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## FORTY-THIRD (1999) REGULAR SESSION

### RECORD OF THE EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Austria Center Vienna  
on Thursday, 30 September 1999, at 3.05 p.m.

President: Mr. KADRI (Algeria)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(43)/INF/15/Rev.3.

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Abbreviations used in this record

AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Regional Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
LDC	Least developed country
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
R&D	Research and development
TCDC	Technical co-operation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

APPOINTMENT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR  
(GC(43)/14)

1. The PRESIDENT recalled that in September 1995 the General Conference, upon the recommendation of the Board of Governors, had appointed the Comptroller and Auditor General of the United Kingdom as External Auditor to audit the Agency's accounts for the financial years 1996 and 1997. In September 1997, that appointment had been extended for the financial years 1998 and 1999. The period of the External Auditor's appointment would end with the completion of the audit of the Agency's accounts for 1999. He took it that the General Conference, in line with the recommendation made by the Board of Governors at its meeting in June 1999, wished to extend the period of appointment of the present External Auditor for a further period of two years so that he could audit the Agency's accounts for 2000 and 2001.

2. It was so decided.

GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1998 (resumed)  
(GC(43)/4)

3. Mr SANTER (Luxembourg), having welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency, associated himself fully with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union.

4. The first review meeting under the Convention on Nuclear Safety to discuss the national reports on the safety of nuclear installations - held in April 1999 - had shown that the Convention had had a positive effect on the safety of many nuclear installations, particularly those that did not meet the Agency's safety standards. It was to be hoped that the remaining necessary measures would be taken before the second review meeting in 2002.

5. He was convinced that the progress achieved through the implementation of that legal instrument would encourage all States, particularly those with nuclear weapons, to accede to it as soon as possible. He was also convinced that the experience acquired during the first review meeting would be useful for the implementation of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, which it was to be hoped would enter into force in the very near future and enjoy widespread support.

6. In September, the Member States of the European Union, the European Commission and the Agency had signed Additional Protocols to their existing safeguards agreements. Luxembourg and its European partners would make every effort to ensure that the ratification procedure for the Additional Protocols was completed before the NPT Review Conference in April 2000. They hoped that as many States as possible would confirm their acceptance of the Additional Protocol by that date and welcomed the Agency's decision to develop an integrated, effective and efficient verification regime. They were convinced that, as in the past, the fruitful co-operation between the IAEA and EURATOM would enable substantial savings to be made.

7. The Secretariat had provided a swift, judicious response to the problem posed by “orphan” sources and he hoped that the discussion that would ensue on the action plan related to the safety of radiation sources and the security of radioactive material would enable the Agency to tackle that problem with the necessary speed and enable it to have adequate resources. He also hoped that due attention would also be given to the safety of operating research reactors and the decommissioning of those which were no longer in operation.

8. With regard to the reduction and control of nuclear arsenals, he hoped that the parties concerned would agree on the adoption of a verification agreement that would enable the Agency to ensure that fissile material from nuclear weapons was not reused for military purposes. He also hoped that the Agency would be closely associated with the work of the Conference on Disarmament so that it could participate in the elaboration and subsequent application of the verification system for the future cut-off treaty.

9. Luxembourg had decided to start paying, as of the 1998 financial year, its share of the target for the TCF, thereby demonstrating its awareness of the importance of the Agency’s technical assistance to developing countries, its recognition of the high quality of that assistance, and its approval of the areas in which that assistance was focused. Efforts should continue to increase still further the number of donors and to promote universal participation in the TCF.

10. Mr. BULBULA (Ethiopia), after welcoming Angola and Honduras, said that Africa would play a major role, both as a partner and a recipient, in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy during the first quarter of the next century. Ethiopia recognized the importance of the Agency’s technical co-operation and fully endorsed the priorities outlined by the Director General.

11. As an LDC, Ethiopia’s main priority was to meet the minimum requirements of its people. It was embarking on a number of significant activities based on the Country Programme Framework which had been recently concluded with the Agency and which had made it possible to identify areas of co-operation such as the use of isotope hydrology to improve water resources management and the use of the sterile insect technique to control the tsetse fly and thereby to improve animal production. Noting in that context the efforts undertaken in the area of regional integration, he said that several African countries had shown interest in that technique in order to tackle the problem of the tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis in Africa.

12. Ethiopia was regrouping small, isolated projects in larger, more effective programmes in areas such as mutation breeding for certain indigenous crops, human nutrition and health. The national authority responsible for radiation protection, which had been strengthened, was the Agency’s counterpart at all stages of co-operation projects and Ethiopia’s support for the Pelindaba Treaty and TCDC was channelled through that authority. Ethiopia was also participating increasingly actively in AFRA projects.

