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Chair: Ms CALLESEN (Denmark)

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¹ GC(66)/COM.5/1

Abbreviations used in this record

AU-PATTEC	African Union's Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CRP	coordinated research project
G-77	Group of 77
IWAVE Project	IAEA Water Availability Enhancement Project
NUTEC Plastics	Nuclear Technology for Controlling Plastic Pollution
PATTEC	Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TC	technical cooperation
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
USA	United States of America
VETLAB Network	Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Network
WHO	World Health Organization
ZODIAC	Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action
ZOSP	ZODIAC Ad-Hoc Scientific Panel

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

(GC(66)/9 and GC(66)/INF/4; GC(66)/COM.5/L.5, L.6, L.7, L.8, L.9, L.10, L.11, L.12 and L.13)

1. The CHAIR recalled that, at its previous meeting, the Committee had been considering a proposal by the Russian Federation to replace the word “Welcoming” with the word “Noting” at the beginning of paragraph (oo) of the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.6, on the grounds that only a limited number of activities had been carried out under the NUTEC Plastics initiative to date. She invited Committee members to express their opinions in view of his further clarification.
2. The representative of NIGERIA said that, in the Vienna spirit and on the basis of the explanation given by the representative of the Russian Federation, he could accept the proposed amendment.
3. The representative of COLOMBIA said that, in addition to the activities mentioned by the representative of the Russian Federation, a number of other projects relevant to NUTEC Plastics were under way, including a regional project involving 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. In order to reflect the region's support for the initiative, she wished to retain the existing wording.
4. The representative of MALAYSIA, supported by the representatives of INDIA and JAPAN, said that marine plastic pollution was a very pressing environmental challenge that impeded sustainable development, in particular in developing countries. It had a direct impact on ecosystems, jeopardized food safety and posed a threat to human health. NUTEC Plastics would benefit all Member States and a number of related projects were in the pipeline. On that basis, he was of the view that the initiative should be welcomed, rather than noted. In the interests of time and in a spirit of compromise, however, he was willing to exercise flexibility.
5. The representative of SWEDEN said that his country was a direct supporter of NUTEC Plastics and would prefer to retain the existing wording.
6. The representative of ARGENTINA said that the word “Welcoming” was appropriate given the information provided in the Director General's report contained in document GC(66)/9 and the importance attached by Member States to the NUTEC Plastics initiative. He reiterated that he was not entirely opposed, however, to accepting the proposed amendment.
7. The representative of the PHILIPPINES said that, following consultations since the previous meeting, she could confirm that there were several TC projects relevant to NUTEC Plastics under way in various regions, including in the area of polymer modification. She was therefore strongly in favour of retaining the existing wording.
8. The representative of AUSTRALIA said that NUTEC Plastics was a very important initiative for her country and the wider region, with 22 Member States currently involved in an RCA relating to marine plastics monitoring. She recalled that a number of Member States had highlighted, at a recent meeting of the Board of Governors, the importance of the initiative and the progress made thereunder. For its part, Australia was contributing to a number of TC projects relevant to NUTEC Plastics and appreciated the assistance of the Secretariat in bolstering capabilities in that area. Her delegation, like many others, was therefore strongly in favour of retaining the existing wording and appealed to the delegation of the Russian Federation to demonstrate flexibility in that regard.

9. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that the word “Noting” had retrospective connotations, while the word “Welcoming” was more forward-looking. The paragraph in question was not intended as an assessment of the progress made under NUTEC Plastics, and her delegation therefore had a strong preference for the existing wording. In addressing the global issue of marine plastic pollution, NUTEC Plastics was important to all Member States and contributed to the SDGs. For its part, the USA had already contributed more than \$3 million to support the application of nuclear techniques in plastic recycling to prevent marine pollution and expected that support to increase.

10. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that he did not agree entirely with the comments made by the representative of the USA in relation to the meaning of the words in question. His delegation was of the view that the paragraph was, on the contrary, intended as an assessment of NUTEC Plastics and that the word “Welcoming” gave too positive an impression of the progress made to date. Bearing in mind, however, the many views expressed with regard to the importance of the initiative, he proposed that the word “Recognizing” could be considered instead.

11. The CHAIR took it that the proposal to replace the word “Welcoming” in paragraph (oo) with the word “Recognizing” was acceptable to the Committee.

