



STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA STATEMENT DURING THE INFORMAL IAEA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE, STARTING ON 20 NOVEMBER 2017 DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR REZA NAJAFI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Vienna, 20 November 2017

Agenda Item 2: Technical Cooperation: The Agency's proposed Programme for 2018-2019

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing the Agency's Proposed Technical Cooperation Program for 2018-2019, as contained in documents GOV/2017/45, Add. 1 and Add. 2, as well as Deputy Director General, Mr Dazhu Yang, and the staff of the Department of Technical Cooperation for the briefing provided to Member States on October 31st. We also thank DDG Yang for his introductory remarks under this agenda item. [not to be read]

Mr. Chairman,

2. The Group reiterates the paramount importance of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Program (TCP) as the main vehicle for the Agency's statutory function of encouraging and assisting research on, and development and practical application of, atomic energy for peaceful uses throughout the world. The Technical Cooperation Program plays an important role for the sustainable socioeconomic progress in developing countries and contributes towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. The Group also reiterates that the Technical Cooperation Program is a shared responsibility and that, as such, it has to be the result of the combined efforts mainly of the Department of Technical Cooperation, of the technical Departments and of Member States themselves. These efforts are crucial for the planning and successful implementation of the Technical Cooperation Program, which is based on the needs and evolving priorities of those Member States in which TC projects are implemented. In this regard, the Group reiterates that "the nature, extent and scope of technical assistance to be provided to the requesting State or group of States shall be defined by the Government or Governments concerned", as is the established practice and is reflected in paragraph (f) of the Revised Guiding Principles and General Operating Rules to Govern the Provision of Technical Assistance by the Agency (INFCIRC/267), and in preambular paragraph (k) of Resolution GC(61)/RES/10. The Group is of the view that this important principle should continue to guide the provision of Technical Cooperation by the Agency and requests the Secretariat to reflect it explicitly in future proposed Programmes, in particular in the section on the programming process.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The Group notes that the Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) target for 2018 is €85.665 million, as decided by the General Conference in September 2017, and that for 2019 it is €86.2 million, as per the recommendation submitted to the Board of Governors (GOV/2017/27). The Group also notes that a rate of attainment of 92% has been used as a basis for calculating the resources that are expected to be available. The Group emphasises the importance of the TCF in the implementation of the TCP and reiterates its call on all Member States to pay their contributions in accordance with the indicative scale of assessment in full and on time. The Group also requests the Secretariat to work closely with Member States to improve the rate of attainment on payments to the TCF.

5. The Group reiterates its view that the resources available for the TC Programme should be sufficient, assured and predictable to meet the objectives mandated in Article II of the Statute, and should be increased taking into account the Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs), the increasing number of Member States with a national TCP, the evolution in the level of the regular budget, the Board's decision of June 2016 to place the appropriate emphasis on the Agency's activities directly related to the implementation of the SDGs in Member States, the large unfunded components of TC projects in Member States, also termed as footnote a/projects, the price increases and other relevant factors. The Group notes that the total Footnote-a/Activities amount to almost €64.7 million in 2018 and to over €56.2 million in 2019, which shows that the current level of resources available falls short of the resources needed. The Group further stresses the importance of maintaining an adequate balance between the Agency's promotional and non-promotional activities.

6. The Group recalls the decision of the Board of Governors, as contained in document GOV/2016/29, through which Secretariat was requested to place the appropriate emphasis on the activities directly related to the implementation of the SDGs during the preparation of the Programme and Budget Proposal 2018–2019, and aware of the need for sufficient, assured and predictable resources. The Group requests the Secretariat, when presenting the draft Budget Update for 2019, to inform Member States on how this update gives effect to the Board's decision in GOV/2016/29 to place the appropriate emphasis on the activities directly related to the implementation of the SDGs during the preparation of the Programme and Budget Proposal 2018-2019, in accordance with the General Conference resolution GC (61)/RES/10.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The Group recalls the report of the Director General entitled Addressing the Challenges Facing Least Developed Countries in the Peaceful Application of Nuclear Energy through the Technical Cooperation Programme (GOV/INF/2016/12), which was published in October 2016, and reiterates the request to 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, also to continue to address this matter and to report accordingly in the TC Reports.

