



International Atomic Energy Agency

General Conference

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RECORDS OF THE THIRTEENTH REGULAR SESSION (23-29 SEPTEMBER 1969)

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Neue Hofburg, Vienna
on Tuesday, 23 September 1969, at 3.10 p.m.

Temporary President: Mr. SANDOVAL VALLARTA (Mexico)

President: Mr. TORKI (Tunisia)

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* GC(XIII)/400.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared the thirteenth regular session of the General Conference open.

2. In accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure, he invited the Conference to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

All present rose and stood in silence for one minute.

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT welcomed the delegates from Member States, the observers from States which were not yet Members of the Agency and the representatives of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and of non-governmental organizations who had come to take part in the work of the session. The Conference was also honoured by the presence of the Vice-Chancellor of the Republic of Austria and the State Secretary in the Federal Chancellery, as well as senior officials of the Federal Government and of the City of Vienna. He thanked them for the interest they were taking in the Agency's work and for attending the meeting in spite of the heavy demands on their time.

4. On his country's and his own personal behalf, he thanked the General Conference once more for the confidence it had shown in him at the last session; he felt sure it would show the same confidence in his successor, to whom he wished every success in the fulfilment of the tasks before him.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

5. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT invited nominations for the office of President.

6. M. HIRSCH (France) nominated Mr. Torki, the delegate of Tunisia, who was a specialist in nuclear energy. For many years Mr. Torki had been closely associated with the work of the Agency and had held a post in the Secretariat's Division of Research and Laboratories; subsequently, Mr. Torki had represented his country on the Board of Governors and had also served as one of its Vice-Chairmen. In 1962, Mr. Torki had been appointed General Commissioner for Atomic Energy in Tunisia and, later, Director of the Tunisian Institute of Atomic Physics.

7. M. HULUBEI (Romania) and Mr. ETEMAD (Iran) supported the nomination.

8. *Mr. Torki (Tunisia) was elected President of the General Conference for its thirteenth regular session by acclamation.*

Mr. Torki (Tunisia) took the Chair.

9. The PRESIDENT thanked the General Conference for the honour it had done his country in electing him President. He regarded his election as recognition of the efforts made by Tunisia in regard to the peaceful uses of atomic energy and of the ceaseless endeavours of President Bourguiba to consolidate peace throughout the world.

10. Thanks to its activities in promoting nuclear sciences and techniques, the Agency continued to play a very important part in international co-operation and in bringing together all nations, whatever their level of development. The Agency's programme included a great many concrete tasks covering nearly all aspects of the nuclear sciences but, nevertheless, the Agency now seemed to be at a crossroads. The orientation of its future activities would certainly be affected by the deliberations on several of the items on the Conference agenda. For that reason the session that had just begun assumed special importance.

11. However, the full effects of the Agency's activities would become apparent only in the more distant future, and only then would it have a clearer picture of the course it should follow. He hoped that human intelligence, which had been able to extract enormous energy from the smallest system known in the universe and to range over cosmic distances in a way that had never been conceived of in the past, would find the necessary moral strength to bring the nations still closer together and thereby to consolidate peace and security throughout the world.

12. That activity should be carried out not only on the scientific plane, but also on the plane of human relations. For several years, various countries had been taking such steps on a regional scale. By way of an example, he would refer to the treaty, known as the Tlatelolco Treaty, for the prohibition of nuclear weapons in Latin America. Mexico to whose delegate he expressed the Conference's thanks for having served as Temporary President, had made a significant contribution to the progress he had in mind by the support its Government had given to the Treaty. That Government had already concluded an agreement with the Agency under the Treaty¹⁾, giving it the important function of applying safeguards. The majority of the Latin American States had already ratified the Treaty, and a regional agency for supervising its application had just been established. He hoped that, with the co-operation of all the delegates, the General Conference would carry out its tasks in such a way as to enable the Agency to make a greater contribution to efforts of a similar character to eliminate the danger which nuclear weapons represented for humanity.

1) Reproduced in document INFCIRC/118.

APPOINTMENT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

13. The PRESIDENT proposed, in accordance with Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure, that a Credentials Committee should be appointed consisting of the following nine Members: Jordan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Spain, Thailand, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America and Uruguay.