12. It was so agreed.

13. Continuing with the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.6, the representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed the deletion of paragraph (uu) in its entirety, since it largely duplicated paragraph (tt).

14. The representative of INDIA, supported by the representative of NIGERIA, said that paragraph (tt) highlighted the importance of molybdenum-99 and technetium-99m production facilities, which must be located within hospitals owing to the very short half-life of technetium-99m. Paragraph (uu), on the other hand, focused on Member State cooperation, with Agency support, with a view to expanding access to that important technology. Stressing that previous General Conference resolutions had included both paragraphs, he called on the representative of the Russian Federation to consider accepting the existing wording.

15. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, noting the comments made, said that his delegation would not insist on its proposal to delete paragraph (uu).

16. Turning to paragraph (ww), he proposed the deletion of the phrase “including in nuclear medicine and radiotherapy” in order to render the paragraph more generic and allow it to cover all areas where nuclear techniques were applied.

17. The representative of INDIA said that it was important to elicit the views of other members of the G-77 and China. His delegation could accept the proposal.

18. The representative of the PHILIPPINES, supported by the representatives of BELGIUM, INDONESIA and MALAYSIA, said that, when it came to personalized medicine, it was in the very areas of nuclear medicine and radiotherapy that the Agency had the greatest potential to support Member States. She was therefore in favour of retaining the existing wording, in particular given the Agency’s focus on cancer-related activities within the Rays of Hope initiative.

19. The representative of AUSTRALIA said that it was important to continue focusing on research into personalized nuclear medicine and radiotherapy, an approach that clearly reduced the risk to patients. In favour of retaining the existing wording — “including in nuclear medicine and radiotherapy” — she stressed that, thanks to the word “including”, the language did not limit the scope. The forthcoming Scientific Forum, which would focus on Rays of Hope, would give Member States the opportunity to learn more about work in related areas.

20. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that, in that case, the paragraph should also make reference to radiation diagnostics.
21. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA suggested “medical imaging” as an alternative term.
22. The representative of the PHILIPPINES expressed a preference for “diagnostic radiology”.
23. The CHAIR took it that the insertion of the term “diagnostic radiology” in paragraph (ww) before “nuclear medicine” was acceptable to the Committee.
24. It was so agreed.
25. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed the deletion of paragraph (aaa) in its entirety, on the grounds that artificial intelligence was a relatively new topic and that previous General Conference resolutions had not included any reference to technical meetings such as that referred to in the paragraph.
26. The representative of INDIA, supported by the representatives of PAKISTAN, the PHILIPPINES, SOUTH AFRICA and INDONESIA, said that, given the importance of artificial intelligence as an emerging technology and its relevance to a number of nuclear applications, he would prefer to retain the paragraph. He could, however, accept the deletion of the reference to the technical meeting.
27. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION referred to an Agency publication entitled “Artificial Intelligence for Accelerating Nuclear Applications, Science and Technology”, which stated, inter alia, that the convergence of artificial intelligence and nuclear technologies could exacerbate existing ethical concerns in those disciplines and give rise to new concerns at their interface. With that in mind, he favoured deleting the reference to artificial intelligence — and, by extension, the whole paragraph.
28. The representative of INDIA said that, in order to increase the effectiveness of Agency assistance in the areas listed in paragraph (aaa), which were of great importance to the developing world in particular, it was necessary to make use of artificial intelligence in order to process large amounts of data in the most efficient manner possible. He was therefore strongly in favour of retaining the paragraph, including the list of potential areas of application, but suggested replacing the term “artificial intelligence” with another term.
29. The DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMME COORDINATOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NUCLEAR SCIENCES AND APPLICATIONS said that the publication cited by the representative of the Russian Federation also explained that the disciplines of the ethics of artificial intelligence and the ethics of nuclear technology were well established as separate domains, but that the application of artificial intelligence technology to nuclear science, technology and applications pointed to the need for the establishment of a new discipline on the interface of those domains — namely the ethics of nuclear and artificial intelligence technologies.
30. The representative of the PHILIPPINES said that “artificial intelligence” could be replaced with the term “machine learning and data science”, which covered some of the techniques referred to in the paragraph.
31. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that both artificial intelligence and machine learning could potentially be used in a huge number of areas; the technology was relatively new and its potential applications had not been studied extensively. To specify all possible areas of application was therefore not advisable, as the list would simply be too long. He proposed replacing the

paragraph with more general and inclusive wording to the effect that the General Conference noted the potential of using artificial intelligence and machine learning in various fields of nuclear science, technology and applications.

