

**Group of 77 and China Statement for the IAEA March Board, starting
on 6 March 2017 delivered by H.E Ambassador Reza Najafi, Permanent
Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

Agenda Item 2: Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety (a) Nuclear Safety Review 2017

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group expresses its gratitude to the Secretariat for preparing the Nuclear Safety Review 2017, as contained in document GOV/2017/3. The Group thanks the Director General for his introductory statement, as well as Deputy Director General Juan Carlos Lentijo for his remarks and for the technical briefing offered to Member States on 24 February. (not to be read)

2. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China under this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group would like to make the following comments in relation to the report, which includes global nuclear safety trends and the IAEA's activities in 2016, as well as the priorities identified by the Agency for 2017 and beyond to strengthen nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety.

4. The Group highlights that the Agency has an essential role in coordinating international efforts to promote and strengthen nuclear safety globally. Furthermore, the Group reiterates the centrality of the Agency in providing expertise and advice, in light of the wealth of experience acquired in the field of nuclear safety. In this regard, the Group is pleased to note that the global nuclear community continued to make progress in improving nuclear safety in 2016.

5. The Group appreciates activities organized by the Agency to keep Member States informed of developments relating to nuclear safety, such as the technical briefings and the periodic reports with updated information. The Group encourages the Agency to continue this practice.

6. The Group recalls the adoption, in February 2015, of the "Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety", which aims to strengthen nuclear safety worldwide through agreed principles to guide the Contracting Parties, as appropriate, in the implementation of the objective of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) to prevent accidents with radiological consequences and mitigate such consequences should they occur. In this regard, the Group notes that one of the priorities of the Agency is to assist Member States in the implementation of the principles of the Vienna Declaration.

7. The Group recalls that the Director General's final report on the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety was released in September 2015. The Group further recalls the release of the Director General's report on the Fukushima Daiichi accident along with five technical volumes at the 59th Session of the General Conference. The Group reiterates that these documents are instrumental in assisting Member States in the strengthening of nuclear safety at all levels. The Group further notes that one of the priorities included in the Report is to strengthen the Agency's safety standards using lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi

accident and other relevant sources and taking into account the principles of the Vienna Declaration.

8. The Group notes that in 2016 the work on establishing a comprehensive set of Safety Requirements was almost completed and further notes that more efforts were devoted to the revision of Safety Guides. The Group notes that seven Safety Requirements publications were issued, covering the areas of regulatory frameworks, site evaluation, design, commissioning and operation, safety assessment, leadership and management for safety, as well as safety of research reactors. The Group welcomes the publishing of five Safety Guides in 2016 after endorsement by the Commission on Safety Standards. The Group reaffirms its support to the work of the Commission.

9. On the improvement of radiation, transport and waste safety, the Group is pleased with the Agency's contribution in response to Member States' growing demands of assistance in the areas of radiation protection, control of radioactive sources, and oversight of transporting radioactive material, waste management, capacity building and regulatory effectiveness. The Group also welcomes the Agency's assistance provided to Member States in establishing and strengthening regulatory and technical frameworks, as well as in developing decommissioning strategies and plans. The Group encourages the Agency to continue to provide such assistance to Member States, upon request, focusing on those areas which can contribute effectively towards sustainable capacity building.

10. The Group appreciates the activities organized by the Agency in providing peer review and advisory services to Member States, upon request, to assess safety of nuclear installations, research reactors, and fuel cycle facilities as well as to review regulatory effectiveness, infrastructure development programmes, and ageing management, among others. The Group welcomes the Agency's intention to continue to assist Member States in further strengthening their national regulatory infrastructures for nuclear and radiation safety through the provision of peer reviews and advisory services, as well as the plan to assess the overall structure, effectiveness and efficiency of the peer review and advisory services. The Group appreciates the regular organization by the Agency of national, regional, and international workshops and training courses for Member States on all relevant issues.

11. Concerning the issue of embarking countries, the Group recognises that around 30 Member States, many of which are members of the Group, are at different stages of initiating new nuclear power programmes. With regard to ongoing challenges to the introduction of nuclear power in embarking Member States, the Group is pleased to note that, as in previous years, the Agency has continued to provide assistance to these countries in fields such as the development of national nuclear safety regulations, the establishment of a management system at the regulatory body, and the preparation of a national plan for human resource development.