14. *The proposal was adopted.*

ELECTION OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTS

15. The PRESIDENT recalled that, under Rule 34 of the Rules of Procedure, the Conference was required to elect its Vice-Presidents after the election of the Chairmen of the two Main Committees. He therefore intended to suspend the plenary meeting for a short time to enable the two Committees to elect their Chairmen.

The meeting was suspended at 3.35 p.m. and resumed at 3.50 p.m.

16. The PRESIDENT invited nominations for the eight posts of Vice-President of the Conference.

17. Mr. QUIHILLALT (Argentina) nominated the delegates of the following Members: Australia, Bulgaria, Chile, France, Italy, Japan, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America.

18. Mr. OBUA-OTOA (Uganda) seconded the nominations.

19. *The delegates nominated were declared elected to the eight Vice-Presidencies.*

APPOINTMENT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

20. The PRESIDENT pointed out that, under Rule 40 of the Rules of Procedure, the General Conference was required to elect four additional members to the General Committee. He invited nominations.

21. Mr. MALU (Democratic Republic of the Congo) nominated the delegates of Canada, Hungary, Nigeria and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

22. Mr. YEO CHEE HEE (Singapore) seconded the nominations.

23. *The delegates of the Members nominated were declared elected to the General Committee, which was thus duly appointed in compliance with the provisions of Rule 40 of the Rules of Procedure.*

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE AGENCY (GC(XIII)/413)

24. The PRESIDENT invited the Conference to consider the recommendation of the Board of Governors concerning the application for membership of the Agency made by Ireland in document GC(XIII)/413 and the relevant draft resolution in that document.

25. Sir John HILL (United Kingdom) supported the application made by Ireland, which was already a member of other organizations in the United Nations family.

26. *The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.*

27. The PRESIDENT stated that Ireland would become a Member of the Agency as soon as its instrument of acceptance of the Statute had been deposited with the United States Government in accordance with Article XXI.C of the Statute.

28. Mr. HOLMES (Ireland) expressed his Government's gratitude and stated that Ireland undertook to observe the objectives of the Agency as defined in Article II of the Statute. In anticipation of its participation in the Agency's work, it was taking certain steps relating to the peaceful uses of atomic energy and was at present setting up a Nuclear Energy Board. It was also providing for the training of personnel who would be responsible for operating a nuclear power station when the time came.

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

29. The DIRECTOR GENERAL said that the past year might well be described in the history of the Agency as the "Year of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States", as it had enabled countries not possessing nuclear weapons to assess the consequences that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) would certainly have on their position and their membership of the Agency. That reawakened interest indicated an increased desire on the part of those countries to participate in the work of the Agency, as a result of which there might be an expansion of the operational programme parallel to the expansion of the safeguards system. In that connection technical assistance and the funds for its provision were of special interest to non-nuclear-weapon States and had, moreover, been thoroughly examined by the group of Experts appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to review "all possible contributions of nuclear technology to the economic and scientific advancement of the developing countries"²). In its report, the group of Experts had invited Member States to increase their voluntary contributions to the General Fund and

2) General Assembly Resolution 2456 A (XXIII), para.8.

had drawn attention to the fact that projects of a pilot plant and pre-investment type would have to be financed under UNDP; it had suggested that recipient States, which themselves fixed the orders of priority, should be invited to accord higher priority to nuclear power projects which frequently required financing beyond the scope of Agency or UNDP funds³⁾.

30. Several of the resolutions adopted by the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States (CNNWS)⁴⁾ had been reviewed by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which had not merely confined itself to noting the Agency's annual report, as was the usual practice, but had expressly referred to two resolutions adopted by the General Conference in 1968, the one on the composition of the Board of Governors and the other on procedures in connection with the peaceful uses of nuclear explosions⁵⁾. We wished to refer in particular to the review of Article VI of the Statute, the Agency's responsibility to provide services in connection with nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, and the fund of special fissionable materials; it was expected that those matters would be considered by the appropriate committees.

31. There was general agreement as to the desirability of a modest expansion in the size of the Board to meet the aspirations of non-nuclear-weapon States, but the manner in which such an expansion might be achieved was not so easy of solution. However, progress so far made should enable an early solution of the problem to be reached.

