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Strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities

Resolution adopted on 25 September 2014 during the seventh plenary meeting

1. General

The General Conference,

- (a) Recalling resolution GC(57)/RES/11 on “Strengthening of the Agency’s technical cooperation activities”,
- (b) Bearing in mind that the objectives of the Agency as stated in Article II of the Statute are “to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world” and to ensure that the assistance provided by it is not used “to further any military purpose”,
- (c) Recalling that one of the statutory functions of the Agency is to “encourage and assist research on, and development and practical application of, atomic energy for peaceful uses throughout the world”,
- (d) Acknowledging that for developing countries, including least developed countries (LDCs), the TC Programme is a major vehicle for executing this function,
- (e) Recalling that the Statute and the Revised Guiding Principles and General Operating Rules to Govern the Provision of Technical Assistance by the Agency as contained in INFCIRC/267 are the Agency’s established guidelines for the formulation of the TC Programme, and also recalling other directives from the General Conference and the Board of Governors relevant to the formulation of the TC Programme, including the Agency’s Medium Term Strategy 2012-2017,
- (f) Further recalling the Board of Governors’ requirement in GOV/1931 of 12 February 1979 that all Member States receiving technical assistance from the Agency should have signed the Revised Supplementary Agreement (RSA) concerning the provision of technical cooperation by the Agency,

- (g) Recalling the Brussels Declaration on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the 2011-2020 Programme of Action of the Fourth UN Conference of the LDCs and the “Istanbul Declaration on Least Developed Countries: Time for action”,
 - (h) Taking into account that the TC Programme of the Agency is needs-based,
 - (i) Mindful of the increasing number of Member States requesting TC projects and of the Agency’s Medium Term Strategy 2012-2017,
 - (j) Noting the substantive outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference relating to the Agency’s technical cooperation activities,
 - (k) Recognizing that Member States and the Secretariat are working to promote transparency and accountability in project formulation, management, monitoring and evaluation of the TC Programme, and
 - (l) Mindful of the shared responsibility of all Member States towards enhancing and supporting TC activities of the Agency,
1. Stresses that, when formulating the TC Programme, the Secretariat should adhere strictly to the provisions of the Statute and the guiding principles and policies as contained in INFCIRC/267 and to relevant directives from the General Conference and the Board of Governors, and welcomes the Secretariat’s efforts to ensure that TC projects are consistent with the Agency’s Statute; and
 2. Stresses the importance of the Revised Supplementary Agreement (RSA) and encourages all Member States receiving technical cooperation to sign a RSA Concerning the Provision of Technical Assistance by the Agency and implement its provisions.

2. Strengthening Technical Cooperation Activities

- (a) Considering that the strengthening of technical cooperation activities in the fields of – inter alia – food and agriculture, human health, water resource management, biotechnology, environment, industry, knowledge management, and nuclear energy programming, planning and production will substantially contribute to the sustainable socio-economic development and help enrich the quality of life and the well-being of the peoples of the world, and particularly those of developing Member States of the Agency, including the least developed ones,
- (b) Aware that the TC Programme contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and also to the achievement of national goals for sustainable development, particularly in developing countries,
- (c) Expressing appreciation of the Directors General’s initiative in selecting the marine environment as a key focus areas in 2013-14, and aware of the role of TC projects in strengthening national and regional capacities in the application of nuclear techniques for a sustainable ecological balance and the survival of coastal regions and the marine environment, particularly in the developing countries,
- (d) Conscious of the potential of nuclear power for meeting increasing energy requirements in a number of countries, and of the need for sustainable development, including environmental protection, and of the need for the application of the Agency’s safety standards and nuclear security guidelines to be applied in all uses of nuclear technology in order to protect humankind and the environment, and noting the Agency’s support aimed at human resources and nuclear power infrastructure development,

