacity in many developing countries.

12. The Group highlights the importance of research reactors to interested Member States and their utilization for research and various applications, including education, training, research and isotope production, and calls for enhanced international cooperation to maximize their efficient use while noting that the efforts in this direction continue to grow. The Group urges the Agency to assist interested Member States that are building or planning to build new research reactors as they have shown that they remain indispensable for providing radioisotopes for medicine and industry, services for cultural heritage and environmental studies all whilst making a strategic contribution to education and training.

13. The Group welcomes the continued international collaboration, supported by the IAEA, to promote and enhance the utilization of research reactors for nuclear capacity building, including education and training, among other areas. The Group encourages the Agency to continue its

work of facilitation of regional networks and coalitions to help fostering international cooperation and enabling research reactors to expand their stakeholder and user communities.

Mr. Chair,

14. The Group attaches great value to the role of the Agency's Nuclear Applications laboratories at Seibersdorf, which have assisted Member States in enhancing their access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies since 1962. The Group appreciates the support already given by Member States to the ReNuAL and ReNuAL Plus projects, and as the project enters its final phase, ReNuAL 2, the Group calls on all Member States, in a position to do so, to contribute.

15. The Group values the Agency's assistance to Member States, especially to developing countries, in the field of medical applications, including through the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) and the Rays of Hope initiative. The Group is appreciative of the Agency's contribution to improving the overall cancer management worldwide, including, the diagnosis, treatment and control of cancer through, inter alia, the development and application of nuclear techniques. The Group notes that these nuclear techniques play an important role in fighting the global cancer epidemic. The Group also takes note of advances in positron emission tomography (PET), targeted radionuclide therapy, isotope-based theranostics and production of medical radioisotopes. The Group welcomes the partnership agreement signing between the Agency and eleven professional societies on cancer and looks forward to establishment of anchor centres to take this initiative forward.

16. On Food and Agriculture, the Group notes with interest, developments in the use of radiolabeling approaches to trace and measure antimicrobial substances. The Group takes note of the continuation of the works of the FAO/IAEA Center of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture and the work of the Joint IAEA-FAO Programme in strengthening the capacity of Member States in the detection, characterization, surveillance and control of transboundary animal and zoonotic diseases such as African Swine Fever, Foot-and-Mouth Disease, Ebola, Zika, Avian Influenza, MERS, SARS and COVID-19, through the use of radioisotopes and radiation technology. The Group appreciates the capacity building of some of the designated Zodiac National Laboratories (ZNLs) under the IAEA Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) project. Strengthening of the remaining designated ZNLs in need is essential for the success of the ZODIAC project.

Mr. Chair,

17. Recognizing the benefits and opportunities offered by the enhanced use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning and deep learning techniques in nuclear sciences and applications, the Group appreciates that the Agency is seeking to open dialogue and collaboration to promote the application of AI to nuclear science, techniques and technologies and encourages the Agency to promote technology transfer and knowledge sharing in this field, in order to better support its Member States.

18. The Group takes note of the progress in environmental Protection programmes, in particular the NUclear TEChnology for Controlling Plastic Pollution (NUTEC Plastics) initiative, launched in 2021, which builds on the Agency's efforts to deal with plastic pollution through recycling using radiation technology and marine monitoring using isotopic tracing techniques.

19. The Group recalls the successful International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology, co-chaired by Costa Rica and Japan, in November 2018 and its Ministerial Declaration. The Group looks forward to the commencement of consultations on the follow up International Ministerial Conference in 2023.

20. With these remarks, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the Nuclear Technology Review 2023, as contained in document GOV/2023/3.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Agenda Item 9- Appointment of the Director General

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China takes this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, a national of a Member State of the Group, on his appointment by the Board of Governors as the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency for a second term. The Group looks forward to his approval by the General Conference in September this year. The Group commends Mr. Grossi for his valuable work as the head of the Agency, in particular in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Group looks forward to the enhancement of the Agency's activities in this field, including in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The G-77 and China acknowledges the impartial, effective and professional manner with which Mr. Grossi has discharged his responsibilities as Director General of the IAEA. The Group assures the Director General of its full support and cooperation in discharge of his professional duties during his second term.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.