32. Peaceful nuclear explosions had been discussed not only in the General Assembly and the Agency but also at the highest technical level between the Soviet Union and the United States. It was perhaps at that level that the aspirations of the non-nuclear-weapon States could best be met. For his part, he shared the expectation of many Member States that nuclear explosions would in future be used with advantage in both developed and developing countries for large-scale engineering projects such as the excavation of canals and building of tunnels, or recovery of gas, oil and minerals from low-grade or otherwise inaccessible deposits. There would then be no obstacle to the establishment, within the framework of the Agency, of an international service for nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes under appropriate international control. In the meantime, the Agency's contribution would probably be limited to an information service pending clarification of the technical and financial aspects of nuclear explosions.

3) See United Nations document A/7568, paras 260 and 261.

4) Reproduced in United Nations document A/7277 and Corrigena 1 and 2.

5) GC(XII)/RES/241 and GC(XII)/RES/245 respectively.

33. In connection with the item of the provisional agenda relating to the establishment of a fund of special fissionable materials he observed that it had perhaps not been sufficiently realized that quantities exceeding 5000 kilograms of fissionable materials including uranium-235 had been made available to the Agency almost since its inception, but had been utilized only to a very limited extent⁶⁾. Bearing in mind CNNWS Resolution H, part III, he had, however, invited the major suppliers to increase supplies of fissionable materials to the Agency. The United States had stated that it was willing to supply materials through the Agency on the same conditions as under bilateral agreements. Member States could then obtain a supply of fissionable materials for up to 30 years, a supply of enriched uranium for up to five years in advance of actual needs, and make toll-enrichment arrangements. France had also indicated its willingness to consider requests for fissionable materials in excess of presently available supplies and there was reason to believe that two other major suppliers, namely the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom, would respond favourably to the Agency's request.

34. The financing of nuclear power plants from international sources was a problem that continued to face developing countries. The results of efforts during the past year had not been at all encouraging, as was clearly evidenced by the reply of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to the request by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for a report on the action taken by United Nations organizations to implement the recommendations of CNNWS. In reply to a similar request the Agency had communicated the result of the relevant discussions within the Secretariat and the Board to the Secretary-General for submission to the General Assembly.

35. The Agency had extended its full co-operation to the Secretary-General in the preparation of the report to the General Assembly on the contributions of nuclear technology to the economic and scientific advancement of developing countries. On the invitation of the Agency the group of experts appointed by the Secretary-General held its first meeting in March 1969 at the Agency's Headquarters.

36. Among other United Nations activities which could not fail to have a bearing on the Agency's work, he referred to the decision taken by the General Assembly last year to organize in 1971 a fourth international conference on the peaceful uses of atomic energy⁷⁾. Responsibility for drawing up the programme would rest with the Agency, as in the case of the third conference. The arrangements for the conference and particularly the choice of scientific

6) See document GC(XIII)/409, para.18.

7) General Assembly Resolution 2406(XXIII).

topics to be discussed had been reviewed in three meetings of the United Nations Scientific Advisory Committee, at which the Agency had been invited to be present. The Committee had also discussed the conference on problems of the human environment to be held in 1972. That was a subject of particular interest to the Agency in so far as it related to contamination by radioactive materials. It was perhaps regrettable, in that connection, that undue prominence had been given to irradiation and radioactive contamination in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly. It might also be of interest to recall that in its report for 1966 the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had stated that low-activity wastes released by facilities using nuclear technology for various purposes contributed only a negligible fraction of the doses received by human populations and that accidents at nuclear establishments had only been of local significance. From the inception of the use of atomic energy no other potential source of environmental contamination had been so carefully controlled or subjected to such rigid legislation. Indeed nuclear energy, if used in substitution for other sources of power, could even limit pollution. On the other hand, atmospheric contamination through the uncontrolled use of solid and liquid fuels was an extremely serious problem, whose solution would be facilitated, however, by the further development of atomic energy and especially of nuclear fusion.