13. In conclusion, he thanked the Agency for its technical co-operation and also the donors that provided assistance to Ethiopia under footnote-a/ projects.

14. Mr. ROSA LÃ (Portugal), having extended a welcome to Angola and Honduras, associated himself with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union.

15. Portugal welcomed the action taken by Mr. ElBaradei, particularly with respect to programme reform and administrative management, and supported the changes aimed at obtaining financial resources to implement key programmes despite budgetary restrictions.

16. Guaranteeing safety was one of the greatest challenges posed by the use of nuclear energy, and it was important to note the major international conventions that had been adopted in that area. The recent review meeting under the Convention on Nuclear Safety was one example of the efforts being made to improve the level of nuclear safety. Agency assistance in the application of advanced technologies would certainly help enhance the safety of nuclear energy and radioactive waste management.

17. The Agency should attach importance to research reactors, illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive materials, the transport of nuclear materials and radiation protection. In that regard, he recalled that at the beginning of September Portugal had hosted a very successful international symposium on research reactor utilization, safety and management.

18. With regard to safeguards, he believed that the establishment of the integrated system should have top priority and called on all Member States to participate in that system. He was pleased that 41 Member States had signed an Additional Protocol and that the Agency was already carrying out activities in application of that instrument.

19. He also took note of the verification and control activities with respect to material originating from military programmes. Although those activities were not progressing as fast as one might have hoped, they were a big step towards the complete banning of nuclear explosives.

20. It was regrettable that certain countries like the DPRK were still not co-operating with the Agency. A case in point was Iraq, which was preventing the Agency from performing the necessary inspections and thereby from fulfilling its Security Council mandate.

21. Portugal, which had benefited from the Agency's technical co-operation programme for a number of years, felt that the programme's activities in such fields as health, food and agriculture were not sufficiently well known to the public and that efforts to publicize them were needed. The Agency's contribution to seawater desalination projects should also be underlined, as the supply of potable water would be one of the main problems in the future. Manpower training in that area should be encouraged and Portugal was prepared to contribute to such activities, particularly to those organized for Portuguese-speaking countries.

22. Mr. BAHHRAN (Yemen) welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency and recalled the important role played by the work of the General Conference for all States, particularly the developing countries, which were endeavouring to obtain greater Agency support. Yemen supported all the Agency's activities aimed at strengthening the safeguards system while ensuring that it was equitable and applied equally to all countries, and its activities to promote international co-operation in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy,

nuclear safety, radiation safety, the safety of transport and of radioactive waste management. It also supported all the steps taken by the Agency to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources.

23. Wherever it occurred, the nuclear arms race only exacerbated tension and instability; thus, Yemen strongly recommended that every effort be made to achieve global development through denuclearization under the NPT and application of the international safeguards system to the nuclear facilities of all countries without exception, with a view to achieving regional and global peace and security.

24. Yemen welcomed the new regional and global trends and initiatives for peace and the solution of conflicts by peaceful means, and it endorsed the negotiations for a just peace based on international, regional and local legitimacy. In view of the progress made, Yemen stressed that the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State on their territory, with Jerusalem as the capital, should be taken into consideration, and voiced Yemen's solidarity with the people of Iraq, who had suffered long enough.

25. On the strength of its recent achievements in safeguards in many regions of the world, the Agency should take whatever steps were necessary to induce Israel to sign the NPT, thereby improving the chances of peace in the region and promoting confidence in a secure future for the Middle East and the rest of the world.

26. Welcoming the recent presidential election in Yemen, a democratic experience that the people of Yemen were happy to have undertaken and which the Yemeni Government was using as a basis for carrying out economic, financial and administrative reforms, he announced that a National Atomic Energy Commission was being established in Yemen and would be the chief State body dealing with all issues related to nuclear and radiation safety and the peaceful applications of nuclear energy for economic and social development. That body would help strengthen Yemen's international and regional relations, particularly its relations with the Agency.

27. In the light of that improvement in its nuclear and radiation safety infrastructure, Yemen hoped that friendly States and the Agency would intensify their co-operation and support to help implement its various national development projects, especially in the fields of health, agriculture, the environment and hydrology.

28. Mr. MORALES SAN MARTÍN (Ecuador), having welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency, said that of the many Agency success stories since its establishment, its main achievement - given that peace was mankind's most precious asset - had been to prevent to a great extent the proliferation of nuclear weapons through the application of its safeguards programme and to facilitate the signature by States of the relevant treaties. It had also brought universal support for the development and application of nuclear technology in many fields, including health, agriculture, environmental protection, industry and power generation.

