

General Conference

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Sixty-fourth regular session

Plenary

Record of the Ninth Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Thursday, 24 September 2020, at 10.10 a.m.¹

President: Mr FARHANE (Morocco)

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¹ In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Conference decided that delegations so wishing could attend in a virtual manner using the Interprefy IT platform or make their statements by means of a pre-recorded video.

² GC(64)/19.

Abbreviations used in this record

COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
IT	information technology
MESA	Middle East and South Asia Group
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
SEAP	South East Asia and the Pacific Group
TC	technical cooperation
UAE	United Arab Emirates

– **Restoration of voting rights**
(GC(64)/INF/16)

1. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had met earlier in the day to examine the request from Zimbabwe set out in document GC(64)/INF/16 for the restoration of its voting rights under Article XIX.A of the Statute. The Committee had recommended that consideration of Zimbabwe's rights to vote in the Agency be deferred until 2021.
2. He took it that the Conference accepted the recommendation by the General Committee.
3. It was so decided.

24. Examination of delegates' credentials
(GC(64)/24/Corr.1)

4. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had met earlier in the day as a Credentials Committee to examine the credentials of all delegates, as provided for in Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure. After discussion, the Committee had recommended that the Conference adopt the draft resolution set out in paragraph 7 of its report contained in document GC(64)/24/Corr.1, with the reservations and positions expressed in the report.
5. Ms AL-HADID (Jordan) said that her country's joining the consensus to accept the report of the General Committee on the delegates' credentials by no means implied recognition of Israel's jurisdiction over the territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights, from which Israel must withdraw in accordance with international law and international resolutions. The borders of Israel were limited to those set out within the 1994 peace agreement between Israel and Jordan.
6. Mr EL-MOLLA (Egypt) said that his country's joining the consensus to accept the report of the General Committee on the delegates' credentials by no means implied recognition of Israel's jurisdiction over the territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights. The borders of Israel were limited to those set out within the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt.
7. Mr MOHAMMAD POUR FERAMI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the adoption of the report of the Credentials Committee did not in any way constitute recognition by his country of the Israeli regime.
8. The PRESIDENT took it that, with the positions and reservations expressed, the General Conference was prepared to adopt the draft resolution contained in paragraph 7 of document GC(64)/24/Corr.1.
9. It was so decided.

9. Election of members to the Board of Governors (GC(64)/9 and 20)

10. The PRESIDENT drew attention to document GC(64)/9, containing the designations of members to serve on the Board of Governors from the end of the sixty-fourth (2020) regular session until the end of the sixty-fifth (2021) regular session of the General Conference.

11. Recalling that, under Rule 83 of the Rules of Procedure, the presiding officer must indicate to the General Conference those elective places on the Board which must be filled, he referred to paragraph 2 of document GC(64)/20, which indicated, for each geographical area, the number of Member States that must be elected so as to ensure that the Board would be constituted in accordance with Article VI.A of the Statute.

12. There were 11 seats to be filled: 3 for Latin America; 2 for Western Europe; 1 for Eastern Europe; 2 for Africa; 1 for MESA; 1 for SEAP; and 1 additional seat — the so-called floating seat under Article VI.A.2.(c) of the Statute — which that year was to be filled by a Member State from SEAP.

13. Paragraph 3 of document GC(64)/20 listed the 24 Member States which had been either elected by the General Conference in 2019 in accordance with Article VI.A.2 of the Statute, and which would therefore continue to serve on the Board until the end of the regular session of the Conference in 2021, or had been designated by the Board the previous June for membership of the Board pursuant to Article VI.A.1 of the Statute, for the one-year period from the end of the current session until the end of the regular session of the Conference in 2021.

14. He recalled that in 1989 the Conference had approved a procedure whereby no secret ballot would be held when there was agreement regarding the candidate or candidates from a particular area. Balloting would take place only in respect of those areas for which there was no agreed slate. That procedure considerably facilitated the efficient use of the Conference's time. Therefore, Rule 79 of the Conference's Rules of Procedure, which stipulated that elections to the Board were to be by secret ballot, must be suspended in respect of the areas for which no secret ballot would be held.

15. The PRESIDENT took it that the Conference wished to suspend Rule 79 of the Rules of Procedure and elect Egypt and Senegal to the two vacant seats for Africa.