- (e) Taking note with appreciation of the activities being developed by the Agency in the field of nuclear knowledge management, education and training and particularly of the initiatives being emphasized by the TC Programme in assisting national nuclear and other entities to build and enhance the basic infrastructure and regulatory framework in this field, and to further improve their technical capacity for ensuring sustainability,
- (f) Recognizing that human capital planning, the development of human resources through scientific visits, fellowships and training courses, expert services and appropriate equipment supply continue to be important components of TC activities to ensure impact and sustainability, and expressing appreciation for the extrabudgetary contributions of some States, as well as in-kind contributions such as, inter alia, experts, training courses and infrastructure, that make those TC activities possible, and
- (g) Recalling that PACT was relocated in 2014 to the Department of Technical Cooperation and acknowledging the effort of the Secretariat to integrate PACT into the TC Programme.
1. Requests the Secretariat to continue to facilitate and to enhance the transfer of nuclear technology and know-how among Member States for peaceful uses as embodied in the Agency's TC Programme, taking into account and emphasizing the importance of specific needs of developing countries, including those of LDCs in line with Article III of the Statute;
 2. Requests the Director General to strengthen the Agency's TC activities, in consultation with Member States, through the development of effective programmes with well-defined outcomes aimed at promoting and improving the scientific, technological, research and regulatory capabilities of the Member States implementing projects, account being taken of the infrastructure and the level of technology of the countries concerned, by continuing to assist them in their peaceful, safe, secure and regulated applications of atomic energy and nuclear techniques;
 3. Welcomes the Secretariat's efforts to promote gender equality throughout the TC Programme, and encourages the Secretariat, in close coordination with Member States, to continue its efforts to further advance gender balance in the TC Programme;
 4. Requests the Director General to make every effort to ensure, where relevant, that the Agency's TC Programme, taking into account specific needs of each Member State, particularly developing countries and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), as well as the Agency's adoption of the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) modality in assisting LDCs, contributes to the implementation of the principles expressed in the Istanbul Declaration, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 and to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, and further requests the Director General to keep Member States informed of the Agency's activities in this regard;
 5. Requests the Secretariat to continue, within the framework of the TC Programme, to work actively to provide assistance and support services to Member States, to identify and implement the lessons learned from the Fukushima accident;
 6. Requests the Secretariat to continue within the framework of the TC Programme, to work actively to render assistance and radiological support to the most affected countries in mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and rehabilitating the contaminated territories;
 7. Requests the Secretariat to continue examining in depth the specific characteristics and problems of the LDCs with respect to the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and, in this regard, reiterates its request to the Secretariat to report its conclusions on this matter to the Member States during the next Technical Assistance and Cooperation Committee, and to issue a report, in the form of a supplementary document to the next Technical Cooperation Report; and

8. Encourages the Secretariat to continue implementing the Programme Cycle Management Framework (PCMF) in phases, and to make it simpler and user-friendly so that Member States may use the tools effectively, and to take into account, in designing and implementing subsequent phases, difficulties experienced and concerns of Member States, including lack of adequate training, equipment and IT infrastructure in developing countries, particularly in LDCs.

3.

Effective execution of the Technical Cooperation Programme

- (a) Reiterating the need to strengthen technical cooperation activities and to further enhance the effectiveness and efficiency as well as the transparency of the TC Programme in accordance with Member States' requests, based on their needs and national priorities with a view to strengthening their national programmes, and emphasizing that all measures taken in this regard should also preserve and enhance the ownership of TC projects by recipient Member States,
 - (b) Stressing the importance for the Agency of regular internal and external evaluations (as performed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the External Auditor, respectively) in order to achieve more effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and sustainability, as well as results, of the TC Programme,
 - (c) Appreciating the efforts of the Secretariat in setting up a two-step mechanism of quality assessment and review of projects for the 2012-2013 cycle, on the basis of TC quality criteria, in particular the central criterion of the Logical Framework Approach (LFA),
 - (d) Noting that the key lessons from the review process showed that consideration should be given to moving towards more focused and comprehensive projects, and that a differentiation in LFA treatment should be made between large, complex projects and small, simple ones,
 - (e) Recognizing the growing number of Member States and their increasing demands on the TC Programme and the importance of enhancing within available resources the capacity of Agency staff to meet the needs of Member States, so as to effectively service Member States in line with the Agency's statutory requirements, in particular Articles II and III of the Statute, and further recognizing the valuable contribution of general service staff, and
 - (f) Recalling the IAEA Medium Term Strategy 2012-2017 provision: The recruitment and retention of staff of the highest standards of efficiency, technical competence and integrity are essential for the success and impact of the Agency's programme. Subject to the above, the Secretariat will continue to promote to the extent possible gender equality and equitable geographical representation in the Agency, especially at managerial levels,
1. Urges the Secretariat to continue to work, in close cooperation with Member States, to strengthen TC activities, including the provision of sufficient resources, in accordance with Member States' requests based on their needs and national priorities, inter alia through ensuring that the components of TC projects, training, expertise and equipment are readily available to the Member States that have made such requests;
2. Requests the Secretariat, within available resources, to enhance TC project implementation capacity by ensuring that staff are adequately and appropriately allocated at all levels;
3. Welcomes and further encourages the continuing efforts of the Secretariat to optimize the quality, the number and the impact of TC projects and to create synergies among them, whenever feasible, and in coordination with the Member States concerned;

