

General Conference

GC(59)/COM.5/OR.4

Issued: October 2015

General Distribution

Original: English

Fifty-ninth regular session

Committee of the Whole

Record of the Fourth Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Wednesday, 16 September 2015, at 10.50 a.m.

Chair: Mr BENHOUCINE (Algeria)

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¹ GC(59)/COM.5/1.

Abbreviations used in this record:

EU	European Union
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PSCS	programme support cost(s)
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund

17. Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications (continued)

(GC(59)/COM.5/L.5 and Add.1)

1. The CHAIR announced that, as agreement had been reached on paragraph 23 between Brazil, Argentina and the sponsors of the draft resolution, the amended wording would be inserted into the draft resolution for submission to the General Conference.

16. Strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities

(GC(59)/INF/3 and GC(59)/COM.5/L.6)

2. The representative of BRAZIL, introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that three changes had been made in relation to the resolution adopted on the subject in 2014: in section 2, paragraph 5, the reference to development goals had been changed to reflect the new sustainable development goals; in section 3, paragraph 3, a request for OIOS to undertake activities relating to the workload of the Department of Technical Cooperation; and, in section 2, paragraph 10, a call on the Secretariat to organize, in close consultation with Member States, a Ministerial Conference in 2018 on applications of nuclear technologies and their delivery through the TC programme.

3. The CHAIR proposed that the Committee consider the draft resolution section by section.

4. It was so agreed.

Section 2. Strengthening Technical Cooperation Activities

5. The representative of ITALY, speaking on behalf of the European Union and the EU task force, suggested, with regard to paragraph (h), that the draft resolution on the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (GC(59)/COM.5/L.7) be clustered with the draft resolution under consideration, bearing in mind the ultimate goal of fully integrating PACT into the Department of Technical Cooperation.

6. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, seconding that proposal, said that it made perfect sense to cluster the two draft resolutions.

7. The representative of AUSTRALIA, referring to paragraph 10, said that a ministerial conference in 2018 would require preparatory work in 2017 that would fall within an already approved budget cycle. He therefore proposed "and within available resources" be inserted after "in close consultation with Member States".

8. The representative of ALGERIA objected, on the ground that ministerial conferences organized by the Agency in other areas had never before been conditional on the availability of resources.

9. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA seconded the proposal by the representative of Australia.

10. The representative of AUSTRALIA, in reply to the representative of Algeria, cautioned against drawing parallels with the funding of ministerial conferences in other areas. For example, the International Conference on Nuclear Security had been funded to the tune of 85% from extrabudgetary resources, and the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century was a known entity on a regular cycle and could be properly planned for in a forward budget, whereas his delegation had been apprised of the proposed ministerial conference on nuclear science, technologies and applications for peaceful uses only during the previous week. As the biennial budget had already been approved, it was important to ensure that any such conference took place in accordance with good financial governance.

11. The representative of EGYPT said that the Secretariat's consultations would allow all delegations to raise any concerns about financing, especially since financing would be approved under the following programme and budget cycle.

12. The representative of PAKISTAN said that, as preparations for the ministerial conference would be made in close consultation with Member States, it was redundant and premature to add a qualifier relating to resources at the current stage, since the budget would be discussed in 2016.

13. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA, noting that the availability of resources would be discussed during consultations, agreed that it was premature to add such qualifiers at the current time.

14. The representative of ARGENTINA, agreeing with the previous two speakers, stressed that the proposed amendment gave the impression that conditions were being imposed, for the very first time, on the organization of a ministerial conference.

15. The representative of SUDAN agreed with Argentina. It was premature to add such a phrase at the current stage, as all matters, including the budget, could be discussed during consultations.

16. The representative of CHILE, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, considered that a stand-alone draft resolution on PACT might send the wrong message on the integration of PACT into the TC programme, he had no objection to the two draft resolutions being clustered.

17. The Group had considered that the current wording of paragraph 10 sufficed and had not considered it necessary to introduce conditions not required for the organization of ministerial conferences in the past.

18. The representative of ITALY, considering the reference to "nuclear energy" at the end of paragraph 1 to be somewhat restrictive, wondered whether it could be replaced by "nuclear technology" or "nuclear technologies", given that some activities in radiotherapy or isotope applications, for example, involved nuclear technology or applications, but not nuclear energy as such.