12. The Group wishes to emphasize that the development of human resources and up scaling their knowledge and capabilities are key to the establishment, safety and sustainability of any nuclear program. Therefore, it is essential that the IAEA continue to provide assistance, upon request, to developing countries in the fields of knowledge sharing, exchange of information, collaboration platforms, nuclear knowledge management and capacity building in nuclear safety. In this regard, the Group notes that the Agency will assist Member States in their capacity building programmes, including education and training in nuclear, radiation, transport, waste safety, in addition to Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR), as well as in the development of their expertise in the relevant technical areas.

13. The Group highlights the importance it attaches to the development of a safety culture. In this regard, the Group notes that an increasing number of Member States are requesting assistance in developing their programmes for safety-related leadership and continuous improvement, including safety culture assessments and that the Agency will assist Member States in their efforts to develop, foster and sustain safety culture. The Group also notes that the Agency will continue to organize specialized training events and to offer e-learning activities such as those on the Radiation Protection of Patients (RPOP) website, on safety and quality in radiotherapy and on radiation dose management in computed tomography.

Mr. Chairman,

14. The Group notes that Member States have shown a greater interest in, and made increased use of, the Global Nuclear Safety and Security Network. The Group reiterates that knowledge networks should always remain a core component of the nuclear safety capacity building initiatives with the support of the Agency. The Group appreciates the Agency's continued support to regional networks, which include the Arab Network of Nuclear Regulators, the Asian Nuclear Safety Network, the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa, and the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies, as well as to thematic networks such as the Small Modular Reactor Regulator's Forum.

Mr. Chairman,

15. As stated in the IAEA 2011 Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, the responsibility for ensuring the application of the highest standards of nuclear safety and for providing a timely, transparent and adequate response to nuclear emergencies lies with each Member State and operating organization. Vendors of nuclear technologies also have a responsibility to ensure that users have access to all information and resources necessary for safe operation. As stated in the Action Plan, its success in strengthening nuclear safety rests on the full cooperation and participation of Member States and relevant stakeholders. The Group calls upon the Secretariat to maintain its facilitating role in this regard. Although all of the planned activities under the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety were completed in 2015, the Group expresses its support for the Agency's work in continuing to build upon the Action Plan and Member States' experience in its implementation, as well as the IAEA Report on the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident, and the principles in the Vienna Declaration and use them for defining its nuclear safety strategy and programme of work. The Group requests the Secretariat to report periodically to the Board of Governors, in accordance with section 1 of Resolution GC(60)/RES/9.

16. With regard to the issue of emergency preparedness and response, the Group notes with satisfaction the Agency's contribution in strengthening national and regional EPR, as well as promoting effective public communication in an emergency. The Group also supports the introduction of enhanced functionalities for the Agency's Unified System for Information Exchange in Incidents and Emergencies (USIE) in 2016 and the significant participation in ConvEx exercises. Despite the meaningful work done by the Agency in this field, the Group notes that many challenges remain. The Group encourages the continued cooperation and coordination between the Secretariat and interested Member States to overcome these challenges, thereby strengthening the capabilities of Member States in emergency preparedness and response.

17. The Group takes note of the Agency's efforts to continue to identify safety and security interfaces. The Group acknowledges activities developed in this regard, including the review of Agency safety standards and nuclear security guidance publications by the Interface Group, which comprises representatives of the Safety Standards Committee and the

Nuclear Security Guidance Committee. The Group encourages the Agency to continue supporting the participation of experts from developing countries in these areas.

Mr. Chairman,

18. With these remarks, the Group takes note of the Nuclear Safety Review 2017, as contained in document GOV/2017/3.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Agenda item 3: Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications: Nuclear Technology Review 2017

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China would like to express its appreciation to the Secretariat for preparing the Nuclear Technology Review 2017, contained in document GOV/2017/2. **(not to be read)**

2. The Group also wishes to thank DDG Mr. Aldo Malavasi and DDG Mr Mikhail Chudakov for introducing this agenda item and for the technical briefing provided to delegations on 20 February 2017. **(not to be read)**

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group of 77 and China considers the Nuclear Technology Review (NTR) a useful document as it provides a comprehensive update on the progress achieved in nuclear power and nuclear applications during the reporting period. The Group notes that there have been developments in nuclear technologies, including in food and agriculture, human and animal health, water resources and environment. The Group encourages the Secretariat to continue with this approach for future reports, which provides the reader with a comprehensive view on the wide range of nuclear applications developed and their potential role in the socio-economic development of Member States.

The year 2016 witnessed many developments in these areas. In this regard, the Group would like to make the following comments:

4. The work done by the Agency in nuclear power and nuclear applications highlights the need to increase the transfer of nuclear technology and the sharing of nuclear knowledge, expertise and lessons learned to developing countries to enhance their capabilities and thus contribute to maximize the benefit of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Group urges the Agency to continue to provide training and education, to support national laboratories and to further enhance coordinated research activities. The Group also welcomes the contributions made by Member States to various Agency projects, and encourages all Member States in a position to do so, to continue providing such support through the Agency.

