



International Atomic Energy Agency

GENERAL CONFERENCE

GC(XXXVIII)/COM.5/OR.2

6 October 1994

GENERAL Distr.

Original: ENGLISH

THIRTY-EIGHTH (1994) REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING

Held at the Austria Center Vienna
on Tuesday, 20 September 1994, at 3.5 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. GOESELE (Germany)

CONTENTS

<u>Item of the agenda*</u>		<u>Paragraphs</u>
13	Nuclear safety, radiological protection and radioactive waste management	1 - 86
	(b) Measures to resolve international radioactive waste management issues (continued)	1 - 86
14	Practical utilization of food irradiation in developing countries	87 - 102
15	Plan for producing potable water economically	103 - 117
16	Strengthening of the Agency's main activities	118 - 144

[*] GC(XXXVIII)/25.

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(XXXVIII)/INF/11/Rev.2.

Abbreviations used in this record

Agency	International Atomic Energy Agency
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
ICGFI	International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation
INWAC	International Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee
ITC	International Trade Centre
RADWASS	Radioactive Waste Safety Standards
TACF	Technical Assistance and Co-operation Fund

NUCLEAR SAFETY, RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION AND RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

(b) MEASURES TO RESOLVE INTERNATIONAL RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT ISSUES (GC(XXXVIII)/7 and Mod.1, GC(XXXVIII)/COM.5/7)
(continued)

1. Ms. POLLACK (Canada) said her Government actively supported the work of the RADWASS programme and the development of the RADWASS Safety Fundamentals, which would be useful in dealing with future waste management issues both at national and international level. Although it had considered the earlier version acceptable for approval by the Board, Canada was pleased to note that the extended INWAC had reached agreement on a revised text. Her delegation felt that further delay should be avoided and looked forward to consideration of the matter by the Board of Governors in December.
2. Canada was ready to participate in activities leading to the drafting of a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management. It could support the draft resolution contained in document GC(XXXVIII)/COM.5/7, taking into account the comments made by the representatives of Indonesia and Ireland, and notably the latter's proposal that the word "developing" be deleted from the phrase "developing Member States" in operative paragraph 2.
3. Mr. CHECKH KHALFALLAH (Tunisia) said that his Government, in signing the Convention on Nuclear Safety, would be assuming responsibility for the safety of its people in connection with the use of nuclear energy, radiation sources and radioisotopes, which was constantly on the increase.
4. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the report by Turkey on the setting up, with Agency assistance, of a waste treatment and storage facility in that country.
5. His Government had recently decided to set up a waste management and treatment unit within the National Centre for Nuclear Science and Technology. Tunisia exhorted the Agency to provide maximum support to developing countries in establishing waste management infrastructures, which were an essential prerequisite for the use of ionizing radiation and radioisotopes.

6. With the worldwide increase in nuclear applications, especially in agriculture and medicine, his delegation wished to recommend that the Agency set up pilot units at regional level for the treatment, recycling or destruction of radioactive waste, and also that it finance research on the subject by regional groups.

7. Lastly, his delegation strongly supported the draft resolution, which he hoped would be adopted by consensus.

8. Mr. COOK (New Zealand) said the safe management of nuclear waste was an important issue for his country. His delegation supported the work on elaborating basic principles in the RADWASS Safety Fundamentals document, and looked forward to the adoption of those principles at the December session of the Board of Governors. That would clear the way for an effective and wide-ranging convention on the safe management of nuclear waste, which New Zealand regarded as a high priority for the Agency.

9. New Zealand was particularly concerned about the disposal of nuclear waste at sea and supported the Agency's efforts to assess the damage to the marine environment caused by the dumping of radioactive waste in the Sea of Japan. It also supported the Agency's Arctic Seas research project.

10. New Zealand had taken an active role in promoting an amendment to the London Convention prohibiting the dumping of radioactive waste at sea, with consequent changes to the Agency's responsibilities in that area. Adoption of the amendment was a clear indication that any dumping of low-level nuclear waste at sea was unacceptable to the international community.

11. The proposal that regional or international repositories for nuclear waste might be established was likely to be controversial, and there would obviously be need to obtain the endorsement of all countries in a region for such an arrangement. Although the Agency might provide impartial technical advice for such schemes, New Zealand would caution against its actively promoting them.

12. He would like to inform the Committee that member countries of the South Pacific Forum, including New Zealand, were currently drafting a regional convention on hazardous wastes. The dumping of nuclear wastes in the South Pacific was already banned by the

Rarotonga Treaty, but the new convention would include provisions prohibiting or restricting the import of such waste into the South Pacific region.

13. His delegation supported the draft resolution submitted by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77, and also endorsed the comments made by the representatives of Ireland and Indonesia.