37. The past year had been one of pessimism in some parts of the world, caused by the delay in the construction of nuclear plants, largely as a result of the considerable increase in orders for such plants over the past three years. New commitments had been made in that direction, particularly in Western Europe and Asia. Unfortunately, however, the number of nuclear power stations under construction in developing countries was less than 2% of the total, thus contributing to what would become an energy gap in the future. The problem continued to be that of the economic size of reactors and the Agency was carrying out an investigation on the technical and cost aspects of small- and medium-power reactors. The concept of dual-purpose reactors providing desalted water cheaply enough for agricultural uses as well as power for energy-intensive industries had been discussed at a Symposium on Nuclear Desalination which had been organized by the Agency in November 1968. The Agency was continuing to co-operate with the United States in the study of the feasibility of agro-industrial complexes in countries in the Middle East. It had to be recognized that the enthusiasm for nuclear desalting had been tempered by realistic considerations of cost and a great deal had yet to be done before nuclear desalting could become a reality. In that connection it would be interesting to know the results obtained from

the first large-scale nuclear desalting plant in the Soviet Union.

38. At the twelfth session of the General Conference great enthusiasm had been shown in connection with the conclusion of NPT, which had at that time been signed by 81 States. Unfortunately, the pace of signature and ratification had since slowed down, and so far only a further 10 Member States had signed the Treaty. It had been ratified by only 20 States, 16 of them Members of the Agency. The date of entry into force of NPT had a direct bearing on the staffing of the Department of Safeguards and Inspection, and careful judgement would have to be exercised because of the Agency's advanced budget planning.

39. He had stated at the twelfth session of the Conference that a period of transition of a year or so would be required before the Agency could be called upon to perform control functions under NPT⁸). The Agency's budget for 1970 was not geared to the requirements of NPT but the Secretariat had already made an effort to examine the legal and technical implications, together with the financial obligations, which the new functions of the Agency within the framework of NPT might involve. The adaptation of the Agency's safeguards system to NPT could be facilitated by a thorough exchange of views between Member States, for example in a committee of the whole. In that connection he wished to pay tribute to the group of consultants, who had prepared a very valuable report on criteria for safeguards procedures, and to the Governments of Canada, Denmark, Hungary, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States for generously providing the services of the consultants.

40. He wished to express his gratitude to Canada and the United States for their offer to keep the Agency continuously informed of the results of their joint project on safeguards research and development. The Board had approved a total of 40 safeguards agreements with 30 Member States and 64 inspections had been carried out in 11 Member States.

41. The past year had witnessed a major event in the field of disarmament, the entry into force, for 14 States, of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Tlatelolco Treaty). The Agency had participated in the recent conference convened to set up a regional agency under the Treaty and he expected close collaboration between the two agencies in the matter of the application of safeguards under it. As the President had mentioned⁹), Mexico had been the first country to conclude a safeguards agreement with the Agency

8) See document GC(XII)/OR.119, para.32.

9) See para.12 above.

covering all its nuclear activities, and it was to be hoped that similar agreements with other countries would follow.

42. The Conference was called upon to examine the Agency's programme for 1969-70 and the budget for 1970, which again showed only a very modest increase. An effort had been made to complete existing programmes and to introduce new programmes having an immediate economic interest, particularly to developing countries. In its laboratory work the Agency was emphasizing support for its scientific programmes in medicine, agriculture, hydrology etc. and, to a limited extent, studies in connection with safeguards. It was still his opinion that plutonium analysis should be contracted out to national laboratories, analytical control being carried out, however, at Seibersdorf. Any extension of those activities would require a substantial increase in laboratory space and staff. The agreement with the Principality of Monaco concerning the Laboratory of Marine Radioactivity had been extended. The programme of that laboratory had been reorientated to meet problems arising from radioactive waste disposal. In respect of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics a co-operation agreement with UNESCO had been concluded¹⁰⁾; the future programme of the Centre would shortly be considered by a group of eminent scientists.

43. Many other activities of the Agency were worthy of mention. The International Nuclear Information System would start its work in 1970, and an agreement had been concluded with the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) relating to the use of its thesaurus of key-words by the Agency. In July, on the occasion of the occasion of the Symposium on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy in Africa, held at Kinshasa, the Agency had given assistance to the Organization of African Unity.

44. The Agency's Scientific Advisory Committee had been re-appointed for a further three years. Serious consideration had been given to enlarging it, and it had been generally agreed that it would be desirable to change its composition from time to time in order to reflect the changing importance of the various scientific disciplines represented on it.

45. Gratitude was due to the Austrian Government which had informed him that, pending the construction of the new permanent headquarters and taking into account the impact of NPT on the Agency's activities, it would make available additional office space without charge. In addition, the Foreign Minister had decided that the cost of leasing space in the Hofburg would be reduced to a point which could be regarded as nominal.

