



International Atomic Energy Agency

GENERAL CONFERENCE

GC(XXVIII)/INF/221
5 September 1984

GENERAL Distr.
Original: ENGLISH

Twenty-eighth regular session

OPENING DATE OF THE NEXT SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

Note by the Director General

1. Under item 5(b) of its provisional agenda, the General Conference is required, under Rule 1 of its Rules of Procedure, to set the opening date of the twenty-ninth (1985) regular session.

2. The opening date of a regular session of the General Conference is decided by the Conference one year ahead, but the need to ensure that adequate facilities are available means that the Secretariat has to start planning and reserving premises at least two years in advance of the expected opening date of the session.

3. In the case of the Conference's twenty-ninth (1985) regular session, the Secretariat has been planning on the assumption that the session will - following a decision to be taken this year by the Conference - take place during the last full week of September 1985, in line with the practice normally followed when the Conference meets in Vienna. In other words, it has assumed that the Conference's twenty-ninth regular session will start on 23 September 1985 and continue through the week of 23-27 September.

4. In making its plans for the twenty-ninth regular session, the Secretariat has taken account of United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/74 concerning the Second and Third Review Conferences of the Parties to the

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In this resolution the General Assembly, inter alia, noted a proposal by the Second Review Conference "that a third conference to review the operation of the Treaty be convened in 1985" and that "there appears to be a consensus among the parties that the Third Review Conference should be held at Geneva in August/September of that year". The Agency's Secretariat consulted the United Nations Secretariat regarding the planned dates for the Third NPT Review Conference before making its plans for the twenty-ninth regular session of the General Conference on the basis of a starting date of 23 September 1985. The United Nations Secretariat, for its part, proposed to the First Preparatory Committee for the Third NPT Review Conference that the Review Conference start on 26 August 1985 and last for a period of up to four weeks. Overlapping of the two conferences would thereby have been avoided and delegates wishing to attend both conferences would have been able to do so conveniently.

5. At its meetings in April 1984 the First Preparatory Committee decided that the Third NPT Review Conference should last for a period of up to four weeks starting on 2 September 1985 - not on the date one week earlier proposed by the United Nations Secretariat. Accordingly, if the Review Conference runs for four weeks, its final week will overlap with the dates for the General Conference's twenty-ninth session which the Secretariat has taken as a basis for its planning.

6. Immediately on being notified of the decision taken by the First Preparatory Committee, the Director General made inquiries about the availability of suitable facilities for the General Conference at other times in the autumn of 1985, so that there would be alternative options in the event that the General Conference wished to avoid an overlap with the Third NPT Review Conference. It was found that the only alternative options were for the Conference to meet at the Neue Hofburg, the normal venue, at the end of August or at the beginning of December 1985; holding of the session at a place other than the Neue Hofburg would have entailed additional expense, and the extensive consultations which the Director General held with representatives of a broad group of Member States showed clearly that Member States would not be prepared to incur additional expense on these grounds.

7. Of the two alternative options, the end of August is too early for the timely preparation and circulation of the main General Conference documents. The beginning of December, on the other hand, is inconveniently late in the year, for a variety of reasons: the General Conference has to approve the Agency's budget for the following year; General Conference sessions are for many Member States the only occasion for consultations on the Agency's technical assistance programme for the following year; and the United Nations General Assembly customarily considers the Annual Report of the Agency well before the beginning of December.

8. In response to a letter explaining the situation to the Under Secretary-General, United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Director General has been informed that the United Nations has reserved premises for the Third NPT Review Conference in Geneva as from 26 August 1985, the starting date originally proposed for the Conference.

9. The Director General has written to the members of the Bureau for the Third NPT Review Conference in order to make them fully aware of the situation prior to the session of the Second Preparatory Committee, which starts on 1 October 1984.

10. It should be noted that, as far as the Secretariat of the Agency is concerned, overlapping of the two conferences would not cause any major problems as only a few Agency staff members will be directly involved in the Third NPT Review Conference. However, the view was expressed by some Member States' representatives whom the Director General consulted that it would be inconvenient for their Governments and for their delegations if the two conferences were to overlap.

11. The Director General has decided to inform Member States of the situation so that their delegations at the twenty-eighth regular session of the General Conference have the full background when considering item 5(b) of the provisional agenda.