Section 3. Effective execution of the Technical Cooperation Programme

19. The representative of ITALY, referring to paragraph (f) and paragraph 3, both relating to evaluation activities and to outcome monitoring, said that the EU attached great importance to outcome monitoring, as the appropriate means of evaluation in the TC context, of gauging the strengths of TC projects and of determining whether there was scope for further improving TC programmes. The concept of outcome monitoring should be retained, and he failed to see what value the phrase "bearing in mind that outcome monitoring is resource intensive" added to the paragraph. The phrase was tautological because all evaluations and TC activities were, by definition, resource intensive. OIOS had held briefings in 2014 on possible scenarios or strategies to cope with the financial implications of performing outcome monitoring, the budget had been approved and specific resources had been attributed to OIOS, which was therefore in a position to perform its task. The impression that outcome monitoring was considered less important should be avoided.

20. Considering that paragraph 3 of the draft resolution replaced paragraph 9 of the 2014 resolution which had been devoted solely to outcome monitoring, whereas paragraph 3 further tasked OIOS with the conduct of an evaluation of the current TC teams' workload — which was not at variance with the 2014 proposal on outcome monitoring of TC projects — he read out paragraph 9 of the 2014 resolution and requested that it be retained. The words “continue to” might be inserted before “evaluate” in the 2014 text, but there was no conflict between the two tasks of evaluating the current workload and conducting outcome monitoring.

21. The representative of AUSTRALIA agreed with the previous speaker and, considering the use of “resource intensive” to be unnecessary and even incorrect, since outcome monitoring amounted to a small fraction of the TC programme and added good governance to the programme, supported the deletion of the last part of paragraph (f).

22. He seconded the previous speaker's proposal to replace draft paragraph 3 by paragraph 9 of the 2014 resolution. The current wording of draft paragraph 3 changed its intention substantially.

23. He was open to discussion on the proposed evaluation of the TC teams' current workload, but wondered whether OIOS was the appropriate body to do so.

24. The representative of PAKISTAN said that the phrase “bearing in mind that outcome monitoring is resource intensive” did not dilute the importance of that activity. Needless to say, budgetary resources were also important. He saw no problem in reaching consensus on the wording of paragraph (f) as it currently stood.

25. The representative of CANADA said that the value of the text added to paragraph (a) was unclear. Outcome monitoring was not as resource intensive as the TC programme itself and provided useful feedback reporting to the States that had contributed to the TCF that the money had been well spent and that project objectives had been achieved. It also helped recipient States with project implementation.

26. While his delegation had no difficulties with the proposed language in paragraph 3, it called for paragraph 9 of the 2014 resolution to be reinstated. Feedback from OIOS was very important for the TC programme and OIOS had confirmed that outcome monitoring was part of its work plan in the near future. OIOS oversight was warranted and the wording should be retained until outcome monitoring was fully integrated into the TC programme.

27. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, agreeing with his counterparts from Italy, Australia and Canada, said that the phrase added to paragraph (f) implied that outcome monitoring was expensive and perhaps should not be done excessively. The TC programme as a whole was resource intensive, and therefore outcome monitoring was important to help States to know that project targets were being achieved and that the money was well spent. He supported the suggestion to reinstate paragraph 9 of the 2014 resolution.

28. The representative of CHILE, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, agreed that the entire TC programme was resource intensive, as it was one of the Agency's main statutory functions. Accountability for costs was important, and the addition to paragraph (f) had been made for that reason. It was not meant to dilute the importance of outcome monitoring.

29. The representative of ITALY wondered whether the word “allocated” in paragraph 2 had been used correctly.

30. The DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF PROGRAMME SUPPORT AND COORDINATION, DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION, said that “assign” was the appropriate verb to use in connection with staff.

31. The representative of CHILE agreed to the change.

Section 4. Technical Cooperation Programme Resources and Delivery

32. The representative of CANADA said that his delegation had worked with other delegations to propose a text that would bring Member States together around the concept of government cost-sharing. The proposal discussed in informal consultation with the sponsors of the draft resolution had not been reflected in the text. Building on talks with the Group of 77 and China and other States, he wished to propose that “recognizing” be replaced by “welcoming” in paragraph (a) and that paragraph 9 bis be inserted, reading as follows: “Encourages Member States on a voluntary basis to contribute through government cost-sharing to their national and regional projects.”