46. A trend had developed in the international organizations which, unless it were kept under control, might limit the amount of effective work which they could achieve. He was referring to the process of self-examination to which United Nations organizations were perpetually subjected. Bodies had been set up to keep under review the various aspects of those organizations. During the last six years, the activities, programmes and structure of the Agency had been subjected to three searching reviews. He did not wish to question the value of that self-examination, but it would be unfortunate if its frequent repetition were to be at the expense of programme operations. The conclusions drawn from the investigations concerned would of course be taken into consideration to the maximum extent in the administration and future programmes of the Agency.

47. He welcomed the interest shown in the Agency by the General Assembly in its discussions on CNNWS. The Agency recognized its responsibilities to those States and indeed to all its Member States. It was looking forward to be time when it would be required to discharge its responsibilities under NPT. Article IV of NPT was of particular importance by reason of the pledge by the technically advanced countries to help their co-signatories and assist developing countries to further the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

48. It was the responsibility of the General Conference and the Board to discuss the Agency's programme and structure, bearing in mind the tasks which it was intended to entrust to it. NPT and CNNWS confronted the Agency with a new challenge; its response to that challenge would do much to determine its future effectiveness as an organization for promoting the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

49. Mr. WINSPEARE GUICCIARDI (Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations) said that the Secretary-General had asked him to convey his best wishes for the success of the General Conference.

50. The report on the Agency's activities submitted by the Board of Governors¹¹⁾ showed the importance of the work which had been performed under the Agency's auspices since the twelfth session. Many aspects of that work were of interest to the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The United Nations and the Agency were at present preparing

10) Subsequently reproduced in document INFCIRC/32.

11) GC(XIII)/404.

the fourth international conference on the peaceful uses of atomic energy. The Agency would certainly play the same important part on that occasion as it did in the 1964 conference.

51. He stressed the Agency's part in the preparatory work for NPT. The functions entrusted to the Agency by the Treaty could have important political repercussions in the future. In the opinion of the Secretary-General, the Agency's activities under the Treaty would increase the effectiveness of the Agency and the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament.

52. The relationship existing between the United Nations and the Agency had recently been illustrated in connection with the preparation of a number of reports requested by the General Assembly. The Director General of the Agency had assisted the Secretary-General by making every possible contribution to the preparation of the report referred to in Resolution 2456 C (XXIII) of the General Assembly, relating to the establishment within the Agency of an international service for nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. The Secretary-General had received views on that subject from 40 Governments and he had also consulted various specialized agencies. In Resolution 2456 A (XXIII), the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to appoint a group of experts to prepare a report on the applications of nuclear technology to the economic and scientific advancement of developing countries. Those experts, selected with the Agency's assistance, had met in Vienna and again in New York, and had derived considerable advantage from the Agency's experience and knowledge. In the same resolution, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the decisions and resolutions adopted by CNNWS. The Agency had outlined the action it had taken in that respect in a detailed progress report. The Secretary-General had presented his report to the General Assembly and the Agency's contribution to it was of considerable importance. The Agency's support would be of great value for

the further work of the General Assembly in that field.

53. The Second Development Decade would also call for co-operation between the two organizations. The Decade would serve as framework for a great many different activities which would require to be synchronized. The organizations in the United Nations family had helped to discover natural resources, to train specialists, to increase productivity, to develop educational and research institutions and to stimulate investments. The Second Decade would, in a sense, constitute a strategy aimed at co-ordinating all those efforts with a view to ensuring maximum effectiveness.

54. The Agency would be able to play an important part during the Decade since some of the techniques it advocated were of immediate interest to numerous developing countries. That was particularly true in regard to the use of radioisotopes in medicine, agriculture and also industry. Various more complex and more costly processes might not be of immediate practical importance for some of the developing countries, but even so one should try to avoid any delays in transferring those techniques so that the countries concerned would be able to employ them as soon as they were in a position to benefit from them.

55. None of the efforts to bring the benefits of technological discoveries to all countries would get beyond the stage of good intentions unless Governments and peoples succeeded in establishing the political will to make of the United Nations system an active and even revolutionary instrument capable of building a new international order, and not an instrument for the defence of selfish national interests.

56. It was to be hoped that the results of the work of the General Conference would mark a further step forward on the road to peace and stability in the international community.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

