



International Atomic Energy Agency

General Conference

GC(XIII)/INF/115
24 September 1969

GENERAL Distr.

Original: ENGLISH

Thirteenth regular session

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 circulating the attached written statement by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

^{1/} INFCIRC/14.

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION
OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

1. At the outset, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) desires to convey its best wishes to the Agency, and expresses its satisfaction with the steady progress it has achieved during the past years in fulfilling the various tasks for which it was created.
2. In the statement which we made to the General Conference at its eighth regular session in 1964, we wrote:

"The ICFTU, considering the bridging of the economic and social gulf between the industrialized and non-industrialized countries as the problem No. 1 of the second half of this century, will use its influence to further the development of international aid and solidarity which are as important preconditions to the fulfilment of this task as are scientific and technological progress, including those in the field of nuclear energy."^{2/}

From a comment in the statement of the Director General we have learned that this problem has not been solved, and that the gap between rich and poor countries still exists. This situation obtains in spite of increased application of nuclear devices in the industrial and "third" worlds.

3. It has been made clear at previous sessions of the Conference that the non-industrialized countries of the world lack conventional energy reserves and that only economic nuclear energy would enable the developing countries to meet their immense energy requirements in order to be able to catch up with the living standards enjoyed in the industrially advanced countries. In this connection, ICFTU assesses highly the positive role the Agency has been playing not only in providing technical assistance to the developing countries and in serving as a clearing-house for scientific and technical information, but also in co-operating with other bodies and the specialized agencies of the United Nations to work out sets of recommendations on radiological protection in all its aspects, which in many countries at present form the basis of relevant national legislation.

^{2/} GC(VIII)/INF/78, para. 2.

4. While we value highly the fruits which have resulted from the peaceful use of nuclear energy, we should at the same time like to address our frank appeal to the Conference by drawing its attention again to the following points.
5. In a resolution on the world political situation passed at the Ninth Congress of the ICFTU, the view was expressed that the partial nuclear test ban should be extended to all kinds of tests and to all countries, that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should be ratified by all countries, and that that Treaty will acquire its full significance only if it is accompanied by guarantees to all countries regarding the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by non-nuclear countries and by a commitment on the part of the nuclear powers to strive for further nuclear disarmament.
6. A further point of importance is the continuous effort towards complete and controlled disarmament. ICFTU's executive has stated in relation to this problem:

"The ICFTU

(a) Stresses that the unabated continuation of the arms race constitutes one of the gravest perils to world peace, and reaffirms the position of the international free trade union movement that all efforts must be made to arrive at a general and complete disarmament under effective international inspection;

(b) Appeals to the peoples of the world to work unceasingly for peace and universal disarmament so that the organization of a secure world order under the aegis of the United Nations may become an attainable objective."

7. We wish further to draw the attention of delegates to a resolution which the International Metal Workers Federation (IMF) passed in 1968, indicating an awareness of some of the problems which will face us in the future. The following is an extract from the resolution:

"The IMF

"Notes that the use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes is continuing to make great progress:

"Directs attention to the marked development of uranium mining, of nuclear facilities in research and industry, where sources of ionizing radiation and radioactive materials are being increasingly used for a multitude of purposes:

"Notes also that together with the enormous development of new electronic products has come the possibility of dangers to both workers and consumers from excessive radiation:

"Demands most emphatically the effective protection of all workers and consumers from the hazards of the atomic and electronic age, and to this end:

"Requests that competent institutions of the United Nations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency undertake appropriate continuing investigations into working conditions in uranium mining and in other industries whose workers are or may be exposed to risks of radiation, for the purpose of establishing international safety standards and revising them in the light of new discoveries:

"Urges all countries to observe rigorously all safety standards and provisions and to work in active co-operation with the ILO, whose activities in this field should be continued and intensified."

8. We are of course fully aware of the fact that the ILO the WHO and the International Commission on Radiological Protection, as well as the Agency, have already worked out a set of recommendations which at present form the basis of relevant national legislation in various countries. We also note with satisfaction from the present report of the Board of Governors^{3/} that, with the general development of atomic energy, the Agency has been developing or is intending to develop specialized activities in this field, such as the preparation of standards for the safe operation of research and power reactors, detailed technical manuals on subjects such as the production of nuclear fuel, decontamination and protective equipment and the management and disposal of radioactive waste. We pay high tribute to the Agency for such endeavours and hope that in co-operation with the related specialized agencies of the United Nations it will facilitate the development of research and activities in these specialized subjects. At the same time ICFTU, for its part, pledges that it will use its best endeavours at the international level and also, through its affiliated organizations, at the national level to strive for safety measures. In this field the ICFTU intends to intensify its world-wide educational programme, part of which consists of giving information at international seminars and conferences about the Agency's work with regard to safety standards and the problems of application of nuclear devices. The ICFTU hopes that the Agency and ILO will lend their close co-operation in this world-wide educational programme.

9. ICFTU, having been fighting and continuing to fight for peace, freedom and elimination of hunger and poverty, expresses its heart-felt wishes for the success of the present session of the General Conference, which is meeting in Vienna to further the contribution of atomic energy to the peace, health and prosperity of the entire world. At the same time, ICFTU pays its tribute to the assembled Government representatives, scientists and experts for their sincere efforts, and pledges that it will use its influence at the international level, and, through its member organizations, also at the national level, to strive to eliminate the dangers that are inherent in this new source of energy. Bearing in mind that this Conference, working in an atmosphere of goodwill and co-operation, depends to a great extent on the international political climate, it is our most sincere hope that the wisdom and the responsibility towards mankind of every nation in the world will facilitate our march in the direction of complete and controlled disarmament throughout the world. In this way a great and lasting contribution will be made to the peaceful development of all peoples.