32. The representative of INDIA stressed the need to highlight the importance of Agency assistance in the areas listed in the paragraph. He recognized, however, that references to artificial intelligence and machine learning could be a cause for concern and therefore proposed replacing the term “artificial intelligence” with the term “data science”.

33. The representative of the PHILIPPINES proposed that artificial intelligence, machine learning and data science should all be referred to — all three were being used in areas such as cancer diagnosis and climate modelling. She could, however, accept the deletion of the list of potential areas of application.

34. The representative of PAKISTAN supported the proposal made by the representative of the Philippines and was in favour of deleting the list, as that would both streamline the text and provide for all possible applications of the technologies mentioned.

35. The SECRETARY OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE read out the following amended version of paragraph (aaa) reflecting the different proposals: “Noting the potential areas for application of artificial intelligence, machine learning and data science in various fields of nuclear science, technology and applications”.

36. The representatives of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, INDIA and SOUTH AFRICA said that the proposed language was acceptable.

37. The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.6, as amended.

38. It was so decided.

39. The representative of NIGERIA, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution on support for AU-PATTEC contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.7 (“A. Non power nuclear applications. 2. Support to the African Union’s Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign (AU-PATTEC)”). Although the draft resolution was usually reviewed at every regular session of the General Conference, little had been achieved since the 2021 session owing to the COVID-19 restrictions. However, in view of the application of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and sustainable development and in meeting the needs of Member States, especially in Africa, the Group had explored the possibility of submitting a draft resolution to the current session.

40. To that end, the Group and other Member States had held negotiations on the draft resolution, including at the open-ended working group level, and had agreed on the inclusion of additional language and factual updates that strengthened and preserved the validity of the draft resolution. He thanked Member States for the spirit of consensus shown during the drafting stage.

41. The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.7.

42. It was so decided.

43. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.8 (“A. Non power nuclear applications. 3. Renovation of the Agency’s Nuclear Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf”). While those facilities served all Member States, they were particularly important to developing countries, as the research and training carried out there assisted States in attaining the SDGs.

44. The text, which had been discussed by all Member States in the true Vienna spirit, included updates in the preambular section regarding the total number of Member State contributors, a joint pledge made by eight Member States and the latest contributors to ReNuAL 2. Technical updates had been made regarding the allocation of €1.55 million from the capital portion of the Regular Budget to Major Programme 2 and, in the light of rising inflation rates, a new operative paragraph had been included, which encouraged the Secretariat to continue managing costs in the face of escalating prices.

45. In closing, she noted that the draft resolution enjoyed broad support and thanked the Member States that had either sponsored the draft, contributed to ReNuAL and ReNuAL 2 or supported the renovation of the nuclear applications laboratories in Seibersdorf.

46. The DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF BUDGET AND FINANCE said that two technical updates were required in paragraph (q): “€17.5 million” had to be changed to “€19.9 million” and “six first-time donors” had to be replaced with “seven first-time donors”.

47. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION asked whether the update regarding the number of first-time donors meant that paragraph (r) would also have to be amended to specify the additional donor.

48. The DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF BUDGET AND FINANCE, following consultations, said that the donor in question was already included in the list in paragraph (r).

49. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION asked for confirmation that some of the States mentioned in paragraph (v) — including Mexico, Slovakia, Slovenia and the USA — were also listed in paragraph (r) because they had made both individual and joint contributions.

50. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA said that the States mentioned in paragraph (v) formed part of a joint pledge made by several Member States. Those listed in paragraph (r) had recently made individual contributions, as announced to the Board of Governors.

51. The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.8, as amended.

52. It was so decided.

53. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution on the ZODIAC project contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.9 (“A. Non power nuclear applications. 4. Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) Project”). A resolution on the topic had first been drafted in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had inspired the Director General to launch the ZODIAC initiative to help prevent future pandemics caused by bacteria, parasites or viruses that originated in animals and could be transmitted to humans. Updates to the resolution highlighted the activities undertaken in that regard.

