



Statement of the Group of 77 and China during the informal meeting of the Programme and Budget Committee, 6 February 2024, delivered by H.E. Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khoker, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Pakistan

Mr. Chairperson,

1. The Group would like to thank the Secretariat for issuing the Agency's Draft Budget Update for 2025 contained in GOV/2024/1 and for the presentation provided today.
2. The Group reaffirms 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 takes note of the draft budget update for 2025 and is studying it carefully.
4. The Group notes that the draft budget update for 2025 proposes no changes to the Agency's programme for 2024-2025 biennium as approved in the Agency's Programme and Budget 2024-2025 (GC(67)/5) and that it represents zero real growth over 2024 with a 2.2% price adjustment in the regular budget.
5. 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 areas of human resources and travel costs.
6. The Group appreciates 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 compliance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution and the attainment of gender balance among the Agency's staff, in accordance with GC(67)/RES/17, and the participation of experts in the Agency's activities, and, in line with the aforementioned principle, to increase the number of staff members from developing countries which are unrepresented or under-represented in the Agency's Secretariat, particularly at the senior and policy-making levels.
7. 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.
8. The Group firmly believes that there should be a balance between promotional activities and non-promotional activities and emphasizes that the Secretariat should increase its focus on the key aspects of the promotional activities which serve the interest of the Member States. The Group stresses the need for sufficient, assured and predictable resources for the TC Programme in order to achieve the objectives of the Agency, as laid out in Article II of the Statute.
9. Concerning possible options for the ASHI liability funding mechanism, the Group notes the implementation by the Director General of a set of cost containment measures as described in his 2023 report on ASHI. The Group looks forward to further update from the Secretariat on this matter, including the development of long-term measures.
10. Finally, the Group will keep engaging constructively in the discussion of the draft budget update for 2025.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.