14. Ms. SCHICK (Australia) said that Australia supported the development of the RADWASS documents, and was pleased to note that, following discussions at the extended INWAC meeting the previous week, representatives had reached agreement on the text of the Safety Fundamentals, including a minor amendment to Principle 3. She hoped that all Member States could now endorse the new text, so that it could be adopted at the December session of the Board of Governors.

15. Australia had actively supported banning the dumping of radioactive wastes at sea, and welcomed the recent amendment to the London Convention to that effect. It looked forward to hearing the outcome of the investigations currently being carried out in the Arctic Seas and the Sea of Japan.

16. Turning to the idea of regional or international waste repositories, she pointed out that Australian Government policy prohibited the import of other countries' radioactive wastes. Despite the advantages of that concept, outlined in document GC(XXXVIII)/7, there were many problems likely to be difficult to overcome. Promotion by the Agency of the regional repository concept could create political and public acceptance difficulties for countries intending to establish local radioactive waste repositories by putting it into people's minds that those repositories might become regional repositories. Countries should be left to negotiate arrangements for the establishment of regional or international repositories themselves. The Agency should refrain from promoting the concept and restrict itself to providing technical advice at the request of the States concerned.

17. In conclusion, her delegation could support the draft resolution before the Committee.

18. Mr. BROWN (United Kingdom) agreed with earlier speakers that work on a convention should be embarked on as soon as possible. The United Kingdom was keen to play a full part in that work.

19. His delegation fully supported the spirit of the draft resolution, and could endorse the amendment proposed by the representative of Ireland. It would suggest that in operative paragraph 2, the words "commence with planning activities for" be replaced by "initiate procedural work leading to".

20. The initial step should be to establish a group of countries to take the work forward. He was encouraged by the progress already made in the extended INWAC towards finalizing the text of the RADWASS Safety Fundamentals and also Standard No. 1. A broad international consensus on all the documents seemed to be well on the way towards achievement. That being so, he proposed that in operative paragraph 2 the words "and begin the process of collecting background information" be replaced by "and continue the process of collecting ... etc."

21. The dumping of radioactive wastes at sea was covered by the London Convention, which now banned such dumping, and to which the United Kingdom was now a signatory. He wondered whether it would be appropriate to make explicit reference to another convention in the text of the resolution, and warned against embarking on a task which might overlap with the brief of other international bodies.

22. Ms. CZOCH (Hungary) said her country attached great importance to the issue of waste management. Hungary's Radioactive Waste Management Project, launched the previous year, was designed to find a disposal site for low- and intermediate-level wastes from its nuclear power plant. The project had to be implemented within an appropriate legal framework, and her delegation therefore looked forward to early approval of the Safety Fundamentals and other safety documents under the RADWASS programme. It supported the establishment of a convention on the safety of waste management, which would enhance international co-operation and provide a mechanism for ensuring that appropriate safety levels were continuously maintained.

23. Hungary supported the draft resolution, together with the amendments proposed by the United Kingdom.

24. Mr. BAHMANYAR (Islamic Republic of Iran) also supported the draft resolution, which pointed the way for future work in the area. However, he would suggest

that a further category of nuclear waste be created to cover the various types of nuclear materials recovered during the process of dismantling nuclear weapons, materials which were highly radioactive and required special care in handling and storage.

25. Another issue that needed to be taken into account was the large amount of highly radioactive materials kept in storage for the further development of nuclear weapons.

26. Those issues served to show, as the representative of Ireland had stressed, that waste disposal was a universal problem, and his delegation felt that they should somehow be reflected in the draft resolution.

27. Mr. IMMONEN (Finland) said his delegation fully supported the Agency's RADWASS programme. Finland believed that the most recent draft of the Safety Fundamentals document would provide a good basis for preparation of a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management. It hoped that the Board of Governors would approve the document at its December meeting, and that work on preparation of the convention could begin as soon as possible.

28. Regional co-operation in the disposal of radioactive waste offered many advantages and his delegation supported the Agency's plans to promote such effort. On the other hand, there was unwillingness in many countries to accept imports of waste for final disposal, particularly in the case of spent fuel or high-level radioactive waste. The Agency was therefore right to proceed cautiously in such a difficult area.

29. His Government was reviewing its policy on nuclear waste management, with the aim of being self-sufficient in all phases of the process, including final disposal. As part of that policy, Finland would be maintaining efficient border control of all transboundary shipments of radioactive waste.

30. In conclusion, his delegation approved the draft resolution with the amendments proposed by the United Kingdom.

31. Mr. ZLAUVINEN (Argentina) said his Government was greatly concerned over the question of radioactive waste management, and hoped that a convention on the

subject could be concluded in the near future. Argentina supported the draft resolution under discussion, with the amendments proposed by Ireland and the United Kingdom.