54. The draft resolution noted the Agency’s bilateral meetings, presentations and regional progress meetings held with Member States, ZODIAC National Coordinators and National Liaison Officers during the reporting period. The preambular section welcomed the fact that ZODIAC built upon such relevant structures as the VETLAB Network and other delivery mechanisms, including the off-cycle interregional TC programme on Supporting National and Regional Capacity in Integrated Action for Control of Zoonotic Diseases. In general, the draft resolution encouraged the Agency to continue to consult, collaborate and coordinate with international organizations and to build on existing partnerships. Furthermore, it noted the launch of the ZODIAC portal, expressed appreciation for the fact that 14 Member States had pledged and contributed €10.4 million, and welcomed that €5.66 million of the funds pledged had been allocated to capacity building.

55. Minor updates had been made to the operative section, including in paragraph 6, which urged the Secretariat to continue updating the programme design of ZODIAC on the basis of the experiences gained and lessons learned from its response to COVID-19 and other zoonotic disease outbreaks.

56. In closing, she thanked Member States for their broad support for the draft resolution.

57. The DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF BUDGET AND FINANCE pointed out that a technical update was required in paragraph (w) of the draft resolution: “€5.66 million” had to be replaced with “€7.21 million”.

58. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, expressing his country’s support for the Agency’s activities to study the potential of nuclear technology and techniques for monitoring and treating zoonotic diseases, said that the current wording of paragraphs (c) and (d) did not reflect the full extent of the work carried out by the Secretariat under the ZODIAC initiative.

59. He therefore proposed the deletion of paragraph (d) and the amendment of paragraph (c) as follows: “Noting the information provided by the Secretariat on ZODIAC, including through regional ZODIAC progress meetings, as well as the launch of the ZODIAC portal in May 2022”.

60. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA said that she would prefer nonetheless to retain the reference to bilateral meetings — in recognition of what had been done by both the Member States and the Secretariat at the meetings — and to the representatives of designated ZODIAC National Laboratories (ZNLs) and ZODIAC National Coordinators (ZNCs), who had been doing a great deal of work on the ground in Member States.

61. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that, if it was important to other delegations, he could accept the retention of the reference to bilateral meetings. However, it was his country’s view that the ways in which information was delivered by the Secretariat to all Member States carried more importance. It would, therefore, have preferred reference only to the regional progress meetings and the ZODIAC portal. While he agreed that the work done by representatives of designated ZODIAC National Laboratories and ZODIAC National Coordinators was of utmost importance, he believed that the reference to ZNLs and ZNCs in paragraph (n) was sufficient.

62. The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to delete paragraph (d) and amend paragraph (c) as follows: “Noting the information provided by the Secretariat on ZODIAC including through regional ZODIAC progress meetings and bilateral meetings as well as the launch of the ZODIAC portal in May 2022”.

63. It was so agreed.

64. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, turning to paragraph (h), proposed the deletion of the phrase “which addresses collaborative efforts to address health risks at the human-animal-environment interface”, as it was repetitive and added unnecessary detail.

65. The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to accept the proposal.

66. It was so agreed.

67. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, moving on to paragraph (i), proposed that the words “Recognizing the importance of” should be replaced with “Taking note of”, as the importance of the Preventing Zoonotic Disease Emergence (PREZODE) initiative — recently launched — had yet to be established. Furthermore, the words “as highlighted in GOV/2022/30-GC(66)/9” were unnecessary and could be deleted.

68. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA said that she was flexible concerning the deletion of “as highlighted in GOV/2022/30-GC(66)/9”. However, preferring to keep the reference to the importance of the PREZODE initiative, she proposed that “Recognizing the importance of” should be replaced with “Taking note of the importance of”.

69. The representative of FRANCE said she supported the compromise proposal, which she believed adequately addressed the concern raised by the representative of the Russian Federation.

70. The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to amend paragraph (i) as follows: “Taking note of the importance of new partnerships with the Preventing Zoonotic Disease Emergence (PREZODE) initiative and the Institut Pasteur de Dakar”.

71. It was so agreed.

72. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed the deletion of paragraph (j). Since the ZOSP had not been part of the initial project plan for ZODIAC, it would not be appropriate to reflect the creation of the Panel in a draft resolution. Furthermore, the Secretariat’s work to establish the ZOSP had been conducted in the interests of, but not together with, the Member States. That was demonstrated by the fact that the ZOSP was composed of independent scientists and experts who worked in a personal capacity and did not represent Member States.

73. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA said that, although it had not been included in the project plan, the ZOSP was an important mechanism that brought together international experts and scientists to work towards implementing the mandate of the ZODIAC initiative in a fluid and forward-looking manner. While it was true that such experts and scientists were independent, it was her understanding that Member States were informed of their appointment to the Panel.

74. Moreover, the ZOSP was a key element in ensuring that Member States were consulted and heard by the Secretariat, in demonstrating that progress was being made and in affirming that the Agency’s mandate did cover zoonotic diseases. Member States had needed reassurance in that regard. She therefore strongly preferred to keep the paragraph and urged the delegation of the Russian Federation to show flexibility in that regard.

75. The representative of ARGENTINA said that his delegation preferred to retain the paragraph for the reasons explained by the representative of South Africa. The ZOSP was an important mechanism for his country and for the ZODIAC initiative. In view of the concern raised by the representative of the Russian Federation, he suggested that “Appreciating” could be replaced with another word.

76. The CHAIR suggested the word “Recognizing”, which had been accepted as a solution for paragraph (oo) of the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.6.

77. The representative of PAKISTAN said that his delegation strongly supported maintaining the reference to the ZOSP — an external body that would help improve the work of the Secretariat by providing it with a second opinion regarding its activities under the ZODIAC initiative. He proposed replacing “Appreciating” with “Taking note of”.

78. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION noted that, as there were 149 ZNCs, the ZOSP would be offering the Secretariat a 150th opinion, not a second opinion.

79. The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to accept the proposal to replace “Appreciating” with “Taking note of”.

80. It was so agreed.

81. The CHAIR suggested that, in view of the deletion of “ZODIAC National Coordinators (ZNCs)” and “ZODIAC National Laboratories (ZNLs)” in paragraph (d), for editorial reasons paragraph (n) should be amended to read as follows: “Acknowledging that by May 2022 ZODIAC included ZODIAC National Laboratories (ZNLs) in 125 Member States and ZODIAC National Coordinators (ZNCs) nominated by their national authorities in 149 Member States”.

82. It was so agreed.

83. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, commenting that the receipt of an invitation was not noteworthy enough to be included in a General Conference resolution, proposed the replacement — in paragraph (t) — of “Noting the invitation extended by WHO to the Agency” with “Noting the plans of the Agency”.

84. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA requested clarification from the Secretariat as to which wording was a more accurate reflection of the facts. She recalled that a major issue before the launch of the ZODIAC initiative had been the potential for the Agency’s mandate to creep, and the invitation by WHO had been important in demonstrating that the Agency was, in fact, well placed to provide support in the area.

85. The DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMME COORDINATOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NUCLEAR SCIENCES AND APPLICATIONS said that, since the launch of ZODIAC, there had been a significant shift in the way in which WHO perceived the Agency. Whereas previously it had been the Agency that had offered its services to WHO, it was WHO that, several months before the establishment of the Global Strategic Preparedness Network, had sent the Agency official correspondence requesting it to join. There was, therefore, a huge difference between the Agency “joining” and “being invited to join” the Network.

86. The representative of FRANCE, expressing support for the view expressed by the representative of South Africa, and noting the explanation given by the Secretariat, said that it was important that the draft resolution recognized the competencies of the Agency and mentioned the invitation extended by WHO.

87. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, noting the comments made, suggested that, in order to make the wording more precise, the words “to the Agency” be replaced with “and accepted by the Agency”.

88. The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to accept the proposal made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

89. It was so agreed.

90. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that, as the ideas communicated in paragraphs (m) and (v) seemed to be identical, he would propose deleting paragraph (v).

91. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA, agreeing that it was important to streamline the text, asked if some of the wording contained in paragraph (v) could be moved to paragraph (m), to reflect the fact that delivery mechanisms such as VETLAB formed part of the Agency’s support in fighting zoonotic diseases and preventing future pandemics — at the core of ZODIAC’s mandate. The reference to ZODIAC forming part of the Agency’s support to Member States in combatting zoonotic diseases and preventing future pandemics could be moved from paragraph (v) to the end of paragraph (m).