16. Egypt and Senegal were duly elected.

17. The PRESIDENT took it that the Conference wished to suspend Rule 79 of the Rules of Procedure and elect Malaysia to the one vacant seat for SEAP.

18. Malaysia was duly elected.

19. The PRESIDENT said that Austria and Switzerland had submitted their candidatures for the two elective places to be filled for Western Europe. There being no other candidates, he took it that the Conference wished to suspend Rule 79 of the Rules of Procedure and elect Austria and Switzerland to the two vacant seats for Western Europe.

20. Austria and Switzerland were duly elected.

21. The PRESIDENT said that, in respect of Latin America, he had been informed that agreement had been reached in the group on two of the three vacant seats. The two agreed candidates were Argentina and Mexico. For the one remaining vacancy, Peru had presented its candidature. He took it that the Conference wished to suspend Rule 79 of the Rules of Procedure and elect Argentina, Mexico and Peru to the three vacant seats for Latin America.

22. Argentina, Mexico and Peru were duly elected.
23. The PRESIDENT took it that the Conference wished to suspend Rule 79 of the Rules of Procedure and elect New Zealand to the one so-called floating seat.
24. New Zealand was duly elected.
25. The PRESIDENT said that, with regard to the one vacant seat for Eastern Europe, he had been informed that there was no consensus in the group but that Belarus, Poland and Romania had presented their candidature.
26. With regard to the one vacant seat for MESA, he had been informed that there was no consensus in the group. He asked whether there were any candidates for that seat.
27. Mr ALKAABI (United Arab Emirates) said that his country nominated itself as a candidate for the vacant seat for MESA.
28. Mr MOHAMMAD POUR FERAMI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, in accordance with Article VI of the Statute, the General Conference must elect members of the Board of Governors with due regard to equitable representation on the Board as a whole of the members in the areas listed, which included MESA. Unfortunately, there had not been a balanced representation of MESA countries on the Board in the past, with each of the 16 members having been represented anywhere between 0 and 22 times. There was therefore an urgent need to redefine the nomination process in order to ensure that countries were represented in an equitable, apolitical and non-discriminatory manner.
29. The calls to set criteria to that end had always been rejected by two members of the group. Iran highly appreciated the efforts of India, as the current chair of the group, to hold several consultation meetings on agreeing such criteria. Unfortunately, those efforts had been hindered by a few delegations, making it increasingly obvious that MESA's unity was just a pretext for a few members to satiate their political whims.
30. Two countries in the region behaved as if they were entitled to occupy MESA's seats on the Board on a regular basis and explicitly opposed the agreement of any criteria for nominating MESA countries for Board membership. That mentality needed to be rectified, otherwise the group's existence would be in serious jeopardy. In failing to reach a consensus on a nomination, MESA was not equitably serving the interests of its members and had therefore become dysfunctional. Geopolitical groups must work on the basis of consensus when it came to candidature issues. Although permitted, bringing the matter to the General Conference diminished the group's integrity and solidarity. That was why Iran had decided not to present its own nomination for membership of the Board to the current session of the Conference. At the same time, his country categorically objected to any nomination from MESA for membership in the Board, pending the resolution of the issue.
31. The PRESIDENT said that, as there was no agreement with regard to candidates for the Eastern Europe and MESA area groups, the General Conference would proceed to a vote to fill the two vacancies, in accordance with Rule 79 of the Rules of Procedure.
32. Ms KROIS (Poland) said that her country had been a firm supporter of the Agency's activities since its inception, and had recently shown its support for the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, named after the prominent Polish-born and French-educated scientist. Poland's nuclear research capacity and pool of scientists had remained well developed since the time of Marie Skłodowska-Curie.
33. Her country participated actively in the Agency's TC activities. It was also in the process of transforming its energy sector, with a view to nuclear power making up 7% of its national energy mix

by 2043. Nuclear energy and nuclear safety remained high on the country's political agenda, both domestically and internationally, and it was involved in the current NPT review cycle.

