

General Conference

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Fifty-second regular session

General Committee

Record of the First Meeting

Held at the Austria Center, Vienna on Monday, 29 September 2008, at 2.25 p.m.

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¹ GC(52)/21.

Attendance

Chairman

Mr GHISI (Italy), President of the General Conference

Members

Mr VALLIM GUERREIRO (Brazil), Vice-President of the General Conference

Ms GERVAIS-VIDRICAIRE (Canada), Vice-President of the General Conference

Mr BJÖRNSSON (Iceland), Vice-President of the General Conference

Ms TOBING (Indonesia), Vice-President of the General Conference

Mr SOLTANIEH,, representing Mr. AGHAZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-President of the General Conference

Mr MWIRIA, representing Ms KOSGEI (Kenya), Vice-President of the General Conference

Mr ENKHSAIKHAN (Mongolia), Vice-President of the General Conference

Mr SERGEEV, representing Mr. KIRIENKO (Russian Federation), Vice-President of the General Conference

Mr NIEWODNICZANSKI (Poland), Chairman of the Committee of the Whole

Mr HORVATIC (Croatia), Additional Member

Mr ZNIBER (Morocco), Additional Member

Mr OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic), Additional Member

Mr SCHELAND, representing Mr BODMAN (United States of America), Additional Member

Mr UZCÁTEGUI DUQUE, representing Mr MOLINA (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Additional Member

Chairman of the Board of Governors

Mr SKOKNIC (Chile)

Secretariat

Mr WALLER, Deputy Director General, Department of Management

Mr ANING, Secretary of the Committee

- Adoption of the agenda for the meeting
(GC(52)/GEN/1)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, in conducting the Committee's business, he intended to follow the established practice whereby its meetings were private but representatives of Member States which had requested the inclusion of an item in the agenda were entitled, pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure, to attend relevant meetings and to participate, without vote, in the discussion of their request. Representatives of other Member States could also attend the Committee's meetings and participate in discussions as decided by the Committee.
2. The proposed agenda for the meeting contained the two traditional sub-items under the item "Arrangements for the Conference", namely "Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items for initial discussion" and "Closing date of the session and opening date of the next session".
3. The agenda was adopted.

5. Arrangements for the Conference

(a) Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items for initial discussion
(GC(52)/1 and Add.1)

4. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the provisional agenda for the Conference (GC(52)/1) and the supplementary item proposed for inclusion in the agenda (GC(52)/1/Add.1). He reminded the Committee that it was considering only the question of whether or not to recommend the inclusion of items, their allocation for initial discussion and the suggested order of discussion. In accordance with Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure, members of the Committee were not to engage in a discussion of the substance of any item, except in so far as that was relevant to the question of whether to recommend that item's inclusion in the agenda.
5. Ms VIDRICAIRE (Canada) said that her country would greatly prefer to have a single item on the Middle East. A constructive approach that preserved the possibility of reaching consensus should be adopted in the work of the General Conference on that sensitive question.
6. Mr ZNIBER (Morocco) said that he had addressed a letter to the Director General requesting the inclusion of a supplementary item on Israeli nuclear capabilities. The Arab Group viewed that issue as important and it was one that the General Conference had already considered on several occasions. The relevance of the issue had been underscored in a letter sent by the Resident Representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and issued in document GC(52)/17.
7. Mr SOLTANIEH (Islamic Republic of Iran) lent his full support to the request for inclusion of the supplementary item and endorsed the remarks made by the delegate of Morocco.
8. Mr SCHELAND (United States of America) said that his country wished to register its protest against the Arab Group's reintroduction of the agenda item on Israeli nuclear capabilities, which it considered a prejudicial and discriminatory effort to single out one country in the Middle East while ignoring the real and acute risks of proliferation in that region due to the failure of certain States to

comply with their safeguards obligations. He noted that no other agenda item named a Member State. The proposal was an unfortunate attempt to politicize the work of Agency, a technical organization, and to undermine the substantive work of the General Conference. The United States recognized that the application of safeguards in the Middle East was an important issue and it continued to hope that consensus could be reached within the framework of the existing agenda item. It also continued to support the Director General's efforts to convene a Middle East forum. For two consecutive General Conferences, no action had been taken on the second anti-Israeli agenda item. In fact, no resolution had been adopted on it since 1991, and even then only narrowly. While his country supported the general principle of the NPT's universality, which was reflected in other General Conference resolutions, it would vigorously oppose any resolution that singled out Israel.