4. Requests the Secretariat to continue to provide Member States with adequate information and training on project development according to the Logical Framework Approach sufficiently in advance of their consideration by the Technical Assistance and Cooperation Committee and the Board of Governors;
5. Recognizes the importance of regular reporting on the implementation and outcomes of TC projects, urges Member States to adhere to all the requirements in this regard, welcomes the progress achieved and encourages further progress by Member States in the submission of their Progress Performance Assessment Reports (PPARs), and requests the Secretariat to continue to provide necessary guidance to Member States on improving their reporting, as appropriate;
6. Requests the Secretariat, when applying the two-step mechanism in monitoring the quality of TC projects, to reflect on the findings in the TC annual report in this regard, as appropriate;
7. Encourages the Secretariat and Member States to enhance adherence to the central criterion and all the TC requirements, and calls upon the Secretariat to guide Member States in this regard;
8. Requests the Secretariat to continue providing updates on the progress of TC Programme implementation in between annual TC reports; and
9. Requests the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the External Auditor, in the course of their regular work and within resources allocated to these offices from the Regular Budget, to evaluate TC projects on the basis of specific outcomes achieved in relation to objectives outlined in the relevant Country Programme Framework or national development plan, and further requests the External Auditor to report the results to the Board of Governors.

4.

Technical Cooperation Programme Resources and Delivery

- (a) Recalling that the financing of TC should be in line with the concept of shared responsibility and that all Members States share a common responsibility towards financing and enhancing the TC activities of the Agency, and recognizing the increase in the number of recipient Member States that are contributing through government cost-sharing,
- (b) Stressing that the Agency's resources for TC activities should be sufficient, assured and predictable (SAP) to meet the objectives mandated in Article II of the Statute, and welcoming, in this regard, the *Report of the Working Group on Financing the Agency's Activities (WGFAA)*, including to examine the ways and means to render resources for the Technical Cooperation Fund sufficient, assured and predictable, as approved by the Board of Governors in September 2014 (GOV/2014/49) and the recommendations contained therein,
- (c) Recognizing that the Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) target should be set at an adequate level, taking into account not only the growing needs of Member States but also funding capabilities,
- (d) Noting the decision of the Board of Governors to set the target for voluntary contributions to the TCF at the level of US\$ 90.25 million in 2014 and US\$ 91 million in 2015, and that the Indicative Planning Figure for 2016 should not be less than US\$ 92 million and that for 2017 not be less than US\$ 92.5 million,
- (e) Aware of the significant number of approved projects that remain unfunded (footnote-a/projects) in the TC Programme,