92. The CHAIR took it that the proposal to delete paragraph (v) and move some of the wording to paragraph (m) was acceptable to the Committee.

93. It was so agreed.

94. The CHAIR took it that the Committee agreed to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.9, as amended.

95. It was so decided.

96. The representative of INDIA, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.10 (“A. Non-power nuclear applications. 5. Use of isotope hydrology for water resources management”). He said that isotope hydrology was a very important activity for delivering the SDG regarding the availability of safe water for all (SDG6) and that it had traditionally contributed to fulfilling the Agency’s objectives in that important area. The Isotope Hydrology Section had been expanding its activity thanks to a shift from focusing on water quantity to water quality studies.

97. India thanked the Secretariat for the meetings and the technical discussions held with the technical team, and expressed gratitude to the members of the Group of 77 and China and other Member States that had taken part in the open-ended working group. India was grateful for their patience, inquisitiveness, constructiveness and flexibility, considering the technical nature of the draft resolution.

98. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that his country supported the Agency’s activities in the very important area of isotope hydrology for water resources management. Nor was it opposed to the conceptual shift from studying water quantity to quality, which the Russian Federation understood was very important for a number of Member States.

99. As a general observation, however, his delegation was of the view that the wording of some paragraphs of the draft resolution was excessively specialized or scientific — even for a technical text such as the draft resolution under consideration. His delegation had some proposals for making the text more accessible to a broader audience.

100. In paragraph (f) of the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.10, he proposed deleting the words “by the end of the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 or by 2030”. As the wording stood, it was unclear whether the ‘accelerators’ mentioned would enable the completion of SDG6 by 2028 or 2030.

101. The representative of INDIA said that the ambiguity arose because the Agency expected the end of the Water Action Decade, planned for 2028, to be delayed by two years, as the previous two years had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. His country was comfortable with the proposed deletion, as it removed the ambiguity.

102. The CHAIR took it that the amendment proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation was acceptable to the Committee.

103. It was so agreed.

104. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, referring to paragraph (m), proposed deleting the words “by including its methodology in the project cycle of new technical cooperation projects, including regional ones”.

105. The representative of INDIA said that he could accept the proposed amendment, as no information would be lost.

106. In response to a query from the representative of AUSTRALIA, the representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that the proposed deletion would make the draft resolution shorter and more readable. In addition, retaining the text in question would restrict the Secretariat’s options in terms of engaging Member States in the IWAVE Project. The original wording suggested that such

engagement should be achieved by including the IWAVE Project in the design of TC projects, whereas, in his delegation's view, the Secretariat could find alternative forms of partnership with Member States.

107. The CHAIR took it that the amendment proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation was acceptable to the Committee.

108. It was so agreed.

109. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, referring to paragraph 1(ii), said that he would propose omitting two superfluous phrases. The deletion of "global and region specific" would not change the meaning and would simplify the text. He also proposed the omission of "in water stable isotopes (WICO), tritium (TRIC) and nitrate (NICO)".

110. The representative of INDIA agreed with the second proposed deletion. He explained that the words "global and region specific" had been included, however, because not all techniques were relevant for all regions. While much of the Agency's activity and resource mobilization differed from one region to another, some global comparative data were also available to ensure common understanding and avoid misinterpretation.

111. The CHAIR took it that the deletion of "in water stable isotopes (WICO), tritium (TRIC) and nitrate (NICO)" was acceptable to the Committee.

112. It was so agreed.

113. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that he opposed the deletion of "global and region specific".

114. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that omitting those words did not change the meaning. In response to the explanation given that test procedures differed between regions, he suggested that referring to them all as "region specific" did not make a difference. Furthermore, the Agency could also provide assistance for national interlaboratory tests. For completeness, therefore, he proposed retaining "global and region specific" and adding a word that conveyed a national element.

115. The representative of INDIA said that he supported the proposal as it did not alter the meaning.

116. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed the wording "global as well as region- and nation-specific".

117. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that the proposal was acceptable but he would prefer "country-specific" to "nation-specific". Nations were completely different to countries: such matters were of great legal sensitivity for Iran and he did not want to accept something that might subsequently pose problems.

118. The CHAIR took it that the proposed wording of "global as well as region- and country-specific" was acceptable to the Committee.