33. The representative of AUSTRALIA seconded that proposal.

34. The representative of CHILE said that the proposals made by the representative of Canada had been discussed in informal consultations and that some delegations in the Group of 77 and China had been of the view that it should be discussed by the Committee.

35. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA said that, as States were already using the cost-sharing approach voluntarily, the reason for highlighting the idea was unclear.

36. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that his delegation supported the language of the proposed amendment. Increased cost-sharing made more resources available to Member States. The new paragraph encouraged States to do so voluntarily.

37. The representative of ITALY said that the proposal concerned an important issue and sought to make more resources available for technical cooperation. He looked forward to engaging in discussions on the issue in order to find wording agreeable to all.

38. The representative of VENEZUELA said that, as cost-sharing was mentioned several times in the draft resolution, it was unclear why it should be covered by a separate paragraph.

39. The representative of SPAIN said that recent reports on technical cooperation showed that the same 18 Member States were contributing through government cost-sharing in 2014 as in 2013 and that total contributions had actually dropped. The statement in paragraph (a) was therefore inaccurate.

40. The DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF PROGRAMME SUPPORT AND COORDINATION, DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION, said that page 16 of the supplement to the report showed total contributions under cost-sharing arrangements in 2013 and 2014.

41. The representative of SPAIN said that the figures in the report showed that the total cost-sharing contribution in 2014 was lower than the amount contributed in 2013. That decrease called into question the factual accuracy of the statement in paragraph (a).

42. The DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF PROGRAMME SUPPORT AND COORDINATION, DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION, acknowledged that the graph on page 25 of the report showed a decrease in government cost-sharing contributions from 2010 to 2014.

43. The representative of SPAIN considered that paragraph (a) should be reworded to reflect those facts.

44. The representative of BRAZIL said that the wording proposed by the representative of Canada, albeit different from that used in the previous year’s resolution, retained some elements of the

proposals that had been made in 2014, including the paper on cost-sharing produced by Canada in November 2014.

45. TC financing had been under discussion for decades and should be seen in the broader context of the Agency's work as a whole. It was not clear whether voluntary activities by States, such as cost-sharing, should be highlighted or encouraged.

46. The representative of COLOMBIA said that the purpose of the proposals was to increase resource allocations for technical cooperation. The draft resolution differed from the one that had been submitted in 2014. A recipient State should make such a contribution to a project only when it considered that it could co-finance a project, but the practice should not be a prerequisite for receiving assistance. Her Government's decision to engage in cost-sharing depended on specific circumstances, on the projects and on the Government's capacity at a specific point in time.

47. In order to correct the factual error in paragraph (a), she proposed that the second part of the paragraph begin with the words "recognizing the number of recipient Member States that are contributing through government cost-sharing".

48. The representative of PAKISTAN supported the factually accurate wording proposed by the representative of Colombia. Turning to the proposal made by the representative of Canada, he said that his Government was interested in the cost-sharing mechanism, but cautioned the Committee against encouraging Member States to participate in government cost-sharing or to abstain from drawing on the TCF in the operative portion of the resolution.

49. The representative of CANADA said that Figure 7 in the TC report showed a steady decline in total government cost-sharing since 2010. The practice had been highlighted in paragraph (a) precisely because it had been in steady decline and the short list of States which had engaged in cost-sharing had remained constant. It was consistent with past practice to encourage Member States to engage in voluntary practices, as exemplified by paragraph 2, in which Member States were urged to make voluntary contributions.

50. The representative of AUSTRALIA said that it was standard practice to encourage practices than could have a positive effect on the Agency's work. With regard to the factual error in paragraph (a), it should be possible to ensure that the wording was correct while still using "welcoming" instead of "recognizing".

51. The CHAIR said that the decrease in cost-sharing was probably due to the impact of the international financial crisis on the Member States.

52. The DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF PROGRAMME SUPPORT AND COORDINATION, DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION, said that the concept of cost-sharing was embedded in the spirit of the Agency's Statute and in INFCIRC/267, which contained the guidelines that governed the provision of technical assistance by the Agency.

53. The HEAD OF THE FINANCE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SECTION, DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION, said that the Agency accepted government cost-sharing arrangements and that some Member States funded their projects fully through cost-sharing arrangements. The project support cost (PSC) policy was conducive to such arrangements by reducing the PSC charge when the donor State and the recipient State were one and the same. In the case of regional projects, unless a specific activity in the regional project could be identified as being funded by a specific donor under that project, it was difficult to attribute contributions to a specific State.