8. Mr. Chairman, the Group would like to seize this opportunity to reiterate the request made to the Secretariat to initiate consultations with Member States on the preparation of the 2018 Ministerial Conference on nuclear science, technologies and applications for peaceful uses, and their delivery to Member States through the Agency's TC programme, while highlighting their future contribution to sustainable development. In this regard, the Group notes with concern the recent circulation of an announcement relating to the Conference with provisional information on the structure, content and other modalities without due prior consultation with Member States. The Group looks forward to actively participating in an open-ended, inclusive and transparent consultation process, which should begin as early as possible. The Group is of the view that this Ministerial Conference should be organized and coordinated jointly by the Department of Technical Cooperation and the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications, in collaboration with any other relevant technical Departments.

9. With regard to the issue of the Due Account Mechanism, the Group is of the view that, in striving to achieve the goal of increasing the rate of attainment, the principles of fairness, neutrality and universality should be preserved. The Group also believes that the application of the Mechanism should be done in a manner that does not adversely affect the TC Programme. In this regard, the Group highlights the need for additional information on this issue and is of the view that the organization of technical briefings would contribute to the consideration of the matter.

10. With these remarks, the Group joins the consensus in having the Committee recommend to the Board the actions listed in the Agency's proposed Technical Cooperation program as contained in document GOV/2017/45, and requests that its views and comments be duly reflected in the official records of the TACC meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Agenda item 3: Evaluation of technical cooperation activities in 2017

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China wishes to thank the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for presenting its evaluation of the Agency's technical cooperation activities in 2017, as contained in document GOV/2017/44. The Group also thanks the OIOS for the technical briefing organized on October 31st.
2. The Group continues to attach great importance to the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to strengthen the Agency's ability to ensure management efficiency and programme effectiveness, and to enhance accountability.
3. The Group of 77 and China notes that, every year, approximately one third of OIOS's evaluations focus on technical cooperation (TC) related activities and thematic areas. The Group further notes that the overall cost of OIOS's TC-related evaluation activities in 2017 amounted to €640 204 and that this was equivalent to 0.75% of the Technical Cooperation Fund target for 2017. The Group encourages the OIOS to perform evaluations of the activities of the other technical departments in the Agency, so that evaluation activities are applied in a balanced manner among all major programmes. The Group stresses the importance of a balanced allocation of resources for evaluation purposes between TC-related activities and other activities of the Agency, which require similarly intensive evaluations, since these activities account for a larger portion of the Agency's budget. Given the increasing demands on the Agency's budgetary, human and other resources, the Group encourages the OIOS to carry out its audit and evaluation functions in an effective and judicious manner, utilizing opportunities for synergies presented by other existing audit, evaluation and assessment mechanisms in the Agency and in the Member States.
4. The Group notes that five of the TC-related assignments completed in 2017 were based on the Country-level Evaluation and Audit (CLEA). The Group would appreciate receiving information on the added value of CLEAs for the work of the OIOS, in particular in light of the difficulties mentioned in paragraph 48 of the Report. The Group would also like to receive information on the criteria used by OIOS to select countries for evaluation.
5. With regard to Part B of the document, on "Common Findings across Evaluations Completed in 2017", the Group notes that the Department of Technical Cooperation has worked on past OIOS recommendations that focused on the need to improve the timeliness, quality and value of project monitoring and that, in response, it has introduced an electronic PPAR system for counterparts, replacing the previously paper-based submission process. The Group further notes that counterpart feedback thus far has been very positive and submission rates in the first quarter of 2017 for the year end 2016 reports increased, as evidenced across this year's CLEAs.
6. The G-77 appreciates that across all OIOS reports completed in 2017 and in preceding years capacity building activities were deemed to have filled pertinent knowledge gaps, with the enhanced capacity relevantly applied by participants upon their return to their workplaces. The Group also appreciates that, in several cases, this enhanced capacity has resulted in new services being offered in Member States. The Report mentions that, in relation to cancer control, for instance, the availability of services in relatively close proximity to those that require care contributes towards the improvement of quality of life.
7. The Group notes that the Report on the evaluation of technical cooperation activities in 2017 has made 47 recommendations which were accepted by the Secretariat. The Group also notes that three recommendations from the 2015 and 2016 reports are overdue for implementation. The Group encourages the Secretariat to carefully examine these recommendations, alongside the ones from 2017, and, where relevant, take

necessary corrective measures.

8. With these comments, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the Evaluation of Technical Cooperation Activities in 2017, as contained in document GOV/2017/44, and requests that its views and comments be duly reflected in the official records of the TACC meeting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.