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Committee of the Whole

Record of the Second Meeting

Held at the Austria Center Vienna on Tuesday, 16 September 2003, at 3.15 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. GARCIA (Philippines)

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[*] GC(47)/21.

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(47)/INF/14/Rev.2.

03-05287 (LXIII)

Abbreviations used in this record:

INPRO International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles

16. Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications

(GC(47)/11; GC(47)/INF/6; GC(47)/COM.5/L.5 and L.8)

1. The representative of INDIA said that the draft resolution submitted by Brazil on behalf of the Group of 77, contained in document GC(47)/COM.5/L.5, did not differ significantly from resolution GC(45)/RES/12.B. He stressed the importance of the use of isotope hydrology for water resources management in the developing world and recommended the adoption of the draft resolution.
2. The representative of MEXICO proposed that the words "and institutes" be added after "universities" in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution.
3. The representative of GERMANY expressed support for the Agency's activities related to isotope hydrology and the draft resolution. He wondered whether the general formula "subject to the availability of resources" in operative paragraph 1 should not, for the sake of clarity, be replaced by "within the approved 2004-2005 budget lines".
4. The DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF BUDGET AND FINANCE said that the Secretariat could agree to that more specific wording.
5. The representative of INDIA, supported by the representative of MOROCCO, expressed concern that changing an agreed standard formulation might set a precedent and impact on other resolutions. He asked the Secretariat whether that amendment would have any repercussions on implementation of the isotope hydrology programme.
6. The representative of GREECE welcomed the draft resolution and associated himself with the suggestion made by the representative of Germany. He proposed the insertion of "and with regional organizations" after "international organizations" in operative paragraph 1(c) and the insertion of "and with relevant regional agencies" after "United Nations agencies" in operative paragraph 2.
7. The DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF BUDGET AND FINANCE assured the representative of India that the amendment suggested by the representative of Germany would have no implications vis-à-vis programme implementation or the manner in which the proposed activities of the resolution were achieved.
8. The CHAIRMAN asked the representative of Germany if he could go along with retention of the original formulation
9. The representative of GERMANY said he would not insist on his amendment.
10. The CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(47)/COM.5/L.5 with the suggested amendments to operative paragraphs 1(c) and 2.
11. It was so agreed.
12. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the meeting be suspended to enable delegations to conduct further consultations in the interests of facilitating consensus on the adoption of resolutions.
13. It was so decided.

The meeting was suspended at 3.40 p.m. and resumed at 5.00 p.m.

14. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, introducing the draft resolution contained in draft resolution (GC(47)/COM.5/L.8), said that it was an update of the Agency's efforts in the development of innovative nuclear technology. He noted that, unlike resolution GC(46)/RES/11.C, there was no direct indication of the origin of financial support for implementation. He hoped that the Committee would support the draft resolution.
15. The representative of NEW ZEALAND said that a number of Member States had difficulty in accepting any link being made between nuclear energy and the concept of sustainable development. Accordingly, her delegation proposed deleting the words "for sustainable development" at the end of preambular paragraph (c).
16. The representative of JAPAN proposed inserting, at the beginning of operative paragraph 4, the phrase "Emphasizes the need for appropriate extrabudgetary funding and resources for INPRO and", which was the formulation agreed to by consensus in the 2002 resolution contained in document GC(46)RES/11.C.
17. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, having welcomed the draft resolution, proposed replacing ", and particularly" in operative paragraph 1 by "in response to the relevant General Conference resolutions, in particular".
18. Regarding the amendment proposed by the representative of New Zealand on preambular paragraph (c), he did not see why language that had been acceptable in the 2002 resolution should not be acceptable in 2003.
19. The representative of INDIA supported the view expressed by the representative of the United States of America on preambular paragraph (c). For countries such as India, nuclear energy was an inevitable option and was part of sustainable development. He therefore appealed to the delegation of New Zealand to reconsider its proposal.
20. Turning to the proposal made by the representative of Japan with regard to extrabudgetary support for INPRO, he said that since some funding of INPRO now came from the Regular Budget, he could go along with the Russian Federation's formulation in operative paragraph 4.
21. The representatives of AUSTRIA and IRELAND endorsed the proposal made by New Zealand.
22. The representative of GERMANY also supported the deletion proposed by the representative of New Zealand, and endorsed the proposal made by Japan.
23. The representative of CANADA proposed that the words "collaborative efforts" replace "joint developments" in operative paragraph 3 and that the words "the development of" be inserted after "work packages on" in operative paragraph 4.
24. The representative of the NETHERLANDS suggested inserting the word "also" before "for sustainable development" in preambular paragraph (c).
25. Regarding operative paragraph 4, his delegation preferred retention of the formulation as it stood.
26. The representative of SWEDEN expressed support for New Zealand's proposal and said she would also like the word "sustainability" to be deleted from operative paragraph 2.
27. She asked the Russian Federation why the word "safeguards" had been changed to "proliferation resistance" in that same paragraph.

28. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that Member States' positions on the use of nuclear technology for sustainable development were clear and had not changed since the previous year's debate. For the time being, his delegation preferred retention of preambular paragraph (c) as it stood. Perhaps the amendment proposed by the representative of the Netherlands could help reach consensus.
29. His delegation could accept the amendments proposed by Canada and the United States of America.
30. Operative paragraph 4 should reflect the fact that INPRO was to receive some funding from the Regular Budget and so he could not support the proposal made by the representative of Japan.
31. In reply to the representative of Sweden, he said that during the implementation of Phase I of INPRO, it had become clear that the scope of the project should cover not only safeguards, but also the broader sphere of proliferation resistance, a key element in the strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.
32. The representative of INDIA said that the use of the term "sustainable development" would doubtless continue to be the subject of dispute. It was difficult to understand how countries could object to the use of nuclear power for sustainable development, given the prospect of the world's population increasing to as much as nine billion. None of the potential options for energy production should be dismissed out of hand. Some countries were lucky; they could afford the luxury of banning nuclear power for, say, the next 100 years, and he did not dispute their right to do so. The Agency was the only organization in the United Nations system which could investigate the use of nuclear technology for sustainable development and the INPRO project was addressing the concerns of the international community about nuclear safety, proliferation and economic issues. He did not understand why a draft which echoed the wording of the previous year's resolution was now being questioned.
33. The representative of FRANCE agreed that it seemed inadvisable to abandon the wording agreed in resolution GC(46)/RES/11.C, and delete the phrase "for sustainable development" in preambular paragraph (c). All attempts to find new energy sources, nuclear or otherwise, should take sustainable development into account. The draft resolution was addressed only to those States which were investigating the potential of nuclear technology for energy production, not to those which were not.
34. Regarding operative paragraph 4, he supported the proposal made by the representative of Japan to reintroduce the wording of resolution GC(46)/RES/11.C.
35. In reply to a question from the CHAIRMAN, the representative of IRELAND said that he could not accept the wording of preambular paragraph (c). His instructions from his Government were to ensure that the phrase "for sustainable development" was deleted from the draft.
36. The representative of GREECE suggested that the last phrase of preambular paragraph (c) be amended to read "... for their sustainable development". After all, the draft resolution was addressed to only a small number of interested Member States.
37. The representative of the NETHERLANDS pointed out that a consensus was not really needed at all. Preambular paragraph (c) merely "invited" interested Member States to "consider" examining nuclear technology. He suggested deleting the phrase "the issues of the nuclear fuel cycle, in particular by examining".

38. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION felt that the benefits of innovation, safety, economic competitiveness and proliferation resistance could not be achieved without considering nuclear fuel cycle issues.

39. The CHAIRMAN invited further comments on the other contentious amendment, namely the proposal by the representative of Japan with respect to operative paragraph 4.

40. The representative of JAPAN said that although prior to 2003 some financing for INPRO had come from the Regular Budget and a small contribution had been agreed from the 2004-2005 Regular Budget, the basic extrabudgetary nature of the financing had not changed. He therefore could not understand why his proposal was not acceptable.

41. The HEAD OF THE NUCLEAR POWER TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT SECTION confirmed that INPRO had been established in 2001 as an extrabudgetary project and had continued as such until 2003. While some Agency technical and administrative support had been provided, there had been no regular budgetary financing.

42. After further discussions involving the representatives of INDIA, JAPAN, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and IRELAND, the CHAIRMAN invited those representatives and the representative of NEW ZEALAND to consult as necessary and agree on a wording for preambular paragraph (c) and for operative paragraph 4 as soon as possible.

13. Measures to strengthen international co-operation in nuclear, radiation and transport safety and waste management (resumed) (GC(47)/7; GC(47)/9; GC(47)/INF/3; GC(47)/INF/4; GC(47)/COM.5/L.4/Rev.1)

43. The representative of AUSTRALIA, introducing the revised draft resolution contained in document GC(47)/COM.5/L.4/Rev.1, drew attention to the amendments made in the light of the proposals put forward at the preceding meeting.

44. The representative of MOROCCO proposed changing operative paragraph 16 by substituting “urges the Secretariat to continue” for “urges the continuation of” as it was the more usual wording.

45. The representative of GREECE asked for a clarification from the Secretariat as to why operative paragraph 26 read “as soon as possible in 2004” and not “in March 2004” in line with operative paragraph 11.

46. The DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF RADIATION AND WASTE SAFETY said the Secretariat’s intention was to submit a draft action plan on the safety of decommissioning to the Board for approval in March 2004. However, it had been requested that the Advisory Committee on Decommissioning review the draft action plan and it was not due to meet until May. He hoped that a postal review would be possible enabling the Secretariat to submit the draft action plan in March.

47. The representative of YEMEN requested the Secretariat to add the names of the co-sponsors of the revised draft resolution.

48. The CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(47)/COM.5/L.4/Rev.1 with the amendments discussed.

49. It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.