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**Sixty-eighth regular session**

## Committee of the Whole

### Record of the Fourth Meeting

*Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Wednesday, 18 September 2024, at 10.45 a.m.*

**Chair:** Mr LODDING (Sweden)

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<sup>1</sup> GC(68)/21



**Abbreviations used in this record**

CRP	coordinated research project
ICONS	International Conference on Nuclear Security
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSTDC	Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre
PMO	Policy-Making Organ
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America



## **23. Promotion of efficiency and effectiveness of the IAEA decision making process**

(GC(68)/1/Add.4)

1. The CHAIR said that item 23 had been included on the agenda at the request of Iran. It was covered by an explanatory memorandum contained in document GC(68)/1/Add.4.
2. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, noting that the item had been discussed by the General Conference for 12 consecutive years, said that promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's decision making process in a fair and balanced manner was of the utmost importance.
3. In accordance with Article IV of its Statute, the Agency was based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members, necessitating the direct engagement and participation of all Member States in taking decisions on issues fundamental to the work of the Agency — in particular those that affected the sovereign rights of Member States. Some Member States, however, still appeared to be 'more equal' than others when it came to decision making.
4. Regrettably, the General Conference, while consisting of representatives of all of the Agency's members, did not seem to be the Agency's highest policy-making body. Given that the General Conference represented all Member States, while membership of the Board of Governors was limited, the balance of powers and functions between the two bodies was inappropriate. The efficiency of the Agency's decision making process could be improved by reconsidering the balance between the two bodies.
5. There was also a need to increase the size and reconsider the composition of the Board's membership to ensure inclusivity. The 1999 adoption of an amendment to Article VI of the Statute, as set out in resolution GC(43)/RES/19, had been a positive step, but, owing to various political and regional issues, the amendment appeared unlikely to enter into force.
6. In addition, the composition of certain regional groups referred to in the Statute had for some considerable time restricted their own members' equal opportunities for Board membership. The Agency and the regional groups needed to establish a fair, logical and efficient arrangement to ensure that no Member States were unjustly deprived of the equal opportunities that they should enjoy. As proposed at previous sessions of the General Conference, an open-ended consultative group of Member States should be set up to discuss proposals and make appropriate recommendations for consideration by the General Conference.
7. Lastly, he said that the General Conference should consider adopting electronic voting, which was widely used in other forums — including the UN General Assembly — by amending Rule 72 of its Rules of Procedure. Doing so would reduce costs and mean that less time was spent on procedural matters, freeing up time for substantive issues. Iran proposed following the example of the UN General Assembly in that regard.
8. The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM said that his country also attached importance to ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency, and the sovereign equality of all Member States and their right to full participation in the Agency's PMOs. His country firmly believed, however, that the Board functioned effectively as the Agency's highest decision making body. The UK could not agree

to establishing an open-ended consultative group to consider the matter, as that would undermine the Board's vital work and the Agency's efficiency and effectiveness.

9. At the same time, the number of Board members should be expanded to reflect the Agency's growing membership and to provide additional opportunities for Member States to serve on the Board. In that regard, the UK had co-hosted a side event the day before on bringing into force the amendment to Article VI of the Statute, and his country encouraged other Member States to ratify the amendment as soon as possible.

10. Lastly, he said that it was important, for the full and effective functioning of the Agency and its PMOs, for all Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time.

11. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, noting the pertinence of the issue repeatedly raised by Iran, said that it was unacceptable that certain Member States had been attempting to politicize the Agency's work, including by abusing their position as Board members for their own political interests. In recent times, it had become common practice for the Board to adopt politicized and unprofessional resolutions by a majority of votes — mostly from Western States — and unscheduled meetings of the Board had been rapidly convened at the instigation of specific delegations on topics that bore no relation to the Agency's mandate. For example, on 12 July 2024, the Board had been led astray by one delegation; there had been no grounds for convening the Board. Those events had amounted to an outright manipulation of the Board.

12. Resolutions that did not enjoy consensus were being adopted by a group of countries guaranteed a majority at the Board and that forced through decisions in their favour, despite the fact that many Board members either voted against or abstained. Such a pernicious practice simply encouraged countries to embark on further odious initiatives and must cease if the Board were to retain any of its authority. The Member States must collectively revise the decision making process at the General Conference.

