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STATEMENT TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE BY THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

Pursuant to Rule 3 (d) of the Rules on the Consultative Status of Non-Governmental Organizations with the Agency^{1/}, the Director General is herewith transmitting to the General Conference for information the attached written statement by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions^{2/}.

^{1/} INFCIRC/14.

^{2/} See document GC(V)/INF/43, which gives a list of non-governmental organizations to which the Board of Governors has granted consultative status.

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

1. In the introduction to the annual report of the Board of Governors to the fifth regular session of the General Conference of the Agency, the year 1961 is described as the year of consolidation^{1/}. The activities of the Agency reviewed in this report confirm this definition. The policies of the Agency are in principle firmly established and permit at the same time enough flexibility for adjustment to unforeseeable scientific, technical and economic developments.
2. The Agency has even more than in the previous year, concentrated on work concerned with the protection of human life and health. research to develop chemical compounds with prophylactic effects on workers exposed to radiation, studies on the biological effects of strontium-90, plans to create a central register of all known cases of strontium-90 contamination, research on the radioactive contamination of the biosphere, studies on waste disposal in soil, fresh water and the sea, conferences on reactor safety and safety problems of nuclear ship propulsion as well as this year's Vienna symposium confirming the high radiosensitivity of the nervous system - in contradiction to views held for many years - are a few highlights of this type of work which deserves all possible support.
3. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) is also in full agreement with the Agency's policy to promote the application of radioisotopes in medicine, agriculture and industry which holds such great promises, especially for the technically less-developed areas, and welcomes the Agency's regulatory activities in the fields of protection, safe handling and safe transport of radioactive materials and of liability for damage caused by radiations or nuclear accidents. However we are deeply concerned about the fact, that the Agency had to cut down its technical assistance program to two thirds of the amount originally allocated for it in the budget for 1961^{2/}, and regret this drastic reduction imposed on the Agency by the lack of funds.

^{1/} GC(V)/154, paragraph 1.

^{2/} See document GC(IV)/116, Chapter III, Section C.

4. It seems particularly tragic - as was also stated in the Director General's farewell address - that so little money should be available for work aiming at the narrowing of the economic and social gulf separating the wealthy minority from the poor majority of the world's population, while ever greater resources are wasted on the armaments race. Of this the latest series of nuclear tests is but one more depressing example.
5. Looking at the program and budget for 1962^{3/} we note with satisfaction the tendency to reduce further the expenditure for general administration and to increase the means devoted to technical assistance and other services of direct benefit to the Member States. According to the program, a large part of the resources at the disposal of the Agency will go to activities which deserve our full interest. Under the Regular Budget, not less than 83% of the amount allocated to research contracts will be spent on research concerning waste disposal, radiation protection, radiobiology and the application of radioisotopes in agriculture, hydrology and medicine. The amounts allocated in the Operational Budget 1962 for technical assistance and research grants surpass the respective provisions for the current year by 49% and 87%.
6. We also welcome the 14% increase in the target set for voluntary contributions and hope that the States represented in the Board of Governors will give an example of generosity at the plodging meeting.
7. It should be borne in mind, that the budgetary priorities established would greatly suffer, in case the Agency's request for voluntary contributions would meet with an insufficient response, especially as the administrative costs of such an international organization cannot be drastically curtailed.
8. At the general debate, some disappointment was expressed about the slow development of nuclear power as an economically competitive source of energy. But there seems to us also to lie some advantage in the fact that for once, research into, and development of counter measures against, risks involved in this new scientific and technical field should make faster progress than its industrial application.

