



**Statement of the Group of 77 and China
during the First Meeting of the Working Group on the Regular Budget
and TCF Targets for 2026-2027 of the IAEA, 24 February 2025,
delivered by Mr. Matheus Uller, PM of Brazil**

Co-Chairs,

1. The Group of 77 and China wishes to thank you Co-Chairs for convening this meeting and congratulates you on the assumption of your duties as Chairpersons of this Working Group. We have full confidence in your wisdom and capability in guiding our work and look forward to engaging in a constructive manner and a spirit of openness in our deliberations in the coming months on the Regular Budget and the Technical Cooperation Fund Targets for 2026-2027.
2. The Group takes note of document GOV/2025/1, the Agency's draft Programme and Budget 2026 – 2027 and reiterates the points it made at the informal PBC meeting on 6 February 2025.
3. The Group has listened carefully to the information provided today regarding the breakdown of regular budget expenditures and efficiencies. The Group is still analyzing the proposals in detail and will provide its comments in due course. The Group looks forward to further information and breakdown regarding human resources and the implementation of the staff cap across the Major Programmes.
4. The Group reiterates its long-held view that the Agency's budget should reflect the balance between the three pillars of the Agency's work, namely the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear technology including technical cooperation, safety and safeguards. In addition, the Group notes that the funds available in the TCF are exclusively for the approved Technical Cooperation Programme.
5. We take note of the proposed cost saving and efficiency measures that reach the figure of € 4,4 million. While awaiting further clarification on different approaches regarding efficiencies and effectiveness, the Group is of the firm opinion that such efforts should not negatively affect the desired balance between promotional and non-promotional activities.
6. The Group notes that the savings and efficiencies identified in the draft Budget and would like to underline that it should not negatively impact the Technical Cooperation Programme and its delivery, including the valuable participation of experts from developing countries in the Agency's activities.
7. The Group underscores that the peaceful use of atomic energy is an inalienable right of Member States, and a fundamental objective of the IAEA, as outlined in Articles II and III of the Statute. The Group reaffirms the significance of the Technical Cooperation Program (TCP) as an essential mechanism for transferring, expanding, and accelerating access to nuclear

technology, materials, equipment, and expertise for peaceful purposes, highlighting the pivotal and leading role of the IAEA in this domain.

8. The Group notes that the Technical Cooperation Fund's target for the next biennium 2026-2027 is 98 million Euros, which is the same target for 2025. While consistent with the agreed methodology as per document GOV/2014/49, the Group also notes that this target does not keep up with the increasing demand on Technical Cooperation particularly by developing countries, as well as the trend of the increase in the unfunded segment of the TCP labeled as foot note a/ projects, which constituted around 60% of the TCF target in 2025.

9. The Group further underscores that the promotional activities of the Agency, delivered through the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), are its main statutory function and would like to underline that the largely unfunded components of TC projects show that the TCF has not been Sufficient, Assured and Predictable (SAP). In this regard, the Group reiterates its call to the Agency to ensure sufficient, assured and predictable resources for the TCF so as to fully implement approved TC projects including footnote-a/ projects.

10. The Group underlines that the respective IPFs should be taken as the starting point in determining the TCF targets for a biennium, in consistence with the recommendation of the Working Group on Financing the Agency's Activities (WGFAA) as stated in GOV/2014/49. Nonetheless, the Group believes that, as acknowledged in paragraph 18 of document GOV/2023/32, the discussions in this Working Group should be guided by the previous relevant decisions of the Board establishing the synchronization of the TCP cycle with the regular programme and budget cycle. This was meant to provide a framework to consider increases to the resources for the TC Programme, including the TCF target by considering the changes in the level of the regular operational budget, the price adjustment in the corresponding years, and all other relevant factors, including the increasing number of TCP recipients, as well as the level of maturity of their respective TC Programmes.

Co-Chairs,

11. The Group notes that under the 2025 TCP, 145 Member States have a national TCP, representing an increase of one Member State compared to the previous year. The Group believes that more effort should be made to provide sufficient resources, including staff, for the management of the TCP, if its priority areas are to be achieved, such as ensuring adequate support to the growing number of Member States participating in the TCP and to the extended demand of Member States for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology for their sustainable development, as well as ensuring the capability to adequately respond to Member States' requests for support through the TCP.

12. The Group also stresses the need for the Secretariat to place appropriate emphasis, upon request and in accordance with Member States' national priorities, on activities directly related to the implementation of their SDGs during the preparation of the Programme and budget proposal for 2026-2027, to help developing countries, including the Least Developed Countries to achieve their developmental Objectives.

13. The Group reiterates that PACT, Rays of Hope, ZODIAC, Atoms4Food, NUTEC Plastics, nuclear power applications and other areas such as Food and Agriculture, Health and Nutrition, Industrial Applications/Radiation Technology and Water and Environment should continue to receive the same appropriate focus in accordance with the needs and priorities of Member States. The Group also takes note of recent efforts of the Rays of Hope initiative, to assist Member States to build and expand their cancer care capacity; as well as the current focus on supporting Member States in building their capacity in relation to the early detection and control of zoonotic diseases.

14. The Group emphasizes the necessity to bridge the nuclear science, technology and applications gap among Member States for peaceful purposes, while stressing the need to respond positively to the growing and evolving needs of developing countries in these areas, including through enhancing international cooperation.

15. As regards Nuclear Power, Fuel Cycle and Nuclear Science, the Group welcomes the Agency's intention to continue to support interested Member States to assess their future energy demands and to evaluate and understand the potential for nuclear power to be part of their energy mix and strategies, including in the context of achieving their SDGs and to continue its support for Member States considering embarking on, or extending, Nuclear Power Programmes.

16. With regards to Programme 3.5, while the Group reiterates that it is financed by extra budgetary resources, the Group requests the Secretariat to provide an update on any regularization of staff and other administrative costs in the Division of Nuclear Security.

17. While the Group appreciates the importance of verification as a statutory function of the Agency, it notes that resources allocated to nuclear verification activities continue to represent by far the largest share of the Regular Budget.

18. The Group is confident that this Working Group will allow for a meaningful dialogue with substantive outcomes for the Board's action.

Thank you, Co-Chairs.