29. With the help of the Agency and its experts, technical co-operation project counterpart staff had been able to familiarize themselves with specific techniques and to update their

knowledge through courses and workshops. Participation by national scientists in conferences, symposia and seminars had also made a contribution in that regard. Without that assistance, which had also included the provision of equipment and information, the least developed countries would not have been able to improve the health, nutrition and well-being of their peoples.

30. In Latin America, the Agency's main achievement had been to unite the efforts of the countries of the region under the ARCAL programme to implement projects which promoted harmonious regional and national development. The introduction of the Partnership in Development concept several years previously had boosted the spirit of co-operation between the countries of the region. Those countries should continue strengthening that spirit by providing joint solutions to their common problems. Ecuador thanked the Agency for the support it had given to the ARCAL programme.

31. One problem facing many countries, especially the least developed countries, was the shortage of potable water resources. Ecuador was therefore pleased with the Agency's efforts to find ways of producing potable water economically and to implement isotope hydrology projects in order to improve the management of existing water resources. On a more general note, it was clear to everyone that the Agency and its Member States had a decisive role to play in resolving food problems and in remedying damage caused to the environment.

32. Finally, he noted that Ecuador had decided to sign an Additional Protocol to the safeguards agreement it had concluded within the framework of the Tlatelolco Treaty and the NPT in order to demonstrate its unconditional commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the world, an objective which was one of the main pillars of the Agency.

33. Ms. ROMERO DE GONZÁLEZ (Paraguay), after welcoming the admission of Honduras and Angola to the Agency and reaffirming her Government's firm commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, said that her country was currently completing the necessary formalities to ratify the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.

34. Paraguay supported the Agency's efforts to encourage certain countries to accede to the NPT, and urged those countries to place their nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards in order to establish the balance required for peace in that region, and to eliminate the nuclear threat existing there.

35. The participation of the National Atomic Energy Commission in the regional project on upgrading radiation protection infrastructure (RLA/9/030) in co-operation with the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare had been one of its most important activities. She was grateful for the Agency's sustained support of her country's efforts to harmonize radiation protection regulations; those efforts had led to the signing of an agreement between the two regulatory bodies in the country. As part of its regulatory activities, the Commission had expanded the national register of occupationally exposed workers and implemented an inspection programme for users of radioactive sources, accelerators with power greater than

200 keV, and industrial X-ray sources. In addition, the Commission and the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare were working actively to provide training of regulatory personnel through courses, scientific visits and expert missions within the framework of project RLA/9/030.

36. Over the previous year, Paraguay had continued to participate actively in the Agency's technical co-operation programme and the ARCAL programme, and had hosted major courses and workshops providing training to many scientists and fellowship students. During the 15 years of its existence, the ARCAL programme had enabled thousands of specialists in the region to receive training in a number of areas and had facilitated the transfer of technology. Paraguay had been one of the first countries to sign the intergovernmental agreement which would lead to the strengthening of the ARCAL programme. It was grateful to the Agency, which was the main contributor to the programme, as well as to the other donors, in particular, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the United States.

37. A special brachytherapy unit had been provided within the framework of technical co-operation project PAR/6/008 entitled "Improvement of Brachytherapy" and extensive use would be made of the equipment for the treatment of cervical cancer, which was a very common disease in the country.

38. Having outlined the specific results obtained under project PAR/5/008 on the improvement of reproductive efficiency in cattle, she said that, as it did every year, the National Atomic Energy Commission had organized an open day to inform people about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, during which a group of women in the nuclear field called "WIN" had been set up; since then, that group had carried out a number of information activities relating to nuclear issues.

39. In conclusion, she thanked the Agency for its valuable co-operation in the implementation of national and regional projects that were of great social and economic benefit.

40. Mr. SERVIÁN (Uruguay), having welcomed Honduras and Angola, commended the efforts of the Director General and the Secretariat to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's work to achieve its basic objectives, namely the promotion and control of nuclear energy, despite a budget that remained practically unchanged. The improvement of the processes for the design, selection, implementation and follow-up of technical co-operation projects, as well as the increase in the volume of activities, and the participation of countries from Latin America and the Caribbean in the ARCAL programme would be beneficial to all Member States.

