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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING

Held at the Austria Center Vienna
on Tuesday, 28 September 1999, at 3.15 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. STRATFORD (United States of America)

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[*] GC(43)/27.

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(43)/INF/15/Rev.1.

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MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN NUCLEAR,
RADIATION AND WASTE SAFETY (continued)
(GC(43)/9, 10 and 11; GC(43)/INF/4, 5, 6 and 8)

(b) SAFETY OF TRANSPORT OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS (resumed)

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, during the previous meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation had proposed the incorporation into the draft resolution contained in document GC(43)/COM.5/L.6 of the following preambular paragraph from resolution GC(42)/RES/13: “Recalling maritime, river and air navigation rights and freedoms, as provided for in international law,”. He also recalled that the representative of the United Kingdom had proposed that the phrase “... to make extensive use of the Transport Safety Appraisal Service ...” in operative paragraph 2 be modified to read “... to make use, where appropriate, of the Transport Safety Appraisal Service ...”.
2. Mr. ARAR (Turkey) said that the sponsors of the draft resolution had no objections to the proposed modifications. He suggested that the paragraph “Recalling maritime, river ... law,” be inserted between existing preambular paragraphs (d) and (e).
3. Ms. LIEBERMAN (United States of America) said that, although the draft resolution did not, in her delegation’s view, impact adversely on the rights guaranteed by international maritime law, some aspects of it gave her delegation cause for concern. However, her delegation did not wish to block a consensus in favour of its adoption.
4. Mr. SUGANUMA (Japan), having proposed deletion of the word “other” in operative paragraph 2, said that it was his delegation’s understanding that the freedoms guaranteed by international law would not be affected by adoption of the draft resolution and that, as stated in preambular paragraph (e), information provided about shipments of radioactive materials “should in no case be contradictory to the measures of physical security and safety”.
5. Mr. TITKOV (Russian Federation) expressed support for the statement made by the representative of Japan.
6. Mr. ARAR (Turkey) said that the sponsors of the draft resolution had no intention of encroaching on the freedom of navigation or on other freedoms governed by international law.
7. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(43)/COM.5/L.6 with the changes proposed by the representatives of the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and Japan.
8. It was so agreed.

- DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION OF PATIENTS

9. Mr. FRANKLIN SABURIDO (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution contained in document GC(43)/COM.5/L.9, said that nearly 100 radiotherapy accidents were reported each year and the number of unreported radiotherapy accidents might be even greater. Some developed countries had launched patient protection programmes, but most developing countries did not have the resources to do so.

10. Mr. RUÍZ (Spain) said that his country attached great importance to the subject of the radiological protection of patients, a fact demonstrated by the holding in Málaga of the international seminar referred to in preambular paragraph (c) of the draft resolution.

11. Expressing support for adoption of the draft resolution, he said that Spain would be happy to host the international conference envisaged in its operative paragraph 1.

12. Ms. SRISWASDI (Thailand), expressing support for the draft resolution, proposed adding the phrase “which include quality assurance and quality control aspects” after “well-designed programmes” in preambular paragraph (g).

13. Ms. LIEBERMAN (United States of America) said that her delegation recognized the importance of the issue addressed in the draft resolution but would like to know about the financial implications for the Agency of the envisaged international conference.

14. Mr. ESPINO (Director, Division of Budget and Finance) said that there would be financial implications for the Agency if the country hosting the conference did not cover all the costs itself. The activities envisaged for the year 2000 under Major Programme 3 (“Nuclear, Radiation and Waste Safety”) already included unfunded regular programme activities (URPAs) to a value of about US \$700 000. If the conference were held in the year 2000, it would be an additional URPA, and the Agency’s costs would have to be met from extrabudgetary resources or from savings made within Major Programme 3.

15. Mr. BOURITA (Morocco) proposed adding the phrase “in close collaboration with the World Health Organization” after “to organize as soon as feasible” in operative subparagraph 1(i).

16. Mr. DELACROIX (France), having expressed support for the proposal made by the representative of Morocco, said that in his view the language of operative subparagraph 1(i) prejudged the conclusions of the envisaged conference. In any case, he was not convinced that an international conference would be the most appropriate forum; he felt that a seminar might be more appropriate.