5. The Group notes that nuclear power is an important option for many countries, as part of their current and future energy mix and that the interest of the countries considering the introduction of nuclear power remains strong, especially among developing countries with growing energy needs. The Group therefore encourages the Agency to enhance its support to developing countries. The Group further notes the role of nuclear power in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and its contribution, including through innovative Nuclear Power applications, to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Group requests the Agency to continue undertaking studies on projecting the balanced perspective on the long term economic and environmental impact of Nuclear Power.

6. The Group urges the Agency to continue to assist interested Member States to analyse energy options and to support their capabilities to introduce nuclear power, while maintaining its leading role in the promotion of the transfer and development of technology and knowledge related to peaceful nuclear applications, including nuclear power and the nuclear fuel cycle. The Agency's Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR) missions provide a useful service in extending this type of cooperation to Member States.

7. The Group reiterates its expression of interest in the work of various technical working groups under the auspices of the Agency in the development of nuclear technology and in the dissemination of knowledge to Member States, *inter alia*, through Coordinated Research Projects and requests the Secretariat to continue its support.

8. The Group takes note of developments relating to the issue of assurance of supply, and reiterates once again its views and concerns expressed on this matter in its statements during the previous sessions of the Board, from 2009 onwards, which, *inter alia*, stated that any arrangement for assurance of supply shall be in full accordance with the Statute and take into account the respective legal obligations of Member States, as well as the principle of non-discrimination, whereby the inalienable right of Member States to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, including national nuclear fuel cycles, is duly respected.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Accelerators and research reactors play an important role in building strong basic capabilities in the nuclear field, and in supporting related education, training and research activities in Member States. The Group appreciates the support provided by the Secretariat in its coordination of projects supporting research, hands-on training and experimental work in the field of accelerators, and encourages it to continue to provide such support, especially by making use of built-in capacity in many countries.

10. The Group highlights the importance of research reactors to interested Member States and their utilization for research and various applications, including education, training, research and isotope production, and calls for enhanced international cooperation to maximise their efficient use while noting that the efforts in this direction continue to grow. The Group urges the Agency to assist interested Member States in addressing issues related to ageing management and underutilization of research reactors, and to assist interested Member States building or planning to build new ones. The Group welcomes the continued international collaboration, supported by the IAEA, to promote and enhance the utilization of research reactors for nuclear capacity building, including education and training, among other areas, including through the Internet Reactor Laboratory (IRL) and the International Centres based on Research Reactors (ICERR) scheme. The Group encourages the Agency to continue its work of facilitation of regional networks and coalitions to help foster international cooperation and enable research reactors to expand their stakeholder and user communities.

11. The Group notes that there were no major supply shortages of the medical isotope molybdenum-99 during 2016. However, the Group requests the Secretariat to remain vigilant on this important issue, with a view to ensuring the sustainability of radioisotope supplies, including through the enhancement of the utilization of existing reactors in developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

12. The Group attaches great importance to the significant contributions that nuclear technologies can make towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, their role in food security and safety; nutrition and human health, including disease prevention and control; animal health and production; environmental protection; water resource management; as well as in the use of radioisotopes and radiation. These are the areas where

nuclear and isotopic techniques are beneficial in supporting sustainable socio-economic development in many countries. The Group reaffirms that the Agency has a leading role to play in the promotion of these techniques among interested Member States, and encourages it to continue to provide its valuable support.

13. The Group accordingly attaches great value to the role of the Agency's Nuclear Applications laboratories at Seibersdorf, which have assisted Member States in enhancing their access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies since 1962. The Group calls on all Member States, in a position to do so, to provide the appropriate support for renovation and upgrading of the Seibersdorf Laboratories through the ReNuAL project.

Mr. Chairman,

14. The Group values the Agency's assistance to Member States, especially to developing countries, in the field of medical and industrial applications. The Group is appreciative of the Agency's contribution to improving the overall cancer management worldwide, including, the diagnosis, treatment and control of cancer, through, inter alia, the development and application of nuclear techniques. The Group notes that these nuclear techniques play an important role in fighting the global cancer epidemic through the Programme of Action of Cancer Therapy (PACT).

15. In this regard, the Group notes the recent development of a new molecule that targets the Prostate-Specific Membrane Antigen (PSMA), an enzyme associated with prostate cancer cells, which could be an excellent molecular target for the development of radiotracers for PET-CT imaging since it can detect early relapse of disease.