54. The representative of PAKISTAN said that the subject of government cost-sharing had been discussed by the Working Group on Financing the Agency's Activities, which had recommended in its report that the "Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, should organize a technical briefing presenting to Member States the mechanisms in place to increase Member State participation in the technical cooperation programme, including the government cost-sharing mechanism". He wished to know whether such a technical briefing had been organized for the Member States, as they would be interested in additional information about the mechanism.

55. The DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF PROGRAMME SUPPORT AND COORDINATION, DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION, said that no meeting had been held but the Department of Technical Cooperation was holding consultations with individual Member States on the margins of the General Conference, during which the government cost-sharing mechanism was being discussed.

56. The representative of ITALY considered that the last part of paragraph (g) concerning the Board's decision on the "split contribution system" was no longer relevant.

57. The HEAD OF THE FINANCE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SECTION, DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION, confirmed that the split contribution concept had been superseded by a subsequent Board decision.

58. The representative of the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, referring to paragraph 2, proposed the following amendment: "Urges Member States to pay in full and on time their voluntary contributions to the TCF and to pay their National Participation Costs (NPCs) on time." The remainder of the paragraph would remain unchanged.

59. The representative of AUSTRALIA, referring to paragraph 4, proposed that "specific guidelines" be replaced by "updated guidelines" and that "in a timely manner" be inserted at the end of the paragraph.

Section 5. Partnerships and Cooperation

60. The representative of ITALY proposed that "noting" at the beginning of paragraph (i) be replaced by "welcoming".

61. The CHAIR urged delegations to continue informal consultations on all matters raised with a view to achieving a consensus on the draft resolution.

17. Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications (resumed)

(GC(59)/5 and Corr.1; GC(59)/COM.5/L.5, L.5/Add.1, L.5/Add.2, L.5/Rev.1, L.7 and L.8)

62. The CHAIR invited the Committee to take up consideration of the draft resolution contained in document GC(59)/COM/5/L.7 entitled "Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy". The Secretariat considered that the draft resolution should be discussed under item 16 concerning strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities. He wished to know whether the Committee concurred with that view.

63. The representative of CHILE said that he supported the Secretariat's view.

64. It was so agreed.

65. The representative of CHILE, introducing the draft resolution, said that the Group of 77 and China attached great importance to the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) and had not encountered any major disagreement with the substance of the draft resolution during the informal consultations. He drew attention to a number of amendments. In paragraphs 4 and 17, “the Division of PACT” had been replaced by “the Secretariat”. In paragraph 7, the words “under the Department of Technical Cooperation” had been inserted after “the Division of PACT”.

66. The representative of FRANCE, referring to paragraph 9 and, in particular, to the concern expressed therein, wished to know whether the number of staff members of the Division of PACT who were financed under the Regular Budget had risen since the Division had been included in the Department of Technical Cooperation.

67. The DIRECTOR OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR CANCER THERAPY, DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION, said that the number of posts financed under the Regular Budget had risen from 8 to 16. Additional posts must be financed from extrabudgetary funds in order to address the many requests received from Member States, for instance for imPACT review missions and the expansion of the Virtual University for International Cancer Control (VUCCnet).

68. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA suggested that the entire draft resolution be reviewed to assess whether the references to the Division of PACT and the Secretariat were appropriate in all cases. For instance, paragraph 1 commended the Secretariat for continued progress made in the establishment of partnerships in Member States but urged the Division of PACT to take further action through such partnerships.

69. The representative of CHILE agreed that the entire draft resolution should be reviewed.

70. The CHAIR encouraged delegations to continue informal consultations so that the draft resolution could be finalized at a subsequent meeting.

25. Personnel

(GC(59)/16 and Corr.1 and 17; GC(59)/COM.5/L.9)

71. The CHAIR invited the Committee to take up consideration of the draft resolution contained in document GC(59)/COM.5/L.9, entitled “Personnel”.

72. The representative of CHILE, introducing the draft resolution, said that the wording of resolution GC(57)/RES/16 had been updated and amended in close consultation with the Secretariat. No significant difficulties had been encountered during the informal consultations.

73. The CHAIR said he took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document C(59)/COM.5/L.9.

74. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.