17. Mr. MCINTOSH (Australia), having expressed support for the proposal made by the representative of Morocco, suggested incorporating into the resolution a reference to the safety guide on radiological protection in medical exposure currently being developed by the Agency.

18. With regard to the question of the financial implications for the Agency of the envisaged conference, he suggested the addition in operative subparagraph 1(i) of the phrase “within the Agency’s current budgetary resources”.

19. Ms. BALLÓN de AMÉZAGA (Peru), Mr. ALVAREZ (Uruguay), Mr. AMMAR (Tunisia) and Mr. DJEFFAL (Algeria) expressed support for the draft resolution with the additional phrase proposed by the representative of Morocco.

20. Mr. SUGANUMA (Japan), endorsing the statement made by the representative of France, said that in his view the phrase “to prepare ... an expanded programme of activities” prejudged the outcome of whatever kind of meeting was held as a result of adoption of the draft resolution.

21. Mr. PIGRAM (United Kingdom) expressed support for the statements made by the representatives of France and Japan.

22. Mr. RAGHURAMAN (India) expressed support for the draft resolution with the changes which had been proposed.

23. Mr. HUBER (Netherlands) expressed support for the suggestion made by the representative of Australia and for the statements made by the representatives of France and Japan.

24. Mr. SCHMID (Austria) said that in his view a forum less ambitious than an international conference would be more appropriate.

25. Referring to operative subparagraph 1(i) and the proposal made by the representative of Morocco, he suggested that the Secretariat also request the International Commission on Radiological Protection to collaborate in organizing whatever meeting was held as a result of adoption of the draft resolution.

26. Mr. MULTONE (Switzerland) expressed support for that suggestion.

27. Mr. BENINSON (Argentina) said that - unlike the World Health Organization - the International Commission on Radiological Protection did not have the machinery necessary for the envisaged collaboration.

28. The CHAIRMAN proposed - following further comments by Mr. MCINTOSH (Australia), Mr. PIGRAM (United Kingdom), Mr. CASTERTON (Canada), Mr. SUGANUMA (Japan) and Mr. BOURITA (Morocco) - that the Committee recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution with the following changes:

- the insertion of the words “which included quality assurance and quality control aspects” after “well-designed programmes” in preambular paragraph (g);
- the insertion of a preambular paragraph reading “Welcoming the ongoing development by the Agency of a safety guide on radiological protection in

medical

exposure,” between preambular paragraphs (h) and (i);

- the modification of preambular paragraph (i) to read “... information on the issue of improving the radiological protection of patients,”;
- the modification of operative subparagraph 1(i) to read “to organize as soon as feasible, in close collaboration with the World Health Organization and within the Agency’s current budgetary resources, an international meeting on the radiological protection of patients for the purpose of an exchange of information and the development of recommendations, as appropriate, regarding the radiological protection of patients,”;
- the substitution of “international meeting” for “International Conference” in operative subparagraph 1(ii); and
- the deletion of operative subparagraph 1(iii).

29. It was so agreed.

- DRAFT RESOLUTION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION AND SAFETY

30. Mr. BENINSON (Argentina), introducing the draft resolution contained in document GC(43)/COM.5/L.11, said that the adoption of resolution GC(XXXVI)/RES/584 on “Education and training in radiation protection and nuclear safety” in 1992 had brought about fundamental changes. Until then, virtually the only thing being provided had been training in radiation protection through one-week courses aimed at achieving the impossible - at turning laymen into experts within a very short space of time. Now there was considerable emphasis on post-graduate educational courses of substantially longer duration.

31. With the growing concern about orphan sources and the security of nuclear and other radioactive materials, there was now a need to provide training in radiological protection for professionals such as customs officials, police officers and firefighters. New approaches were therefore called for.

32. Mr. CRONJE (South Africa), responding to a question asked by Mr. DJEFFAL (Algeria), drew attention to preambular paragraph (d), which mentioned a four-month post-graduate educational course currently taking place in South Africa, and said that experience had shown that four months were about the right duration for such courses.

33. Mr. BOURITA (Morocco), Mr. WØHLK (Denmark) and Mr. ARAR (Turkey) expressed support for the draft resolution.

34. Mr. BENINSON (Argentina), replying to a question asked by Mr. MULTONE (Switzerland), said that the sponsors of the draft resolution did not envisage the setting up of new regional training centres.