32. A number of delegates had referred to the idea of establishing regional repositories. He wished to reiterate that Argentina was against such a project since it was likely to have a negative impact on public opinion in countries of the region. Radioactive waste management, conducted in compliance with international standards and with Agency collaboration, should be largely the responsibility of the national authorities concerned.

33. Mr. WOJCIK (Poland) said he had no doubt of the vital need for the Agency to continue to promote co-ordination in the field of radioactive waste management. Although other areas of the Agency's programme deserved equally strong support, initiation of work on a convention on the safety of waste management was a unique development, which justified adoption of a resolution on the subject.

34. He welcomed the progress achieved with RADWASS, notably in the elaboration of the Safety Fundamentals, which he hoped would be approved by the Board at its December session. However, he would prefer that document to bring out more clearly the obligation of countries to ensure that records listing waste disposal facilities and identifying their location were given both legal and physical protection, so that continuity over long periods of time could be ensured. There had been recent instances of such records being destroyed, and it was important that the need for protection be reflected in the Safety Fundamentals.

35. Mr. LIU (China) also welcomed the progress achieved with the RADWASS programme. The Principles of Radioactive Waste Management, considered by the Board of Governors at its recent meeting, reflected a concern for human health and for the protection of the environment for both present and future generations. He hoped the work on the RADWASS documents would be concluded as soon as possible. China would continue to co-operate with the Agency in activities in that field.

36. His Government was a signatory to the London Convention, and was thus helping to ensure that the seas around China were protected. He appealed to all Member States to play their part in ensuring that mankind's common heritage, the ocean, was safeguarded.

37. The majority of Member States were making a serious effort to find a solution to the problem of radioactive waste. However, in some developing countries infrastructures were still inadequate. Although the creation of such infrastructures was for the most part the responsibility of Member States, the Agency could provide assistance in specific cases under the RADWASS programme. Only when all Member States possessed adequate infrastructures could a convention on the safety of waste management be effectively implemented.

38. China also supported the draft resolution before the Committee.

39. Mr. LOGHIN (Romania) said Romania fully supported the development of a convention on the safety of waste management, and urged the Agency to persist in its efforts to ensure that the management of radioactive waste conformed with the most rigorous international standards.

40. His delegation favoured the setting up of regional repositories for nuclear waste but felt it might be hard to win political and public acceptance. Regional facilities could not be set up without taking into consideration the policies of potential users, as well as the import and export control regulations of neighbouring countries. Any proposal to site a repository in Eastern Europe would have to take into account, for example, the policy of the Romanian Government of prohibiting the import and export of radioactive wastes.

41. His delegation could support the draft resolution, with the modifications proposed by the United Kingdom.

42. Ms. THOMAS (United States of America) said her delegation appreciated the reports prepared by the Secretariat contained in document GC(XXXVIII)/7. It found the current draft of the RADWASS Safety Fundamentals acceptable, and trusted that Board agreement on it could be reached without delay, so that preparatory work on a convention could begin. The United States was prepared to participate actively in that work.

43. Turning to the question of sea disposal, she said the United States supported the International Arctic Seas Assessment Project and noted the developments recorded. In regard to the concept of regional or international repositories, the United States did not in general consider it appropriate for the Agency to play an active role in promoting such schemes. It

might, at the request of Member States, advise on collaboration in the disposal of low-level radioactive waste, but it should not promote a regional solution for categories of material that required disposal in a geological repository, notably high-level waste and spent fuel. The political, economic and regulatory problems in developing a geological repository were highly complex, and any collaboration was a matter for governments themselves to handle. Requests from individual Member States for guidance in specific circumstances could be dealt with within the existing regular programme.

44. The problem that had arisen in Africa concerning the disposal of radium needles in a geological repository was a special case. The United States considered the creation of such a repository for that purpose alone to be questionable. A Member State developing such a repository for its own purposes could offer use of the facility to others but that should be a collateral matter.

45. In conclusion, her delegation was pleased to note the amount of guidance already available to Member States under the Agency's waste management programme, and could support the draft resolution on the subject.

46. Mr. GIOVANSILY (France) expressed satisfaction at the work done by the extended INWAC meeting the previous week, and hoped that that would enable the Board to approve the Safety Fundamentals and the first Safety Standard in December. His delegation urged that moves to develop a convention on waste management be initiated as soon as an international consensus had been reached. As in the case of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, a group of experts chaired by a really competent person should be set up to direct the operation.