Mr. Chairman,

16. As noted in the report, agriculture accounts for approximately two thirds of global freshwater consumption and, to help meet the challenges of global climate change and rapidly increasing population numbers, agricultural systems are to maximize yields while improving the efficiency of water use through irrigation. In this regard, the Group highlights the importance of assistance provided by the Agency. The Group notes with interest the development of a novel device, the cosmic ray neutron sensor, which can capture and quantify soil water content over a large area without the time-consuming and invasive aspects of traditional assessment systems.

17. The Group also notes with interest the advances in animal health with the development and implementation of radiation hybrid maps and genomic tools, which will help establish breeding programmes for improving the productivity of livestock and enhance food security.

Mr. Chairman,

18. The Group welcomes the recent work at the Agency which has shown that there is a substantial correlation between isotope ratios and cloud processes responsible for precipitation, which will significantly expand the usefulness of Global Network of Isotopes in Precipitation (GNIP) data for understanding both short-term weather-related, and long-term climate-related processes, and contribute to climate change monitoring and adaptation. The Group encourages the IAEA to continue working towards further development of the technologies needed in water resource management, which are of great importance to members of the Group.

19. The Group also welcomes the work undertaken by the Agency in environmental protection, specifically with regards to ocean acidification, which is affecting many marine organisms, This work includes the experiments using a suite of radioisotopes, which are addressing how projected decreases in ocean pH will affect such marine organisms, and are

enabling new insights into the wide-ranging impacts of ocean acidification. The Group encourages the IAEA to continue its work in this regard.

20. The Group appreciates the update on the recent development of a range of cost-effective nuclear and related techniques to determine food authenticity, which can provide information on its geographical origin and production technique, as well as on its safety or toxicity. The Group notes that these analytical techniques overall facilitate food authenticity testing at multiple points along the food chain and significantly increase the effectiveness of control systems.

21. With these remarks, the Group of 77 and China takes note of the Nuclear Technology Review 2017, as contained in document GOV/2017/2.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Agenda Item 3: Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications - Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories (ReNuAL) Project

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China under this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

2. It will be recalled that in 2016, the IAEA General Conference, through its resolution on the renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf contained in document GC(60)RES/12, requested the Secretariat to undertake planning activities in order to appropriately scope the elements required to complete the renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories as defined in GOV/INF/2014/11/add.1. In this regard, the Group welcomes the timely release of the Director General's Report on the ReNuAL Project contained in document GOV/INF/2017/1, which provides an update on the progress and status of the project.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The G77 and China is pleased that the 31 million Euros funding target for the first phase of the ReNuAL project was reached last year. In this regard, the Group would like to thank the Secretariat, under the leadership of DDG Malavasi, and the Friends of ReNuAL, under the Co-Chairmanship of the Ambassadors of South Africa and Germany for their unwavering support for this project. Furthermore, the Group would also like to thank the 25 Member States, AFRA as well as the two individuals referred to in the Report for their financial contributions to the ReNuAL project.

4. The Group welcomes the progress that has been made in the construction of the Insect Pest Control Laboratory (IPCL) and the Flexible Modular Laboratory (FML), which are the critical components of the ReNuAL project. The Group looks forward to the completion of these Nuclear Applications Laboratories and will appreciate receiving regular updates in this regard.

5. The Group welcomes with appreciation that resource mobilization efforts for the ReNuAL project are now geared towards ReNuAL+. In this regard, the Group welcomes the Secretariat's proposal to place emphasis on the construction of the Animal Production and

Health Laboratory (APHL) which is of vital importance to Member States, especially developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Group takes note of the current estimated costs and resource requirements for ReNuAL+ totalling 22 million Euros. The Group would like to reaffirm its support for the continued funding of the ReNuAL project including through the Regular Budget. In this regard, the Group would like to reiterate its call to all Member States to make financial contributions to this project to ensure its successful and timely completion.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Agenda Item 7 - Appointment of the Director General

Mr. Chairman,

1. The Group of 77 and China takes this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Yukiya Amano on his appointment by acclamation as the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency for a third term. The Group commends Mr. Amano for his valuable work across all Major Programmes of the Agency, in particular in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Group looks forward to the enhancement of the Agency's activities in this field, including its contribution in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Group acknowledges the impartial, effective and professional manner in which Mr. Amano has discharged his responsibilities as Director General of the IAEA. The Group assures the Director General of its full support and cooperation in discharge of his professional duties during his third term.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.