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STATEMENT TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE BY THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE
TRADE UNIONS

Pursuant to Rule 3(d) of the Rules on the Consultative Status of Non-Governmental Organizations with the Agency,^{1/} the Director General is herewith transmitting to the General Conference for its information the attached written statement by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, a non-governmental organization, to which the Board of Governors granted consultative status on 1 July 1959.^{2/}

^{1/} INFCIRC/14.

^{2/} GC(IV)/INF/32.

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION
OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

1. The annual report of the Board of Governors to the fourth regular session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, reviewing the Agency's third year, shows an impressive amount of practical work done. Moreover the Agency has taken its place among the United Nations specialized agencies and its prestige in the scientific world is growing. This latter fact seems of great importance in view of the Agency's expanding tasks as adviser of Member States which are planning their atomic energy programs and are introducing appropriate legislation, as well as promotor and co-ordinator of research the world over.
2. The relative weights given to the principal fields of work appear in our view well balanced. The member organizations of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) have always supported the priority given to the needs of the economically and technically less developed areas and to the urgent task of setting up international standards in the fields of health and safety, protective regulations and third party liability.
3. The fast pace of progress in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy necessarily involves an increase of risks. It is therefore reassuring to note that the Agency is engaged in working out a comprehensive series of safety regulations designed to cover the uses of radioisotopes, the transport of radioactive substances, the operation of reactors and the disposal of nuclear waste. The Agency's priorities are moreover illustrated by the fact that out of a total of 41 research contracts placed in 1959, 29 are dealing with problems of radiation protection.
4. But besides expressing our general appreciation of the Agency's work and its direction, we wish to draw the attention of the General Conference to some remarks in the report which seem to us of particular importance. The first is the statement, that wide gaps still exist in our knowledge of the fundamental effects of radiation and that a large and co-ordinated research program on a world wide scale should therefore be undertaken.
5. Some health and safety measures will retain a provisional character as long as large areas of uncertainty prevail. The Agency should be encouraged to stimulate further research in this vital field.

6. The second remark mentions the proposal that the Agency should set up and maintain an international register of nuclear waste deposits in the sea. In view of the discussions at the Scientific Conference on the Disposal of Radioactive Wastes, held in Monaco in autumn 1959, which demonstrated the growing magnitude of the waste disposal problem, this proposal should also find general support.
7. The third point, which we should like to stress, deals with rendering international aid in cases of major nuclear accidents. Since long it has been the trade unions' view that serious nuclear accidents could not only cause damage extending beyond national borders and thus create problems of liability, but would in some instances also necessitate international action to cope with its consequences.
8. An analysis of the budget as proposed by the Board of Governors shows a satisfactory trend insofar as the expenditure on general administration decrease absolutely and relatively, while the amounts allotted to the actual tasks of the Agency increase correspondingly.
9. The increased expenditure planned on the preparation and dissemination of scientific information, including conferences, seminars, symposia and the Agency's fellowship programs, should enable the Agency to react favorably to a suggestion by the ICFTU already brought to the attention of the delegates at the first and second regular sessions of the General Conference. The ICFTU then suggested the inclusion in the Agency's educational program of the training of workers engaged in industries using radioactive substances or ionizing radiations and in nuclear installations. A scheme for the "training of trainers" should be considered, so that a relatively large number would ultimately benefit from the knowledge directly imparted to a comparatively small group of people by the Agency.
10. Secondly, the Agency should co-operate and assist in the adequate instruction of trade union officers whose duties comprise the safeguarding of workers exposed to radiation risks and the participation in establishing relevant legislation.
11. Since then, legislation covering radiation protection is well under way in many countries, obliging trade union officers to participate in its

drafting and practical application. The value of their contribution depends largely on adequate instruction and the Agency's assistance and co-operation would be of utmost importance to the unions concerned. The significance of special instruction is bound to grow in the near future, when the framework of national legislation and international conventions has to be filled with detailed regulations not only dealing with general principles, but using exact scientific and technical data.

12. The ICFTU, at the request of its Committee on Atomic Energy, has therefore renewed its proposal to the Agency in the form of a detailed plan for a first Trade Union "Seminar on Problems of Workers' Protection against Ionising Radiation" and we hope that this plan will find the approval of the Agency. It would be a means by which labor organizations could directly draw on the Agency's accumulated wealth of expert knowledge and experience.

13. An important step towards the setting up of universally accepted standards of radiation protection has been achieved by the passing of a "Convention and Recommendation concerning the Protection of Workers against Ionising Radiations" by this year's conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ICFTU has actively participated in the drafting of these international instruments in which it takes greatest interest. It could certainly speed up their universal acceptance if the Agency would, after due consideration, propose to the Governments of its Member States the ratification and application of the ILO's convention and recommendation.

14. But there again convention and recommendation form only the skeleton which has to be clad with the flesh of detailed regulations, if their potential value shall become fully effective.

15. Close co-operation between the Agency and ILO in this task could be of great advantage and once again lead to a pooling of their technical and human resources in the interest of the international community.

16. In view of the encouraging results already achieved and in view of the still greater hopes placed in the Agency's future work, the scant response of some Member States to the Agency's needs for voluntary contributions must seem disappointing. The voluntary contributions so far pledged threaten to

fall not only behind the goal set by the General Conference, but even behind last year's already very modest amount. We fully share the Board of Governor's concern as expressed in the introduction to the program for 1961 and we hope that the courageous attempt to raise the goal for voluntary contributions to US \$ 1.8 million will not only meet the sympathy but also the warm support of the Member States, in order to enable the Agency to fulfill its statutory responsibilities in the service of mankind.