34. If it became a member of the Board of Governors, Poland hoped to promote sustainable nuclear safety and security frameworks in Member States, in particular in the area of nuclear power infrastructure development. It would also encourage the peaceful use of nuclear energy for achieving climate change goals and support international instruments in the field of nuclear and radiological security. Her country would further promote peer review missions in the area of nuclear security and capacity building in the area of nuclear safety. Poland was fully committed to strengthening the Agency for the advancement of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

35. Mr ISTRATE (Romania) said that his country had done everything in its power to avoid a vote at the General Conference given the current pandemic conditions. It had made two proposals for a memorandum of understanding on the rotation of Eastern European group members for elected seats and had held bilateral and multilateral talks with a view to reaching a compromise at group level. Unfortunately its efforts had been to no avail. While regretting the current situation, Romania took no responsibility for it.

36. His country had presented its candidature earlier than other members of the group. Romania had been absent from the Board of Governors longer than the other two candidates. Despite having a nuclear sector that was more than 60 years old, being committed to the Agency's goals, and contributing constructively to various multilateral nuclear-related forums and institutions, his country had refrained from requesting an earlier return to the Board. It did not want to become a member for vain reasons, but to further advance its contribution to the public good. It hoped to succeed in the name of fairness and the effective multilateralism that underpinned the 'Vienna spirit'.

37. Mr LOZOVIK (Belarus) said that it was not the general custom for Member States to advocate for their election as members of the Board of Governors at the General Conference. His country had already conveyed its case for membership, and would not repeat those arguments out of respect for the General Conference and the tellers.

38. The PRESIDENT said that Rules 83 to 85 of the Rules of Procedure, in particular Rule 84, applied in an election to fill vacant seats to the Board of Governors.

39. In accordance with Rule 79 of the Rules of Procedure, election of members to the Board of Governors would be by secret ballot and there must be no nominations.

40. Under Rule 74 of the Rules of Procedure, explanations of vote would not be allowed before or after the vote.

41. The relevant provisions set out in Article XIX.A of the Statute governing voting rights of Member States applied.

42. In accordance with Rule 84 of the Rules of Procedure, there would be a single ballot for all elective places to be filled. The ballot paper would specify the vacant places to be filled in the order in which they were referred to in Article VI.A.2 of the Statute. Accordingly, each Member State that was entitled and eligible to vote would receive one ballot paper specifying the two vacant seats in the following order: the fixed seat for Eastern Europe in accordance with Article VI.A.2(a) of the Statute; and the fixed seat for MESA in accordance with Article VI.A.2(a) of the Statute.

43. Delegates were requested to indicate on the ballot paper their preference for one candidate for the fixed seat from among the eligible States of Eastern Europe and their preference for one candidate for the fixed seat from among the eligible States of MESA. The candidates for Eastern Europe were Belarus, Poland and Romania, and the candidate for MESA was the United Arab Emirates.

44. A vote was taken by secret ballot.
45. At the invitation of the President, Mr Moeller (Norway) and Mr Srisukwattana (Thailand) acted as tellers.
46. The PRESIDENT proposed proceeding to consideration of the report on the Scientific Forum while the votes were being counted.

– Report on the Scientific Forum

47. The PRESIDENT, recalling that the theme of the Scientific Forum 2020 had been “Nuclear Power and the Clean Energy Transition”, invited the Rapporteur of the Scientific Forum 2020, Ms Kirsty Gogan, to report to the General Conference.
48. Ms GOGAN (Rapporteur of the Scientific Forum 2020) read out the report (annexed hereto).
49. The PRESIDENT thanked Ms Gogan for the report and commended her and the Secretariat on the success of the Scientific Forum 2020.

The meeting was suspended at 11.10 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.

9. Election of members to the Board of Governors (resumed)

50. The PRESIDENT announced the result of the ballot for the fixed seat for MESA to the Conference.

51. In the election of one member for the fixed seat for MESA, the result of the vote was as follows:

<u>Ballot papers returned:</u>	116
<u>Invalid votes:</u>	2
<u>Abstentions:</u>	25
<u>Valid votes:</u>	89
<u>Required majority:</u>	45

Votes obtained

Islamic Republic of Iran:	1
Jordan:	1
United Arab Emirates:	87

52. Having obtained the required majority, the United Arab Emirates was duly elected for the fixed seat for MESA.

53. Ms AL-HADID (Jordan) noted that her country had not been a candidate for membership of the Board of Governors.

54. Mr ALKAABI (United Arab Emirates) thanked all Member States that had voted for his country and said that the UAE looked forward to filling the seat.

55. Mr MOHAMMAD POUR FERAMI (Islamic Republic of Iran) noted that his country had not presented its candidature for membership of the Board at the current session.