47. France supported the draft resolution, with the proposed amendments by the United Kingdom, but had two reservations. Firstly, Agency assistance in strengthening waste management infrastructures should be available to all Member States, not just developing countries. Secondly, while recognizing the importance of sea disposal, he considered it desirable to delete the reference to it in operative paragraph 2, now that the amendments to the London Convention had come into force, to avoid a conflict of responsibilities and duplication of effort.

48. Mr. ISASHIKI (Japan) said that negotiations on a nuclear waste management convention should commence as soon as possible, particularly as the Convention on Nuclear Safety was complete and open for signature. His delegation was pleased to note that Japan was one of the first countries to have signed the Convention. The RADWASS Safety Fundamentals should be approved by the Board in December, and would provide a good basis for the development of a convention.

49. Turning to sea dumping, he expressed concern regarding the Russian Federation's dumping of waste in the Sea of Japan. However, he welcomed the increased co-operation between Japan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea and the Agency on that issue, and wished to express Japan's gratitude to the Agency's Monaco Laboratory for its contribution to the current investigations.

50. His delegation supported the thrust of the draft resolution submitted by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77. However, as it was essential that the views of Member States should be taken into account in the preparatory work for the convention, he suggested that the phrase "taking into account the views of Member States on the basic concept and framework of the said convention," be inserted in operative paragraph 2 after "drafting the convention". He also expressed doubts about the last line of paragraph 2, pointing out that the "assessment of the impact of the land and sea disposal of wastes", was but one of several aspects to be considered.

51. Mr. OMRAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that it was imperative to solve the problem of radioactive waste management without detriment to anyone, so his country could not agree to the disposal of waste on other countries' territory or in the sea. He called upon the Secretariat to find radical solutions to protect people from radioactive waste in the present and future, and looked forward to its preparing a global convention promoting international co-operation in that field. In that connection his delegation supported the draft resolution submitted on behalf of the Group of 77.

52. Mr. MOR (Jordan) said that the management of radioactive waste was a universal problem with a potential for disasters, which it was imperative to avoid. He was concerned at the fact that waste disposal sites were located all too often in developing

countries, and felt that every country should be able to manage its own radioactive waste effectively, particularly as underground storage sites could be found. However, storage was only a short-term solution, and technology had to be developed to handle and manage waste efficiently. His country would welcome any progress in that area and supported the draft resolution submitted by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77.

53. Ms. TISCHLER (Germany) said she hoped the Board would approve the Safety Fundamentals document in December so that preparatory work on a waste management convention could go ahead.

54. Her delegation supported the draft resolution submitted by Venezuela, and endorsed the amendment proposed by the United Kingdom. In principle, Germany supported Japan's proposal, although it went without saying that the views of Member States would be taken into account during the preparatory work for the convention.

55. Mr. PAPADIMITROPOULOS (Greece) welcomed plans to conclude a waste management convention and hoped that its precursor, the Safety Fundamentals document, would be approved by the Board in December. He was in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Venezuela. However, since all Member States required Agency assistance in strengthening their waste management infrastructure, it would be preferable to delete the word "developing" from operative paragraph 2, as proposed by Ireland.

56. Whilst not objecting to the Japanese proposal, he was confident that the Agency would always take account of the views of Member States in preparing a draft convention.

57. Mr. KOSTENKO (Ukraine) said that, now that the Safety Fundamentals relating to radioactive waste management were likely to be approved by the Board in December, the Agency should begin preparatory work on a waste management convention. Ukraine was convinced that such a convention would facilitate international co-operation on waste management, including agreement on the development of regional waste repositories. Ukraine itself had pressing waste management problems - in particular regarding the storage and reprocessing of spent fuel from its 15 reactors. It lacked the resources to deal with the situation and therefore counted on the international community and the Agency to provide

advice and assistance. International regulations on radioactive waste management would also be of great benefit.

58. Ukraine supported the draft resolution along with the amendments proposed by Ireland, the United Kingdom and Japan.

59. Mr. MULTONE (Switzerland) supported the draft resolution with the amendments proposed by Ireland and the United Kingdom. At the same time, he proposed that the phrase "assessment of the impact of the land and sea disposal of wastes" be amended to "assessment of the impact of the storage of radioactive wastes".

60. With regard to the concept of regional repositories, the subject of Attachment 3 of document GC(XXXVIII)/7, he said that his country, like Australia, was of the opinion that such schemes should be for countries themselves to organize.

61. Mr. EKECRANTZ (Sweden) said that his delegation supported the draft resolution with the amendments proposed by the United Kingdom. However, as it maintained that each country should take responsibility for its own nuclear waste, Sweden could not support the Secretariat's plans regarding regional repositories. In exceptional cases however, such as in Africa, it was prepared to acknowledge that a regional solution might be the only one available.