- (f) Also aware that the existence of a significant number of such projects also results in an increased workload on the Secretariat in terms of project planning and design review,
- (g) Stressing the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance between the promotional and other statutory activities of the Agency, and taking note of the decision of the Board, which—inter alia—notes that the synchronization of the TC Programme cycle with the budget cycle provides a framework beginning in 2012, to consider appropriate increases to the resources for the TC Programme, including the TCF target where such adjustments would take into account the changes in the level of the regular operational budget from 2009 onwards, the price adjustment factor and other relevant factors as contained in document GOV/2009/52/Rev.1, and taking note of the decision of the Board on the “split contribution system” as one of the measures to protect the purchasing power of the TCF as contained in GOV/2009/52/Rev.1,
- (h) Considering the request to the Secretariat (included in decision GOV/2011/37) to reassess the application of the due account mechanism with a view to its possible future strengthening, and recognizing that its effectiveness depends on its consistent application to all Member States,
- (i) Stressing that Major Programme 6 should be funded appropriately through the Regular Budget, and recalling the decision GOV/2011/37 that recommends—inter alia—one Working Group dealing with both the level of the Regular Budget and the TCF target,
- (j) Expressing appreciation to those Member States which have paid in full their TCF target shares and their obligatory National Participation Costs (NPCs) in a timely manner, noting the improvement in the number of Member States paying their NPCs and thus their strong commitment to the TC Programme, and noting with concern the Rate of Attainment of 2013, which, albeit higher than that of 2012, fell short of the value set by the Board of Governors in 2004, based on the mechanisms established by resolution GC(44)/RES/8, and looking forward to reaching the rate of 100%, which is central to reconfirming the commitment of Member States to the Agency’s TC Programme, and
- (k) Noting the use of the Programme Cycle Management Framework and emphasizing the need for assessing its impact on, inter alia, enhancing coordination, programme planning and the quality of programme delivery as well as increasing the implementation rate,
1. Stresses the need for the Secretariat to continue to work, in consultation with Member States, towards establishing means, including mechanisms, that would achieve the goal of making TC resources sufficient, assured and predictable (SAP);
 2. Urges Member States to pay in full and on time their voluntary contributions to the TCF, encourages Member States to pay their National Participation Costs (NPCs) on time, and requests those which are in arrears with Assessed Programme Costs (APCs) to meet this obligation;
 3. Requests the Secretariat to ensure that the commencement of projects within a national programme will take place upon the receipt of at least the minimum payment of the NPCs without affecting the preparatory activities and that, in the event of a failure to pay any second installment during a biennium, funding for a core project in the next biennium will be suspended until full payment is received;
 4. Requests the Secretariat to make every effort to strictly apply the due account mechanism to all Member States equally, efficiently and effectively, and to devise specific guidelines for its application, in consultation with Member States, and for further approval by the policy-making organs of the Agency;

5. Further requests the Director General to continue to take account of the views of the General Conference when requesting Member States to pledge and pay their respective shares of the TCF targets and to make timely payments to the TCF;
6. Recognizes that the Agency requests that shipments of radioactive materials in the framework of the TC programme are carried out in compliance with the IAEA Regulations for the the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material;
7. While cognizant of the diverse nature of export control regimes, urges Member States to work in close cooperation with the Agency to facilitate the transfer of necessary equipment for TC activities, in accordance with the Statute, in order to ensure that TC project implementation is not delayed by denials of necessary equipment supply to Member States;
8. Requests the Secretariat to continue to actively seek resources to implement footnote-a/ projects;
9. Encourages Member States in a position to make voluntary contributions to show flexibility as regards their use in order to enable the implementation of more footnote-a/ projects;
10. Welcomes all extrabudgetary contributions announced by Member States, including the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative, which is designed to raise US\$ 100 million by 2015 as extrabudgetary contributions to Agency activities, and encourages all Member States in a position to do so to make contributions to meet this goal, and requests the Secretariat to continue to work with all Member States in matching contributions to Member States' needs;
11. Requests the Secretariat to continue to develop a formal process for Member States to share voluntarily their Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs) and footnote-a/ project details, via a searchable electronic format, with other Member States in order to facilitate cooperation and extrabudgetary contributions, while giving at the same time due consideration to the protection of confidentiality of the information contained in CPFs and footnote-a/ project details;
12. Encourages Member States that have not yet started to use the *InTouch* communication platform to do so as soon as possible and requests the Secretariat to take into account the observations of Member States in improving this tool, including through the sharing of experiences and lessons learned by National Liaison Officers (NLO);
13. Requests that the actions of the Secretariat called for in this resolution that are not directly related to the implementation of TC projects be undertaken subject to the availability of resources; and
14. Calls upon Member States and the Secretariat to take the necessary actions on the recommendations made by the Working Group on Financing the Agency's Activities (WGFAA), including to examine the ways and means to render resources for the Technical Cooperation Fund sufficient, assured and predictable, as contained in the report approved by the Board of Governors in September 2014 (GOV/2014/49);