56. Mr ULYANOV (Russian Federation) said that the vote that had taken place the preceding day constituted the first time that the Chair of the Committee of the Whole had needed to be elected in that fashion. While a vote was not prohibited, agreeing on a Chair by consensus would have been far preferable. There was a growing trend of countries nominating themselves for positions when no consensus emerged in the regional groups. Again, that was not prohibited, but it was not the optimal way of ensuring fair geographical representation. The high number of delegations that had abstained from the vote that had just been taken, and from the vote taken the previous day, was a clear sign of Member States' displeasure with that trend. If it continued, the Russian Federation would find it hard to vote for a country or even abstain, leaving no option but to vote against it.

57. The current turbulence in international relations seemed to be spreading to the work of the Agency, the 'Vienna spirit' notwithstanding. Politically motivated interests could not be allowed to throw that work off balance. The Agency's fate lay in the hands of its Member States, who needed to make every effort to overcome their differences, reach consensus and ensure that such situations were avoided in the future.

58. The PRESIDENT announced the result of the ballot for the fixed seat for Eastern Europe to the Conference.

59. In the election of one member for the fixed seat for Eastern Europe, the result of the vote was as follows:

<u>Ballot papers returned:</u>	116
<u>Invalid votes:</u>	0
<u>Abstentions:</u>	8
<u>Valid votes:</u>	108
<u>Required majority:</u>	55

Votes obtained

Belarus:	15
Poland:	52
Romania:	41

60. The PRESIDENT said that, since no State had obtained the required majority of votes, a second ballot would be taken at the subsequent meeting to be held that afternoon. Pursuant to Rule 80 of the Rules of Procedure, the second ballot would be restricted to the two candidates who had obtained the largest number of votes in the first ballot: Poland and Romania.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.

IAEA Scientific Forum 2020

Nuclear Power and the Clean Energy Transition

Report to the sixty-fourth regular session of the General Conference

Ms Kirsty Gogan

(CoFounder, Energy for Humanity; Managing Director, LucidCatalyst)

Mr President, Director General, Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured to present to the General Conference the report on the IAEA Scientific Forum 2020, the theme of which was “Nuclear Power and the Clean Energy Transition”.

The annual IAEA Scientific Forum is organized parallel to the General Conference and seeks to showcase and advance the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology to address contemporary challenges.

This year, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi gave priority to the essential role of nuclear power in helping countries meet climate goals. In particular, the Forum highlighted nuclear energy innovations that could assist countries towards a clean energy transition.

The Forum, held during the past two days, covered a wide range of topics that proved to be of great interest and relevance, as could be seen from the active participation of Member State representatives both physically and online. Discussions centred around innovations that are being applied to improve nuclear reactor performance, economics and safety, along with advances in engineering and material sciences to extend the operation of current reactors, develop advanced reactors and improve the backend of the nuclear fuel cycle, thus making nuclear power a more attractive option for countries.

The Forum was structured into four thematic sessions and was opened by Director General Grossi, who highlighted that nuclear power must be part of the solution to curbing emissions and meeting climate goals by 2050. He stressed that innovations, such as those discussed at the Forum, would be necessary for nuclear power to achieve its full potential. Developments now in the pipeline, he said, could make nuclear power more accessible, sustainable and affordable.

His Excellency Mr Bento Costa Lima Leite de Albuquerque Júnior, Minister of Mines and Energy of Brazil, highlighted in his statement that, during the pandemic, Brazil’s nuclear sector helped to sustain the country’s energy supply. He pointed out that the latest technological developments, such as those discussed at the Forum, are paving the way for promising hybrid systems that combine nuclear technologies with renewable sources.

Next, His Excellency Mr Alok Sharma, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of the United Kingdom, and President of the 2021 United Nations Climate Conference (COP26), said in a video message that a clean energy future depends on decarbonizing the power sector, and that nuclear energy, as a source of constant, low-carbon energy, can play an important role in this regard. He also emphasized that making nuclear more affordable would help this low-carbon energy source reach new consumers and markets across the globe.

The need to deploy more low-carbon energy was echoed by Ms Ol’ga Algayerová, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in her statement. She stressed that efforts to green the energy system have brought only modest gains to date, and that we would need to deploy every technology, including nuclear, in order to achieve climate objectives.