62. Mr. CHO (Republic of Korea) believed that the United Kingdom's suggested amendment to operative paragraph 2, replacing "commence with planning activities for" by "initiate procedural work leading to" was too restrictive and would confine the Secretariat's work to procedural rather than substantive matters. The original text should therefore be retained. However, his delegation supported the proposal to replace the phrase "begin the process of collecting relevant background information" with "continue the process of ..."

63. Korea had no objection to the Agency helping all Member States to strengthen their waste management infrastructures. However, in the light of the fact that developing countries were - for the most part - likely to require more assistance from the Agency in that area, the phrase "that assist developing Member States" should be amended to read "that assist Member States, in particular developing countries".

64. His delegation fully supported the Japanese proposal.

65. Mr. QUAYES (Bangladesh), endorsing the draft resolution, together with the amendments proposed by the United Kingdom and Japan, welcomed the Korean proposal to use the expression "Member States, in particular developing countries".

66. Mr. TITKOV (Russian Federation) emphasizing the importance of developing a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management, said that his delegation supported the draft resolution with the amendments proposed by the United Kingdom.

67. Mr. TATAH (Algeria) supported the draft resolution submitted by Venezuela. However, referring to preambular paragraph (c), he said that in his view the disposal of radioactive wastes was part of radioactive waste management and therefore did not require mentioning, as borne out by operative paragraph 1. At all events, for the sake of consistency, reference to disposal should either be added to the latter or deleted from the former. Also in paragraph (c), the French version of the last line was too restrictive and would exclude wastes from other types of reactors such as heat-generating reactors in desalination plants.

68. Finally, his delegation also supported use of the wording "... Member States, in particular developing countries ..." in operative paragraph 2.

69. Summing up the discussion, the CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the United Kingdom's proposal to replace the phrase "to commence with planning activities for a convention ..." in operative paragraph 2 by "to initiate procedural work leading to a convention ...".

70. Mr. FITZGERALD (Ireland) proposed that the phrase should instead be amended to read "to commence preparations for ...".

71. Mr. DUERDEN (Australia) and Mr. MEADWAY (United Kingdom) supported that proposal.

72. It was so agreed.

73. The CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee was ready to accept the United Kingdom proposal to replace the word "begin" (the process of ...) by the word "continue",

and the Japanese proposal to insert, after the words "drafting the convention," the phrase "taking into account the views of Member States on the basic concept and framework of the said convention".

74. It was so agreed.

75. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the proposal to delete the word "developing" before "Member States".

76. Mr. ELYSEU FILHO (Brazil), Mr. EL KOUNY (Egypt), Mr. MOHAN (India), Mr. RAZAK (Indonesia) and Mr. OKONKWO (Nigeria) expressed a preference for the proposal made by the Republic of Korea to reword the text to read "assist Member States, in particular developing countries, ...".

77. The CHAIRMAN took it that that was generally acceptable.

78. It was so agreed.

79. The CHAIRMAN sought the Committee's views on the proposals to amend the final phrase of the paragraph commencing with the words "including assessment ...".

80. Mr. MEADWAY (United Kingdom) suggested deleting the phrase for the sake of simplicity.

81. Mr. ISASHIKI (Japan) said that his delegation had no objection to deletion of the whole phrase. However, it could also agree to its retention on the understanding that it was interpreted as meaning that the impact of land and sea disposal of wastes was only one of the measures which needed further consideration.

82. Mr. CHO (Republic of Korea) said that, as one of the sponsors of the draft resolution, his delegation felt that some reference to the issue of waste disposal was appropriate in the light of the situation in the Asian region, where sea dumping continued despite its total prohibition under the 1993 London Convention. Countries in the area were consequently anxious to ensure that the situation regarding illegal dumping would be fully assessed and that the Agency would contribute to solving those problems, as it had done in the past, for example by participating in scientific missions and promoting international co-operation.

83. Mr. FITZGERALD (Ireland) said that the London Convention could only partially solve the problem of the dumping of waste at sea, in so far as it was adhered to by States which had acceded to it. Another aspect of disposal at sea was the ongoing problem of discharges from land-based facilities - a problem that needed to be addressed by the Agency. As it stood, the text of the draft resolution could also be taken to cover that area and should therefore be retained.

84. Mr. GIOVANSILY (France), pointing out that the London Convention dealt with the dumping of waste at sea and not the discharge of liquid effluent into the sea, said that the illegal dumping of waste at sea was outside the Agency's competence. His delegation would therefore prefer to have the final phrase deleted, but would go along with a majority wish to retain it, whilst stressing that in its view the reference was to land and sea disposal and not liquid discharges.

85. The CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee wished to retain the final phrase as it stood and was now prepared to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(XXXVIII)/COM.5/7, as amended.