119. It was so agreed.

120. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, referring to paragraph 1(v), proposed omitting "from very young to very old water" because the preceding phrase — "the full spectrum of groundwater residence time" — already implied "from very young to very old".

121. The representative of INDIA said that the meaning of "full spectrum of groundwater" had changed owing to technological progress in the Agency's laboratories. The phrase "from very young to very old water" emphasized the range that had been achieved thanks to recent research at the Agency, and he wished to retain that wording in the draft resolution.

122. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA said that she would also like to keep those words in the text.

123. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION agreed to withdraw the proposed deletion.

124. Turning to paragraph 1(vi) — which was unwieldy as it stood — he proposed replacing the words “the risk of contamination as well as” with the word “and”. Studying the transit times for pollution between different water reservoirs already entailed assessing the risk of contamination.

125. The representative of INDIA said that the proposal entailed a loss of information concerning contamination and pollution. He therefore proposed adding “to understand the risk of contamination and pollution” to the end of the formulation proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation.

126. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that, while he largely agreed with the proposal made by the representative of India, he found the precise difference between “contamination” and “pollution” in English to be unclear. If both terms were needed, he proposed a new version of paragraph 1(vi): “to provide easier access for Member States to improvements in analysis of tritium in the hydrological cycle in order to understand the connections and transit times between different water reservoirs as well as the risk of contamination and pollution”.

127. The representative of INDIA said that he could accept the elegant wording proposed. Both “contamination” and “pollution” were required: “pollution” applied to all bodies of water, while “contamination” referred specifically to sources from which potable water was derived.

128. The representative of AUSTRALIA asked why the reference to understanding transit times for pollution needed to be removed. In her view it enabled knowledge of water reservoir pollutant movements, and therefore assisted in remediation and risk management. The proposed deletion would occasion an inherent change of meaning and she would welcome further explanation, as monitoring transit times for pollution was an important topic in isotope hydrology.

129. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that the time taken for pollution to transit from one reservoir to another was essentially the same as the transit time for water between reservoirs; studying the latter therefore brought with it an understanding of the former.

130. The CHAIR took it that the amended text proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation was acceptable to the Committee.

131. It was so agreed.

132. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that the wording of paragraph 1(ix) was confused. It began with a reference to expanding the use of N-15 but later used the phrase “including on isotopes of nitrates”, which entailed a shift in emphasis.

133. He therefore proposed clearer wording for the paragraph: “to expand the use of isotopes for water quality studies, analytical requirements to adopt such isotopes and to carry out international intercomparison exercises to ensure the readiness of laboratories in Member States”.

134. The representative of INDIA said that N-15 and other isotopes were a new development at the Agency, which had previously lacked the technical capability to address such isotopes — a very important indicator in all studies on pollution. He requested that the references be retained in the draft resolution and offered to propose alternative wording. Noting that the proposed amendment would result in a loss of information owing to the deletion of “water quality concerns”, he requested that a reference to analytical requirements to address water quality concerns be retained.

135. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that, whereas in his view the reference to “water quality studies” took water quality concerns into consideration, he proposed adding “addressing water quality concerns” after “water quality studies”.

136. The representative of INDIA said that he could agree to the elegant solution proposed. He insisted, however, that the reference to N-15 and other isotopes be retained.

137. The CHAIR took it that the amended paragraph 1(ix), reading “to expand the use of N-15 and other isotopes for water quality studies addressing water quality concerns, analytical requirements to adopt such isotopes and to carry out international intercomparison exercises, to ensure the readiness of laboratories in Member States”, was acceptable to the Committee.

138. It was so agreed.

139. The CHAIR took it that the Committee agreed to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.10, as amended.

140. It was so decided.

141. The representative of NIGERIA, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.11 (“A. Non-power nuclear applications. 6. Development of the sterile insect technique package for the management of disease-transmitting mosquitoes”). He said that the topic, normally reviewed every two years, had not been considered since the sixty-second regular session of the General Conference in 2018. Mindful of the increase in disease-transmitting mosquitoes and frequent deaths recorded in developing countries, and of the Agency’s efforts in implementing previous resolutions, the Group of 77 and China and other Member States had conducted negotiations and consultations on the draft resolution.