Mr Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency emphasized that the scale of the challenge of addressing climate change is so big, that we cannot afford to exclude any low carbon technology, including nuclear. He stressed that nuclear can play a critical role in decarbonizing the industrial sector and also complement other intermittent energy forms which are set to grow, such as wind and solar.

In his address Mr Boris Schucht, Chief Executive Officer of Urenco Limited, pointed to areas in which nuclear needs greater support from political leaders and government officials. At the same time, he called for the sector to work on ways to make nuclear more cost effective, including through standardization and new nuclear power plant designs.

After a brief dialogue between the high level speakers, the opening session closed with video statements from other high level representatives of Member States.

His Excellency Mr Alfonso Cusi, Secretary of Energy of the Philippines, said the pandemic underscored the urgency to address energy security in his country, which is why the Philippines is considering the use of all energy sources, including nuclear.

Mr Zhang Kejian, Chairman of the China Atomic Energy Authority (CAEA), said in a video statement that, with 48 reactors in operation and 13 units under construction, nuclear power is an essential part of the country's energy mix and a reliable option to fulfil commitments to reduce emissions.

Mr François Jacq, General Administrator of the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) said in his video statement that the production of carbon-free electricity is a major asset to achieve goals within the Paris Agreement, and reiterated that nuclear will remain at the heart of the French energy transition strategy.

The first session entitled "Innovations for Achieving a Clean Energy Transition" focused on the scientific and technological innovations that are under way across the nuclear energy sector, highlighting scientific and engineering breakthroughs for advanced reactors and to support the long term operation of current reactors.

The second session entitled "Raising the Bar: Nuclear Energy for Deep Decarbonization" looked at how nuclear power can support the goal of achieving net zero emissions by mid-century, and how energy systems using a mix of nuclear and renewable energy sources can lead the way towards this goal. Discussions focused on the non-electric applications of nuclear energy, including seawater desalination, the production of district and process heat for industries, and hydrogen. Speakers noted that these applications can significantly reduce emissions in hard-to-abate sectors such as industry, transport and buildings.

The third session entitled "Innovations for a Sustainable Future: Managing the Energy Life Cycle" examined the externalities of low carbon energy production and their management. It also considered how innovations in the nuclear fuel cycle can reduce both the volume and the toxicity of high-level waste, contributing to the sustainability of nuclear power.

The fourth session entitled "Advancing the Clean Energy Transition" looked at some of the barriers hindering greater deployment of nuclear power in the transition to clean energy, such as concerns over costs and financing. The IAEA's role in fostering technological innovation and in transferring this technology to its Member States was also highlighted.

During the closing session, Director General Grossi joined a panel with Mr Bernard Bigot, Director-General of the ITER Organization, and representatives from civil society, namely myself, Ms

Kirsty Gogan, CoFounder of the NGO Energy for Humanity and Managing Director of LucidCatalyst, and Ms Fabricia Piñeiro, Member of the Board of Directors of the International Youth Nuclear Congress.

The panel concluded that nuclear power deserves a seat at the table where global discussions over energy policies to curb emissions are conducted. New reactor designs are already opening the door to better economics, streamlined licensing and greater public acceptance of nuclear power. Innovation is also helping to extend the lifetime of many of the world's existing 442 nuclear power reactors in operation, which could provide many more years of safe, efficient and low carbon operation and have a more immediate impact on emissions. Lastly, advances in the management and disposal of radioactive waste and nuclear spent fuel hold the promise of further reducing nuclear power's environmental footprint, making this reliable low carbon energy source sustainable for generations to come.

Director General Grossi concluded that the discussions at the Scientific Forum offered new insights into how we can maximize nuclear technology to achieve urgent climate goals, providing new impetus to seek real solutions to one of the greatest challenges of our time. Many countries are looking to nuclear energy, he said, and we must work to meet this demand. Challenges remained, such as the financing of nuclear power plants, but innovations in this regard are being pursued in different parts of the world. Public communication, Director General Grossi added, is another area where the nuclear sector will need to do better. The IAEA, as the international hub for all things nuclear, can lead the global discussions in these areas and take this debate to COP26 in Glasgow in 2021.

Lastly, Director General Grossi said that with concerted efforts from all sectors — government, industry and civil society — the expansion of nuclear power could have a meaningful impact on the clean energy transition.