86. It was so agreed.

PRACTICAL UTILIZATION OF FOOD IRRADIATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (GC(XXXVIII)/6)

87. The CHAIRMAN, introducing document GC(XXXVIII)/6, noted that it contained a progress report on the implementation of the requests contained in resolution GC(XXXVII)/RES/616 adopted by the 1993 General Conference.

88. Mr. MOHAN (India) said that document GC(XXXVIII)/6 was a commendable response to resolutions GC(XXXVI)/RES/588 and GC(XXXVII)/RES/616.

89. The extension of the mandate of the ICGFI was welcome, as it could play an important role in harmonizing regulations on food irradiation control and removing non-tariff barriers to trade. GATT negotiations would also help increase trade in irradiated food.

90. While the work done in response to the General Conference resolutions was encouraging, further follow-up was needed, together with other initiatives in the context of

plans to strengthen the Agency's main activities. India urged that the resource requirements referred to in paragraph 16 of document GC(XXXVIII)/6 be taken care of, and looked forward to receiving further progress reports in the Board of Governors and at the 1995 General Conference.

91. Ms. THOMAS (United States of America) said that her delegation welcomed the Secretariat's most informative report on the work done in pursuit of the General Conference resolution. It noted the proposed project on spices and trusted that the promotion of food irradiation in Member States would take economic considerations fully into account. It understood that the ICGFI would be a source of advice in determining whether or not the irradiation of spices in individual countries was sufficiently justified.

92. In the light of the 1993 resolution, the United States' main interest lay in the Agency's Action Plan for food irradiation activities, endorsed by the Board in June 1994 and involving major projects in China and Mexico, feasibility studies and pre-project missions.

93. The United States delegation remained mindful of the visibility of commercial-scale projects. Success under the Agency initiative was important for the pursuit of the food irradiation option in many countries. At the same time, the value of assistance through normal TC projects and the endeavours in the regular programme and the ICGFI were also recognized.

94. The United States would support the Agency and wished it well in its enterprise.

95. Ms. POLLACK (Canada) said that her delegation welcomed the positive developments contained in the Director General's report. The Agency was to be congratulated on developing a programme involving the practical application of food irradiation to meet the needs of a considerable number of developing countries. The progress achieved on a number of necessary measures was encouraging.

96. Great care should be taken to ensure that beneficiary countries made proper provision for radiation protection and waste management before embarking on that technology. Canada was pleased to note that those issues had been highlighted at the Technical Co-operation Policy Review Seminar prior to the General Conference.

97. Mr. LIU (China) said that his delegation welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to help the developing countries introduce food irradiation techniques. The extensive co-operation between the Agency, FAO and other international organizations was most encouraging.

98. In China, the reduction of food losses was a major objective and the Government was actively promoting food irradiation technology. After decades of basic research, there was now a range of irradiated food products on the Chinese market and the trend was expected to increase.

99. The Chinese Government had recently decided to participate formally in the work of the ICGFI, so as to expand exchanges and co-operation with the international community in that area. It therefore fully supported the Action Plan for food irradiation activities for 1995-96.

100. Mr. KOSTENKO (Ukraine) said that in recent years his country had been trying to develop food irradiation techniques with Agency assistance, and was extremely grateful for the vast amount of work being done in that field, particularly for benefit of the developing countries. The Agency's educational function in that regard was also extremely valuable. On a recent visit to an Agency laboratory organized for the benefit of Ambassadors and Resident Representatives, he had observed that money was being well spent and important practical projects were being pursued.

101. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that it take note of the report contained in document GC(XXXVIII)/6.

102. It was so decided.

**PLAN FOR PRODUCING POTABLE WATER ECONOMICALLY (GC(XXXVIII)/8,
GC(XXXVIII)/COM.5/1)**

103. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to document GC(XXXVIII)/8, produced in response to resolution GC(XXXVII)/RES/617, and also the draft resolution submitted by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 in document GC(XXXVIII)/COM.5/1, which the Committee was now invited to consider.

104. Mr. VILLALBA PALACIOS (Venezuela), introducing the draft resolution, said it had been approved at the Plenary meeting of the Group of 77.

105. Mr. TATAH (Algeria), referring to preambular paragraph (d), suggested that the expression "water deficits" would be more appropriate than "water shortages" since the latter implied shortages due to a technical defect.

106. Mr. LIU (China) said that much useful work had been done to promote seawater desalination using nuclear energy since the Agency launched its project in 1989. The progress achieved in the North African and Saudi Arabian feasibility studies was therefore most welcome. The stage had now been reached where demonstration projects could be used to verify the safety and economic competitiveness of seawater desalination using nuclear energy.