142. The open-ended working group had agreed on additions, factual updates and the elimination of obsolete paragraphs. The review had strengthened the draft resolution and enhanced its validity. Thanking Member States for their consensus-based approach to the draft resolution, he noted that the following review was due to take place at the sixty-eighth regular session of the General Conference in 2024.

143. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION pointed out that there had been outbreaks of Zika virus in continents other than the Americas, in particular in Africa. Therefore, and in order to shorten the text, he proposed amending paragraph (k) to read: “Noting with concern the Zika virus outbreaks and that so far there are no drugs nor effective global vaccines available to treat or prevent Zika”.

144. The representative of NIGERIA said that he was prepared to be flexible but felt that the proposal would seriously alter the meaning. He invited input from other delegations.

145. The representative of SOUTH AFRICA requested that the important reference to the WHO declaration of a public health emergency of international concern be retained.

146. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that it would not then make sense to omit the reference to the Americas, as the outbreak of Zika virus on that continent had led to the WHO declaration. On the other hand, not referring to outbreaks in other continents could give the misleading impression that they had not happened. He therefore proposed retaining the original wording in the draft resolution.

147. The CHAIR took it that the Committee agreed to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.11.

148. It was so decided.

149. The representative of MOROCCO, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.12 (“A. Non-power nuclear applications. 7. Plan for producing potable water economically using small and medium-sized nuclear reactors”). Thanking the Secretariat for its support in producing the draft resolution, he said that the text emphasized non-electric applications of nuclear energy to produce potable water and the assistance the Agency could provide for Member States, including with regard to nuclear desalination using SMRs.

150. The draft resolution acknowledged achievements by the Secretariat, such as the launch of the IAEA SMR Platform to provide consistent and integrated support to Member States on all aspects of the development, deployment and oversight of SMRs. It noted that in 2022 the Agency had launched a CRP on assessing the role of nuclear cogeneration including desalination within the context of sustainable development.

151. The draft resolution requested the Director General to continue to develop the Agency’s activities in assessing the role of nuclear desalination within the context of sustainable development and climate change mitigation, and to continue to increase the Agency’s activities related to training, capacity building and disseminating information on nuclear desalination using SMRs.

152. The representative of NORWAY said that he had been planning to table proposals concerning safety and security, as such matters were not covered in the draft resolution. However, consultations had revealed that it would not be possible to achieve consensus on such proposals. It was Norway’s view that safety and security should be looked into with regard to using SMRs for producing potable water — perhaps when the text was debated subsequently. He would pursue discussions elsewhere so as not to take up time at the current meeting.

153. The representative of the NETHERLANDS said that she supported the views expressed by the representative of Norway and looked forward to engaging in such discussions at a later stage.

154. The representative of ARGENTINA, supported by the representative of BRAZIL, said that he wished to thank the representative of Norway for his flexibility and patience. He hoped, however, that, when the time came for any subsequent discussions of the questions mentioned — such as using SMRs for producing potable water — it would be borne in mind that the draft resolution under consideration focused on non-power nuclear applications, whereas it was other texts that covered questions of nuclear safety and security.

155. The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM said that he also supported the statement made by the representative of Norway and noted that his approach demonstrated the constructive pragmatism expected within the Committee and that had been absent over the preceding hours of discussion. The UK and other countries had prepared several amendments relating to the non-power nuclear applications resolutions; although they had been likely to achieve consensus, in the interests of other Member States they had not been raised.

156. The representative of EGYPT, thanking the representative of Norway for his statement, echoed the views expressed by the representatives of Argentina and Brazil. It was critically important to caution against introducing certain sensitive elements into the technical resolutions submitted by the Group of 77 and China. Such proposals could be considered in discussions of other resolutions and would be given due consideration, taking into account the position of the broad membership of the Agency.

157. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, praising the well-balanced draft resolution, noted that paragraph (b) yet again mentioned the Rio Summit on Development and Environment, held in 1992 — 30 years on. For the sake of brevity, he proposed removing that reference, so that the start of paragraph (b) would read: “Recognizing that sufficient and clean potable water supplies for all

humankind are of vital importance, as emphasized in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development”.

158. The CHAIR took it that the amendment proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation was acceptable to the Committee.

159. It was so agreed.

160. The CHAIR took it that the Committee agreed to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(66)/COM.5/L.12, as amended.

161. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.