9. Mr UZCÁTEGUI DUQUE (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his delegation was in favour of including the item in the agenda and he endorsed the remarks made by the delegate of Morocco.

10. Mr BJÖRNSSON (Iceland) expressed support for the Canadian position that there should be a single item dealing with the subject.

11. Ms TOBING (Indonesia) said that her country associated itself with the ministerial declaration recently adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement and supported the inclusion of the item in the agenda.

12. Mr OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that Rule 13 of the Rules of Procedure accorded to all Member States of the Agency the right to propose a supplementary item. A large number of Member States, including the members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab Group, had requested the inclusion of the supplementary item, which was not discriminatory but merely a reflection of the situation prevailing in the Middle East where one country had a special status.

13. Mr MWIRIA (Kenya) expressed support for the item's inclusion in the agenda. It was not true that it was discriminatory to single out Israel. On the contrary, it would be discriminatory not to mention Israel when other countries like the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Islamic Republic of Iran were under Agency scrutiny. Including the item would serve the interests of peace in the entire region, including Israel.

14. Mr VALLIM GUERREIRO (Brazil) expressed support for the right of every Member State to propose the inclusion of items in the agenda for the General Conference as long as they were relevant to the activities of the Agency. That was the case with the supplementary item in question.

15. The CHAIRMAN said that, taking into consideration the reservations expressed, he took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that the agenda for the current session should consist of all the items listed in documents GC(52)/1 and Add.1.

16. It was so agreed.

17. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the allocation of items for initial discussion and the order of discussion suggested in documents GC(52)/1 and Add.1.

18. Ms VIDRICAIRE (Canada) pointed out that it would be logical for the supplementary item to become item 21 and be discussed together with item 20, "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East".

19. It was so agreed.

20. Mr ZNIBER (Morocco) drew attention to the fact that the supplementary item was of crucial importance and called on the Chairman to ensure that sufficient time was allowed for discussion of it.

21. The CHAIRMAN said he would make every effort to allow time not only for discussion but also for consultations on the item.

22. On that understanding, and if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference the allocation of agenda items for initial discussion and the order of discussion suggested in documents GC(52)/1 and Add.1.

23. It was so decided.

(b) Closing date of the session and opening date of the next session

24. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the IAEA official holiday of Eid al-Fitr fell on Thursday, 2 October, and that the plenary had decided that the General Conference would not meet on that day. It would therefore need to continue one day longer than usual until Saturday, 4 October.

25. The number of speakers registering to speak in the general debate was one of the main factors influencing the length of the session. Over 100 delegations had registered to speak so far. The cooperation and goodwill of all delegations would be required if the Conference was to finish its work on schedule. He was sure that the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole would do his best to ensure that the Committee finished its work by Friday afternoon at the latest. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to recommend to the Conference a closing date for the current session of Saturday 4 October 2008.

26. It was so decided.

27. The CHAIRMAN said that the proposed date for the opening of the next regular session of the General Conference was Monday, 14 September 2009.

28. Mr OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that shortage of time was always a problem for the General Conference. A starting date of 14 September was likely to coincide, for the second year running, with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Surely, by 2009, the new conference centre would be available, which would give the Agency more flexibility in scheduling its meetings.

29. Mr ZNIBER (Morocco) noted that a starting date of 14 September would avoid the actual day of Eid al-Fitr.

30. Mr WALLER (Deputy Director General for Management) said that, while the new conference centre was almost complete, it would still be necessary to use the Austria Center for some meetings during the 53rd regular session of the General Conference since the C building in the Vienna International Centre would be out of commission owing to asbestos removal work. When the C building was available once more, in approximately 2011, the Agency would indeed enjoy more flexibility.

31. Mr OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) asked the Secretariat to ensure that the General Conference did not coincide with Ramadan again in 2010.

32. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to recommend to the Conference an opening date for the next regular session of Monday, 14 September 2009.

33. It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 2.50 p.m.