107. China would continue to support the Agency in that endeavour. Its expert, provided cost-free to the Agency, had already begun work and it was to be hoped that more Member States would provide human and material support for the project.

108. China supported the Agency's options identification programme, which would enable a suitable demonstration project to be selected from among the many designs, and hoped that that programme could be completed in the near future in order to meet the urgent needs of Member States. It therefore supported the draft resolution submitted by the Group of 77.

109. Ms. POLLACK (Canada) said that Canada supported the Agency's programme to produce potable water economically and fully agreed with the recommendations to proceed with an options identification programme to identify the various requirements for project implementation. The work to date had clearly indicated that significant advantages attached to potable water production in nuclear desalination plants.

110. In supporting and participating in the options identification study, Canada understood that the role of the Agency would not extend to the implementation of a demonstration project. Finally, it could support the draft resolution submitted by the Group of 77.

111. Mr. TITKOV (Russian Federation) said his delegation was also ready to support the draft resolution.

112. Ms. THOMAS (United States of America) said that her Government appreciated the serious concern of Member States with securing supplies of potable water and recognized the work being completed on the North African feasibility study. It also noted the Agency's work on the feasibility study in Saudi Arabia and was contributing to the implementation of that study.

113. It further noted the reports of the Advisory Group meeting in June 1994, as well as the consultants' report entitled "Nuclear Desalination Demonstration Facility", and was pleased to have provided two experts for that discussion.

114. Referring to the options identification programme described in Annex III of document GC(XXXVIII)/8, she stressed that the results of that programme and the feasibility studies should be available before the Secretariat considered further activities in that regard.

115. Mr. SERVIGNON (Philippines), adding his support to the draft resolution before the Committee, said that his country with its vast seawater resources would be very interested in any breakthrough that might be achieved in seawater desalination using nuclear technology.

116. The CHAIRMAN took it that, subject to replacement of the word "shortages" by "deficits" in paragraph (d), the Committee was ready to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the resolution contained in document GC(XXXVIII)/COM.5/1.

117. It was so agreed.

STRENGTHENING OF THE AGENCY'S MAIN ACTIVITIES (GC(XXXVIII)/11, GC(XXXVIII)/COM.5/2 and 3)

118. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the Director General's report in document GC(XXXVIII)/11, describing measures taken to strengthen the Agency's main activities pursuant to resolution GC(XXXVII)/RES/618, as well as two associated resolutions submitted by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77.

119. Mr. OCHOA ANTICH (Venezuela), introducing the draft resolutions contained in documents GC(XXXVIII)/COM.5/2 and 3, expressed the hope that the

Committee would approve them by consensus and recommend their submission to the General Conference.

120. Mr. ZHANG (China), while applauding the practical action taken by the Agency in response to resolution GC(XXXVII)/RES/618 with respect to management policy, the elaboration of the Medium Term Plan, the Programme and Budget for 1995 and 1996 and the Technical Co-operation programme, expressed renewed concern at the lack of assured funding for technical co-operation activities. The Agency should persevere in its efforts to achieve an adequate balance between its major activities, and further measures should be taken to promote nuclear technology in the developing countries, increase the effectiveness of technical co-operation and expand the resources of the TACF.

121. It was to be hoped that the Secretariat would complete the measures necessary for a return to normal programme implementation referred to by the Director General in his opening statement to the September Board, and review the Programme and Budget for 1996 in the light of the need to guarantee funding in priority areas. Particular attention should be given to work on the use of radioisotope hydrology for water resources management.

122. In conclusion, his delegation was ready to support the draft resolution contained in document GC(XXXVIII)/COM.5/2.

123. Mr. PAPADIMITROPOULOS (Greece) expressed appreciation for the report on the strengthening of the Agency's main activities. Turning to the draft resolution on the subject, he said that by explicitly mentioning technical co-operation activities, the wording of operative paragraph 1 of the resolution placed undue emphasis on those activities at the expense of other Agency activities such as nuclear safety and nuclear power. He therefore preferred the wording adopted in the previous year's resolution, GC(XXXVII)/RES/618, which indicated that a balance was to be sought between safeguards and non-safeguards activities, without specifying the latter. Since paragraphs 3 and 4 referred back to paragraph 1, they also attracted the same criticism.

124. Mr. MEADWAY (United Kingdom), also commending the Director General's report, said that if the main activities of the Agency were not to be adversely affected by the present climate of economic austerity, it must strive to improve programme efficiency and

cost-effectiveness, which entailed determining priorities, setting better objectives and evaluating the progress achieved, tasks for which the management tools offered by the Programme Performance Assessment System (PPAS) were admirably suited. It was therefore to be hoped that Agency managers would make full use of the opportunities afforded by that system.

