



International Atomic Energy Agency

## General Conference

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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<sup>1/</sup>, the Director General is herewith transmitting to the General Conference for information the attached written statement by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions<sup>2/</sup>.

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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. The annual report of the Board of Governors to the 8th regular session of the General Conference of the Agency, anticipating the result of the United Nations 3rd International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, mentions already the notable improvement in the prospects for economically competitive nuclear power and for the use of nuclear energy for desalting seawater. Both assumptions have been confirmed by the discussions held in Geneva last week. As Dr. Glenn T. Seaborg stated in his excellent summary of the 3rd Geneva Conference, a dramatic reduction in construction costs of large reactors, the "stretch capability" which makes it possible to operate many reactors at higher power levels than rated in their original design, the possibility of substantial reductions in fuel cycle costs and higher burnup mean that nuclear energy as a source of heat and electric power may just now become - or is already - economically competitive, at least in a number of member countries of this Agency.

2. Further progress will be achieved and thus we have to expect in the years to come a great change in the pattern of energy production, not only in the industrialized countries but in the whole world. Atomic power will very soon be an everyday commodity in many countries, and together with the problems of radiological protection and safe waste management will grow in magnitude and importance. But by far the most important aspect of this development consists in the fact that economic nuclear energy will enable the developing countries to meet their immense energy requirements. The urgency of this vital task was well illustrated by H.J. Bhabah's and M. Dayal's paper, laid before the Geneva Conference (Document A/Conf.28/P/741), demonstrating the lack of conventional energy reserves in the non-industrialized countries of the world. The ICFTU, considering the bridging of the economic and social gulf between the industrialized and non-industrialized countries as the problem No. 1 of the second half of this century, will use its influence to further the development of international aid and solidarity which are as important preconditions to the fulfilment of this task as are scientific and technological progress including those in the field of nuclear energy.

3. The ICFTU, having followed with interest and sympathy the Agency's activities since its very beginnings, notes with great satisfaction the positive role the IAEA has played not only in providing technical assistance to the developing countries and in serving as a clearing house for scientific and technical information, but also in co-operating with other bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations to work out sets of recommendations on radiological protection in all its aspects which form at present in many countries the basis of relevant national legislation. The Agency's regulatory activities in this field are highly appreciated by the international free trade union movement and have helped the ICFTU to shape its own policies especially in its work with the ILO, to protect radiation workers and the general public from the damaging effects of ionizing radiations. Therefore the ICFTU warmly supports the Agency's plan to develop a special health and safety and waste management advisory service (as stated in the Annual Report, page 26, No. 118), hoping that this service will help to establish high international standards and to spread new knowledge and new solutions for relevant problems as fast as possible among member countries and organizations having working agreements or consultative status with the Agency.

4. In its statement to the 5th regular session of the Agency's General Conference (Document GC(V)/INF/45, 5 October 1961) the ICFTU drew the attention of those delegates, who were then disappointed by the slow advance towards economically competitive nuclear power, to the fact that for once in industrial history, research into, and development of counter measures against, risks in this new scientific and technical field were ahead of broad industrial application and that this should enable us to lower the price to be paid for nuclear energy in terms of human suffering. One of the papers before last week's Geneva Conference (Document A/Conf.28/P/182) stated proudly: "... nuclear industry is the first industry in the world that has tried to assess its hazards a priori and control its risks in advance...". Now, at the eve of an ever more widespread use of nuclear energy, we draw the attention of this conference to the fact that the excellent record of health and safety nuclear industry so far enjoys in many countries is partly due to public control of the vast majority of nuclear installations and to their running on a non-profitable basis. This has so far permitted a budget for health and safety measures which it will not be easy to maintain with the anticipated spreading of nuclear

installations under private ownership and with their integration into normal commercial activities. Therefore the burden of responsibility for adequate radiological protection will grow heavier and more difficult to shoulder for this Agency as well as for all others concerned and last not least for the free trade unions. In view of these trends the ICFTU counts on the further advice and help by the Agency's staff which it has enjoyed during the 7 years past.

5. There is general agreement on the overwhelming importance of desalination of seawater by dual purpose reactors as an economic proposition. Politics and economy are especially closely linked in this field in some areas of tension and it may be that peaceful settlements of disputes hitherto seeming to be hopeless will become possible because fresh water is no longer as scarce as it is now in many parts of the world. The ICFTU therefore welcomes the Agency's intention to continue its studies and research activities in this field as mentioned in the Programme for the years 1965/66 (page 6, No. 84). Its work will greatly contribute to open up new horizons of hope and welfare for millions of people.

6. This conference, working smoothly and efficiently in an atmosphere of goodwill and co-operation, proves once more how much this Agency, although considered purely technical and scientific in character, depends on the international political climate. The ICFTU shares the hopes expressed by many distinguished participants of this conference that the Moscow testban treaty is but one first step towards complete and controlled disarmament throughout the world. If and when these hopes come true the present atmosphere will not only prevail but further improve in the years ahead and it will enable the Agency to develop all its potentialities to fulfil the important tasks for which it has been created.

