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

THE RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION OF PATIENTS

Resolution adopted on 1 October 1999 during the ninth plenary meeting

The General Conference,

- (a) Aware, through the Nuclear Safety Review for the Year 1997 (GC(42)/INF/6), that in June 1997 the Council of the European Union adopted a “Council Directive on Health Protection of Individuals against the Dangers of Ionising Radiation in relation to Medical Exposures” (97/43/EURATOM),
- (b) Noting that, in the past, emphasis has been placed in the Board of Governors on the importance of accurate radiation dose delivery in patient therapy,
- (c) Noting also, from document GC(43)/INF/8, that (as reflected in an International Seminar on Radiological Protection in Diagnostic Radiology held recently in Málaga, Spain) the question of the radiation protection of patients undergoing diagnostic and therapeutic medical procedures is attracting increasing attention, stimulated in part by a wish to prevent serious accidents, and there is a growing recognition of the need to control doses from normal procedures - particularly high-dose ones such as interventional radiology,
- (d) Concerned about the numerous cases of accidental overexposure of radiotherapy patients reported in publications of the Agency and aware that doses significantly different from those prescribed in radiotherapy can have serious consequences, including the death of patients,
- (e) Noting in addition that the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, in its report to the 48th session of the United Nations General Assembly (A/48/46), pointed out that diagnostic uses of radiation accounted for the largest exposure from man-made sources,

(f) Recognizing, however, that the International Commission on Radiological Protection, in its latest recommendations (issued as ICRP Publication 60), stated that simple, low-cost measures were available for reducing doses without loss of diagnostic information,

(g) Convinced that well-designed programmes which include quality assurance and quality control aspects for the radiological protection of patients can, by reducing radiation exposure during diagnosis without loss of diagnostic information and reducing the probability of accidental overexposure during therapy, maximize the benefits to patients,

(h) Mindful that it is a statutory function of the Agency to establish standards of safety for the protection of health and the minimization of danger to life and to provide for the application of those standards, inter alia, at the request of States,

(i) Welcoming the ongoing development by the Agency of a safety guide on radiological protection in medical exposure, and

(j) Convinced also that the time is ripe for promoting an exchange of information on the issue of improving the radiological protection of patients,

1. Requests the Secretariat:

(i) 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; and

(ii) to consider ways of providing financial support in order that participants from developing countries may attend the above-mentioned international meeting; and

2. Requests the Director General to report to it at its forty-fourth (2000) regular session on the implementation of this resolution.