125. His delegation welcomed the introduction of mid-year management performance reviews, which would enable the Agency to respond flexibly to changing needs and circumstances and, if necessary, redirect its efforts.

126. The United Kingdom fully supported the Agency's technical co-operation activities, especially in areas outside nuclear power. It would continue to contribute as far as it could to the TACF, and urged other Member States to do likewise. In addition to Member States' contributions, however, the Agency needed to seek new sources of funding, in particular from other United Nations programmes, the international financing institutes and non-governmental organizations, bearing in mind that, in competing for such funds, success depended on clearly demonstrating the utility, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of technical co-operation projects. The model project concept provided an excellent framework for that purpose and should be extended throughout the technical co-operation programme.

127. Technology transfer should be undertaken in line with recipient States' overall development goals and needs. In the interests of long-term sustainability, those States should commit themselves to maintaining the development momentum, once Agency involvement had come to an end, and should accordingly submit only project requests that were fully geared to their development goals.

128. The United Kingdom supported the draft resolution on the subject, with the proviso that, as proposed by Greece, the previous year's wording be substituted in paragraph 1, to take account of activities other than safeguards and technical co-operation.

129. Ms. TISCHLER (Germany) likewise supported the draft resolution with the reservation that it be amended as proposed by Greece and the United Kingdom, since the Agency's objective should be to achieve a balance between all its main activities, including nuclear power and nuclear safety.

130. Ms. SCHICK (Australia), expressing appreciation for the report contained in document GC(XXXVIII)/11 and its focus on management policy, welcomed the measures undertaken so far to introduce effective management systems, which were essential for the achievement of more effective programme implementation, including technical co-operation.

131. In regard to the draft resolution, Australia likewise felt that due weight should be accorded to all the Agency's statutory functions and that the previous year's wording should be retained in paragraph 1.

132. Mr. RUIZ (Spain) and Mr. WESELKA (Austria) also supported retention of the previous year's wording of paragraph 1 for the reasons already stated by the representatives of Greece, the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia.

133. Mr. GIOVANSILY (France) said that in view of the difficulty of tackling all the work involved in fulfilling its statutory functions on a zero-growth budget, the Agency needed to select its priorities judiciously.

134. His delegation supported the proposed improvements in the technical co-operation programme but felt that the Medium Term Plan, while containing some useful initiatives, was generally too timid in its approach.

135. Concerning the draft resolution, he joined previous speakers in expressing a preference for the phrase "safeguards and non-safeguards activities" in paragraph 1, in order to pay due regard to all the Agency's functions, including nuclear safety.

136. Mr. FITZGERALD (Ireland), while welcoming the report submitted on the present item, warned against imposing too many reporting requirements on the Secretariat in addition to the normal annual report.

137. He agreed with previous speakers' criticisms of the draft resolution because of the priority it assigned to technical co-operation, and said the programme and budget and the Medium Term Plan were the proper context for establishing the Agency's priorities. Furthermore, paragraph 4 seemed redundant, since activities approved by the Board and General Conference would presumably be followed up automatically.

138. Mr. TITKOV (Russian Federation) also advocated reverting to the language of the previous year's resolution in paragraph 1 as well as deleting paragraph 4.

139. Mr. ZLAUVINEN (Argentina) suggested deleting the final phrase of paragraph 1, namely the words "having particularly in mind safeguards and technical co-operation activities", to avoid repeating the same argument year in, year out.

140. Mr. HREHOR (Czech Republic) supported the proposal to retain the previous year's version of paragraph 1 because of the danger inherent in the present text of overlooking such important Agency activities as nuclear safety.

141. Mr. ALCANTARA DE MELO (Portugal) said that, in the absence of a consensus on the proposal by Greece - his preferred option - he could accept the proposal put forward by the representative of Argentina.

142. Mr. MOHAN (India) said that, in specifying technical co-operation activities in paragraph 1, the Group of 77 had been motivated by a desire to encourage the production of an action plan for that area of the Agency's work, so that resolutions would no longer be necessary, as had already proved possible, for example, in the case of food irradiation and would also hopefully soon be the case with safeguards.

143. It was wrong to think that specific reference to technical co-operation activities eliminated other Agency activities from consideration, since a large proportion of the nuclear safety and research and isotope programmes was subsumed under technical co-operation.

144. Mr. OUVRY (Belgium) said that the representative of India clearly regarded safeguards and technical co-operation as the Agency's main activities, unlike himself and many previous speakers, who attached equal importance to, inter alia, nuclear safety. By leaving open the definition of the Agency's main activities, however, the solution proposed by Argentina ran the risk of implicitly excluding nuclear safety and other important functions, and was therefore unacceptable to his delegation.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.