5. Partnerships and Cooperation

- (a) Recalling that CPFs are developed by Member States in cooperation with the Secretariat with the objective of facilitating an understanding of the real needs of developing Member States and of encouraging technical cooperation between Member States through triangular mechanisms, and stressing that CPFs are non-legally-binding documents and subject to revision as Member States' priorities evolve and should not be made a prerequisite for providing TC Programmes,

- (b) Noting that interested Member States making their CPFs available to potential partners on a voluntary basis could facilitate additional cooperation and improve understanding of how TC projects respond to the needs of Member States,
 - (c) Considering that the “Delivering as One” approach for the development, financing and delivery of country programmes by all UN system organizations may have a possible impact on the TC Programme in many areas, including resource mobilization, while noting the relationship between the Agency and the UN system and the nature, character and specificity of the TC Programme, and noting that there are pilot countries implementing this exercise on a voluntary basis,
 - (d) Appreciating the increase in the number of UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) signed by the Agency, resulting in higher synergies with the activities of other UN organizations, while emphasizing that, by virtue of their specialized technical focus, some aspects of TC projects may not fit within UNDAFs, which should not be a requirement for TC projects,
 - (e) Recognizing that national nuclear and other entities are important partners in the implementation of TC programmes in Member States and in promoting the use of nuclear science, technology and innovation for achieving national development objectives, and recognizing also in this regard the role of the National Liaison Officers, the Permanent Missions to the IAEA and the Programme Management Officer (PMO),
 - (f) Recalling previous resolutions favouring innovative educational partnerships – like the World Nuclear University – involving academia, government and industry, and confident that such initiatives can, with the Agency’s support, play a valuable role in promoting strong educational standards and building leadership for an expanding global nuclear profession, and
 - (g) Appreciating the work done by the Agency in promoting partnerships with relevant regional and multilateral organizations and recognizing that such partnerships can play a key role in further disseminating the contribution of the Agency in nuclear applications for peaceful uses, health, and prosperity; maximizing the impact of TC projects; and integrating TC activities into relevant international development frameworks,
1. Requests the Director General to continue consultations and interactions with interested States, the competent organizations of the United Nations system, multilateral financial institutions, regional development bodies and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies to ensure the coordination and optimization of complementary activities, and to ensure that they are regularly informed, where relevant, about the developmental impact of the TC Programme, while aiming at achieving sufficient, assured and predictable resources for the TC Programme;
 2. Requests the Director General to promote, in close consultation with Member States, TC activities supporting the self-reliance, sustainability and further relevance of national nuclear and other entities in Member States, particularly in developing countries, and, in this context, requests him to continue and further enhance regional and interregional cooperation by (a) encouraging activities under and seeking complementarities between national projects and regional cooperation, including regional cooperation agreements, (b) identifying, utilizing and strengthening established regional capacities and resource centres or other qualified institutes, (c) formulating guidelines for the use of such centres and (d) strengthening guidance for partnership mechanisms;
 3. Requests the Director General to resume and to further develop and facilitate cost-sharing, outsourcing and other forms of partnership in development by reviewing and amending or simplifying,

as appropriate, relevant financial and legal procedures for these partnerships, to ensure that their objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (SMART); and

4. Requests the Director General and the Board of Governors to remain seized of this matter and further requests the Director General to report to the Board of Governors periodically and to the General Conference at its fifty-ninth (2015) regular session on the implementation of this resolution, highlighting significant accomplishments of the prior year and indicating goals and priorities for the year to come under an agenda item entitled “Strengthening of the Agency’s technical cooperation activities”.