41. The balance between promotional and verification activities, and between the power and non-power applications of nuclear technology was essential in order to ensure the Agency's universality and its influence on the world stage so that it could rise to the challenges ahead and promote the further use and synthesis of technical progress in nuclear and non-nuclear fields. It also had to deal with the risks associated with the existence of large

quantities of uranium and plutonium from dismantled weapons, the proliferation potential of neptunium and americium, the increase in illicit trafficking in nuclear material, and the verification activities provided for by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Although Uruguay recognized the importance of those problems, it considered that the Agency's universality and efficiency would be reduced significantly if it became primarily an organization for verification and control.

42. Finally, he noted that Uruguay was continuing its efforts to use nuclear technology in the production sector and was planning to restructure its radiation protection activities with the support of the Agency.

43. Mr. TABIBIAN (Armenia), after welcoming the admission of Honduras and Angola to the Agency, noted that, according to some estimates, more than 20 countries possessed nuclear weapons or were about to acquire them. In a few years, the international community had taken decisive steps to avert a predictable disaster, and a large number of countries had acceded to the NPT and other treaties aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and nuclear testing. Armenia remained fully committed to the principles of non-proliferation, and supported the Agency's activities to improve the effectiveness of the safeguards system. With the conclusion of new Additional Protocols, the prospects for the elimination of the threat of nuclear weapons and their proliferation were good.

44. His Government attached great importance to the legal aspect of the nuclear issue, and on 1 March 1999, the Armenian President had signed the main national nuclear law on the safe utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Armenia was party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the first legal instrument to address directly the issue of the safety of nuclear power plants worldwide. Armenia had also acceded to the Agency's Conventions on the Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, and on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. That legal framework had contributed to the relative success of Aragats 99, an exercise on emergency preparedness and response, which had been held in Armenia under the auspices of the Agency with the participation of foreign observers. Despite certain shortcomings, the main purpose of the exercise, which was to validate the revised Armenia procedures for preparedness and management of nuclear and radiological emergencies, had been achieved.

45. The Armenian Government attached great importance to technical co-operation and highly commended the Secretariat, in particular the Europe Section, for its continuous support. As part of the biennial cycle of technical co-operation with the Agency, the Armenian regulatory body had carried out co-ordination activities for 8 national and 18 regional projects in which Armenia was participating. Armenia was grateful to the main donors - the United States and the United Kingdom - for their support, which had made the successful implementation of the Armenian projects possible.

46. At the bilateral level, Armenia was continuing to co-operate closely with Argentina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and other countries. Very recently, on

23 September, the Armenian Government had concluded an agreement with the European Union on assistance for the development of the energy sector, including nuclear energy.

47. His Government was very committed to nuclear safety and was determined to apply the highest safety standards at Unit II of the Medzamor nuclear power plant. It was grateful to the Agency for the considerable assistance provided both before and after the plant's reopening in the areas of seismic safety evaluation, emergency planning and seismic and radiation monitoring systems, and for organizing training courses and scientific visits.

48. Turning to financial matters, he said that Armenia had fulfilled its commitments. In spite of serious financial constraints, his Government had approved the transfer of the sum of US \$86 719 to the Agency's Regular Budget - the amount required for the restoration of the country's voting rights.

49. Many countries in the world were using nuclear techniques for a variety of peaceful purposes - more than 40 countries had nuclear reactors, and numerous major facilities containing nuclear material safeguarded by the Agency were operating in some 68 developed and developing countries. Efforts should be redoubled to strengthen international co-operation in the areas of radiation protection and waste management, as well as to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radioactive sources, and to guarantee the safe storage and disposal of such materials. The Agency could not work alone in those areas, and the international community as a whole should join in its efforts.

50. Mr. SUAREZ (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization) said that the previous week, on 24 September 1999, the Preparatory Commission had celebrated the third anniversary of the opening of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty for signature at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. During those three years, 154 States had signed the Treaty and 47, including 23 of the 44 States whose ratification was required for the Treaty's entry into force, had deposited their instruments of ratification with the United Nations Secretary-General. On the same day, the majority of States that had ratified the Treaty had sent a letter to the Secretary-General, as depositary of the Treaty, requesting, pursuant to Article XIV.2 of the Treaty, the convening of a Conference of the States that had already deposited their instruments of ratification to examine the extent to which the requirement for entry into force had been met and to decide by consensus what measures consistent with international law could be undertaken to accelerate the ratification process to facilitate the early entry into force of the Treaty. That Conference, which was expected to take place at ministerial level, would be held in the Hofburg from 6 to 8 October 1999.

51. The Treaty provided for the establishment of a global regime to verify compliance with the comprehensive ban on nuclear explosions. When fully operational, that regime would be able to detect and locate any nuclear explosion, even of very small yield, whether underground, underwater or in the air. Although it was not yet complete, and therefore only partially operational, it had repeatedly demonstrated that it was capable of detecting and locating various events around the world.

