



GC

GC(39)/INF/17
15 September 1995

International Atomic Energy Agency

GENERAL CONFERENCE

GENERAL Distr.
Original: ENGLISH
and RUSSIAN

Thirty-ninth regular session

COMMUNICATION OF 6 SEPTEMBER 1995 RECEIVED FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF BELARUS TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

The texts of a letter dated 6 September 1995 and of a Memorandum attached thereto which the Director General has received from the Permanent Mission of Belarus are - as requested - reproduced for the attention of the General Conference.

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Waller's letter of 27 July 1995 and your fax of 5 September 1995 concerning our unpaid contributions to the IAEA Regular Budget and the Working Capital Fund and possible suspension of our voting rights at the thirty-ninth IAEA General Conference.

"I want to tell you frankly that recently this alarming problem was considered very seriously by my Government. Despite the present extremely grave financial and economic difficulties of the Republic of Belarus my Government found the possibility to allocate only 100.000 US dollars to cover a part of our arrears to the Agency. This amount will be transferred to the Agency soon. It is a sign of my Government's willingness to fulfil its obligations before the Agency as soon as circumstances permit. Unfortunately now my Government is not in a position to pay the whole amount of 627,940 US dollars by the opening of the IAEA General Conference.

"I am forwarding to you herewith a Memorandum of my Government explaining our very difficult financial situation and requesting the General Conference to take into consideration the circumstances and to allow our delegation to vote at the 39th IAEA General Conference. I kindly ask you to issue this Memorandum as an official document of the General Conference."^{2/}

^{2/} It is suggested that, pursuant to Rule 42(b) of the Conference's Rules of Procedure and in line with past practice, this request be referred to the General Committee for consideration.

Memorandum

"On the subject of the unpaid contributions of the Republic of Belarus to the IAEA's budget the Government of Belarus has the honour to make the following statement.

"The 1986 accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant caused irreparable damage to the economy of Belarus. Twenty-three per cent of the Republic's total area and up to forty per cent of its farmland were put out of normal use. More than one hundred thousand people were resettled in cleaner areas. People's health suffered irreparable harm. In recent years there has been a sharp rise in the incidence of thyroid cancer among children, and experts predict a further increase in this dreadful disease. The State's direct and indirect annual expenditure on mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl accident amounts to 20% of the national budget. Scientists estimate that at this rate of expenditure the Republic will need another 160 years to repair the damage. In this connection, it must be pointed out that Belarus had nothing to do with the causes of the accident, nor was the exploded reactor located on its territory.

"Belarus's economic difficulties, including those stemming from the Chernobyl disaster, have increased substantially since the break-up of the USSR. The process of economic re-structuring of Belarus, the lessening of its dependence on external markets for its energy and raw material needs, the creation of a competitive export potential - all this will take a long time and require vast external sources of funds.

"A heavy burden has been imposed on Belarus by the costs of destroying military hardware in accordance with the Treaty on the Reduction of Conventional Forces in Europe and by the costs of dismantling nuclear weapons and transferring them outside the borders of Belarus under the START Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol.

"Becoming a party to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State, concluding a safeguards agreement with the IAEA and establishing a costly State system of nuclear material accounting, control and physical protection are involving the Belarus Government in considerable expenditure.

"The cumulative effect of all these factors on the Republic's economy has led to a sharp decline in the country's ability to pay in real terms. Its negative foreign trade balance for the first five months of 1995 alone was US \$270 million. At the end of 1994 Belarus's external debt was US \$2000 million.

"The difficult economic situation of Belarus was aggravated further by the unjust and legally unjustifiable decision taken by the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-seventh session to increase Belarus's assessment for the Regular Budget for 1993 and 1994 by a factor of one and a half. The General Assembly decision was followed by an automatic increase in the country's assessments for the regular budgets of the UN Specialized Agencies, including the IAEA.

"In 1994, taking into account the situation prevailing in Belarus, the United Nations fixed a new rate of assessment for Belarus for 1995-97, reducing its contribution substantially from 0.48% to 0.28%. However, its contribution to the IAEA's 1995 budget has been calculated without regard to the United Nations revised scale. Furthermore, during the years when the USSR was still in existence Belarus was placed in the category of "unshielded" States for calculation of its contribution to the Agency's safeguards budget.

"The current minimum wage in the Republic is US \$5 per month and the average monthly earnings stand at US \$40. Nevertheless, the Republic still continues to be classified among the most developed countries, in which the per capita national income is much higher than in Belarus and with whose nuclear activities those of Belarus bear no comparison - it does not have a single nuclear power plant, nor a single operating reactor within its borders. Attention was also drawn to the existing unfairness in the report submitted at the June (1995) meetings of the Board of Governors by the IAEA's informal working group on the financing of safeguards, which recommended transferring Belarus to the group of "shielded" States.

"Since the Agency's inception Belarus has always scrupulously honoured its financial obligations to the IAEA. It is only the extremely difficult economic situation in which Belarus has found itself in recent years for reasons beyond its control, as well as the disregard, in the case of Belarus, for the principle that a State's contribution should match its real ability to pay, that has resulted in the Republic's being in arrears with its contributions to the Agency. On the eve of the present session of the General Conference the Government of the Republic of Belarus transferred US \$100 000 to the Agency in part payment of its arrears, and it will make every effort to meet in full its financial obligations to the Agency as soon as the situation permits.

"The Government of the Republic of Belarus appeals to the delegations of Member States at the thirty-ninth session of the General Conference of the IAEA to give favourable consideration to this matter in the light of the foregoing and to recognize that Belarus's failure to pay is due to circumstances beyond its control."