35. Ms. CLIFF (United Kingdom) proposed the addition of “, within existing resources,” between “to strengthen” and “the role of regional centres” in operative paragraph 2.

36. Mr. CASTERTON (Canada) said that, while endorsing the intent underlying the draft resolution, he felt that some parts of the draft resolution were unnecessary. He suggested that other parts - for example, preambular paragraph (a) and operative paragraphs 1 and 2 - be incorporated into the draft resolution contained in document GC(43)/COM.5/L.12.

37. Mr. MANNINEN (Finland) endorsed the statement made by the representative of Canada.

38. The CHAIRMAN said that the suggestion made by the representative of Canada was in line with decision GC(42)/DEC/13 whereby the General Conference had, in 1998, approved Secretariat recommendations for streamlining the Conference’s work.

39. He proposed that: preambular paragraph (a) of the draft resolution contained in document GC(43)/COM.5/L.11 be inserted into the draft resolution contained in document GC(43)/COM.5/L.12 after preambular paragraph (d); that operative paragraph 1 be converted into a preambular paragraph (through the replacement of “Re-emphasizes” by “Re-emphasizing”) and inserted before preambular paragraph (e); that operative paragraph 2 - with the addition of “, within existing resources,” between “to strengthen” and “the role of regional training centres” - be inserted after operative paragraph 8; and that the remainder of the draft resolution contained in document GC(43)/COM.5/L.11 be allowed to lapse.

40. It was so agreed.

- DRAFT RESOLUTION ON MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL
CO-OPERATION IN NUCLEAR, RADIATION AND WASTE SAFETY

41. Mr. MCINTOSH (Australia), introducing the draft resolution contained in document GC(43)/COM.5/L.12, said that it included elements from resolutions adopted in earlier years and that the sponsors hoped it would set a pattern whereby a number of safety issues were routinely considered together. At the same time, the sponsors recognized that the politically sensitive question of the safety of transport of radioactive materials should perhaps continue to be considered separately.

42. Mr. BOURITA (Morocco) suggested the replacement of the words “last week” in operative paragraph 8 by “at its September 1999 session” and the deletion of “ministerial-level” in operative paragraph 10.

43. Mr. TITKOV (Russian Federation) said that nuclear safety depended not only on the setting and observance of standards and the training of staff, but also on the inherent safety of the technology involved. Accordingly, his delegation would like to see a paragraph reading something like “Requests the Secretariat to resume the preparation of annual reviews on technological safety, starting with a review for 1999” inserted after operative paragraph 10.

44. Mr. DELACROIX (France) said that his delegation endorsed the spirit underlying the draft resolution but had doubts about operative paragraph 5. Did the sponsors envisage the formulation, within the Agency framework, of safety standards for research reactors? There was a great variety of research reactors in the world, and his delegation could therefore not imagine international standards for their safety being formulated.

45. Mr. BENINSON (Argentina) proposed, in response to the question asked by the representative of France, that the word “standards” in operative paragraph 5 be replaced by “levels”.

46. Mr. SUGANUMA (Japan), proposing the insertion of the word “particularly” in operative paragraph 1 before the words “all areas”, said that safety should improve in all areas - not just those mentioned at the First Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

47. He did not understand the significance of the reference to “annual reviews on technological safety” made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

48. Mr. HUBER (Netherlands), having expressed support for the draft resolution, said that year 2000 (Y2K) problems might occur well into the year 2000 and proposed that operative paragraph 6 be modified to read “... requests that it continue its work until the issue has been resolved”.

49. Mr. MCINTOSH (Australia) expressed support for the proposals made by the representatives of Japan and the Netherlands.

50. Mr. CASTERTON (Canada), having expressed support for the proposals made by the representatives of Japan and Argentina, said - with reference to the proposal made by the representative of the Netherlands - that it might be better simply to delete the phrase “until the end of 1999” at the end of operative paragraph 6.

51. He also - like the representative of Japan - did not understand the significance of the reference to “annual reviews on technological safety” made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

52. Mr. TITKOV (Russian Federation) said that a review on technological safety had been before the Board of Governors at its March 1998 session and the information contained in it had been very useful. His delegation would like the Secretariat to produce such reviews annually. He suggested that the Committee postpone further discussion of the matter until his delegation had provided the Chairman with a copy of the Board document in question.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.