52. The regime comprised of three main elements: the International Monitoring System (IMS), consisting of 321 seismological, hydroacoustic, infrasound and radionuclide stations, supported by 16 radionuclide analysis laboratories; the International Data Centre (IDC), at the Vienna International Centre, where data from the IMS stations were collected, processed, analysed and made available to Member States; and the on-site inspections, which were a final verification measure that would only be carried out in accordance with the stringent requirements set out in the Treaty. Much progress had been achieved in that area during the past year.

53. With regard to the IMS, approximately 55% of the site surveys needed for the System's 321 stations had been completed, about 45% of the station installation work was under way or had been completed and data signature devices for authentication of information were being installed. A fourth introductory training programme had been held at Dubna (Russian Federation) in June 1998 for monitoring station personnel in Eastern Europe, North America and Western Europe and a second technical training programme was under way.

54. The IDC had installed the second of four test releases of the application software and the Preparatory Commission was in a position to provide initial services and to distribute IMS data and IDC products to Member States. Reviewed event bulletins and atmospheric radioactivity reports were being produced regularly and the third and fourth training courses to improve understanding of how the IDC functioned and to identify a pool of possible candidates for analyst posts in the IDC had taken place. The backbone of the global telecommunication infrastructure, which made the swift and secure transmission of IMS data to the IDC and Member States possible, had been tested and accepted and was now in use. Furthermore, the IDC was connected to nine destinations by terrestrial lines and to 12 remote sites by geostationary satellites. Site surveys for the installation of further communication nodes were progressing.

55. Preparatory activities for the on-site inspection aspect of the regime - in readiness for the Treaty's entry into force - had continued to focus on the drafting of an operational manual; establishing the specifications for the equipment for testing and training purposes and obtaining that equipment; and organizing training programmes and practical exercises to develop a corps of inspectors. During the past year, two introductory on-site inspection courses - attended by 72 trainees from 37 signatory States - had taken place. In December, the first simulation of various phases of the on-site inspection process would take place. In 2000, two on-site inspection courses would be organized for potential inspectors.

56. The Preparatory Commission had set up a legal framework to protect its interests while at the same time allowing for the verification activities to proceed swiftly. Four facility agreements, setting the basis for the Commission's activities in the States hosting or taking responsibility for monitoring stations, had been concluded and interim exchanges of letters governing verification activities pending the conclusion of facility agreements had been conducted with more than 50 States.

57. The Commission had made every effort to emphasize the advantages of participating in the Treaty by identifying possible spin-offs from the Treaty's verification regime and the

resulting data. Workshops on international co-operation had stressed the Treaty's fundamental importance in strengthening global peace and security and possible applications of the technologies used within the framework of verification, as well as other peaceful applications of the IMS data. A database of meetings of possible relevance for R&D had been developed.

58. Those achievements had been made possible through the strong support of Member States for the Preparatory Commission's activities. States had worked hard to lay the foundations for an effective and efficient verification system, supported by a small and flexible Secretariat. The Preparatory Commission was grateful for that support and was committed to carrying out the programme of activities entrusted to it.

59. The Secretariat had continued the development of the experts communication system, which enabled national experts to contribute to the Commission's work. The Commission intended to develop that system still further to help Member States participate better in its work.

60. The support of Member States was demonstrated by the high level of payment of assessed contributions. As of 23 September 1999, 71.8% of the contributions for 1999 had been paid - an increase of 55.4% over 1998. The administrative costs were low, since they represented only 20% of the verification-related budget. Staff continued to grow as the Secretariat's responsibilities increased and on 30 September 1999 there was a total of 206 staff members from 65 signatory States.

61. Finally, he noted that the Commission was grateful for the advice and co-operation provided by the other organizations at the Vienna International Centre and elsewhere, as well as for the continuing support and understanding of the host country, all of which had helped to make such rapid progress possible.

#### REQUESTS FOR THE RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS

62. The PRESIDENT said that during the meeting that it had held in the morning to examine delegates' credentials, the General Committee had considered, in the light of the criteria and guidelines for the consideration of requests for the restoration of voting rights approved by the General Conference at its previous session, two requests submitted by Afghanistan and Senegal. In the case of Afghanistan, the Committee recommended that its voting rights should not be restored since the request, which had been received only during the current session, did not comply fully with the criteria and guidelines. In the case of Senegal, the Committee also recommended that its voting rights should not be restored. He took it that the General Conference wished to accept those recommendations.

63. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.