13. The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM said that recent Board resolutions adopted by a majority vote and the convening of unscheduled meetings of the Board had been fully in line with the Board's provisional Rules of Procedure.

14. The representative of CUBA, stressing the priority that his country continued to attach to the strengthening and democratization of the UN system, including the Agency, said that a structural and operational review of the Agency's bodies must promote an appropriate balance among its various statutory activities. He welcomed the addition of the current item on the agenda.

15. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that the addition of the current, politicized agenda item stood in the way of focusing on the Agency's critical technical missions and of holding an efficient and productive meeting of the General Conference.

16. The respective responsibilities of the Board and General Conference were set out in the Statute. Meanwhile, the composition of the Board was a separate issue and the subject of the pending amendment to Article VI of the Statute. Every Member State should be represented in a geographically appropriate regional group; at present, a number were not. The acceptance of all Member States into an appropriate regional group would contribute to support for the amendment to Article VI of the Statute. Moreover, assigning all Member States to a geographic area was a precondition for the amendment to enter into force.

17. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that the statement by the representative of the USA had referred to "regional groups". However, the term used in Article VI of the Statute was "areas"; there was no reference to "groups".

18. The CHAIR said that he would report to the plenary that, under item 23 of the agenda, the importance of maintaining and promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's decision making processes and strengthening the Agency and its governing bodies in a fair and balanced manner had been highlighted.

19. Expansion of the Board's membership, enhancement of the role and authority of both the General Conference and the Board, and the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance between the two bodies had been underlined. The importance of the direct engagement and participation of all Member States in the decision making process on issues related to the Agency's work had been emphasized, as had the issue of the sovereign equality of Member States in the Agency's PMOs, in order to enhance their representation therein. The relevance and importance of the process currently under way for the timely ratification of the amendment to Article VI of the Statute had been referred to and some views and suggestions had been expressed in that context. The issue of the use of electronic voting by the General Conference, following the example of the UN General Assembly, had also been raised.

## **25. Election to the Agency's Staff Pension Committee**

20. The CHAIR recalled that the General Conference was represented on the Agency's Staff Pension Committee by two members and two alternates. As a result of the departure of the two members and one of the alternates, the General Conference must elect one member and two alternates, in accordance with the Pension Committee's Rules of Procedure. Following consultations, it had been proposed that Ms Evelyne Ong'ayo of Kenya be elected as a member and Ms Vania Lijaya of Indonesia be elected as an alternate. He understood that those nominations had been the subject of consultations by the Secretariat, which had solicited nominations from regional groups. No other nominations were before the Committee.

21. He said that he took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that Ms Ong'ayo be elected as a member and Ms Lijaya be elected as an alternate on the Agency's Staff Pension Committee.

22. It was so decided.

23. The representative of COSTA RICA said that his country had been a member of the Staff Pension Committee since 2021 and that he welcomed the new members.

## **13. Nuclear and radiation safety (resumed)** (GC(68)/11; GC(68)/INF/2; GC(68)/COM.5/L.9)

24. The CHAIR invited the coordinator of the draft resolution on nuclear and radiation safety contained in document GC(68)/COM.5/L.9 to update the Committee on the consultations held.

25. The representative of AUSTRALIA said that Norway and Thailand had requested to be added to the list of sponsors.

26. Drawing attention to paragraph 142, she said that, following consultations, replacing the words "and enhancing the capabilities of" with "and upgrading the performance of" appeared to be acceptable to all parties involved in the discussions.

27. Consultations continued on other paragraphs.

## **14. Nuclear security (resumed)**

(GC(68)/7; GC(68)/INF/3 and 6; GC(68)/COM.5/L.15)

28. The CHAIR invited the coordinator of the draft resolution on nuclear security contained in document GC(68)/COM.5/L.15 to update the Committee on the consultations held.

29. The representative of FRANCE, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that discussion was under way on three principal points: the balance between the three pillars of the NPT; attacks on peaceful nuclear facilities; and the financing of the NSTDC. Proposals would doubtless be made on other matters and could, perhaps, be discussed at a later time.

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

(GC(68)/10; GC(68)/INF/4; GC(68)/COM.5/L.3, L.4, L.5, L.6, L.7, L.8, L.10, L.12 and L.13)

30. The CHAIR invited the coordinator of the draft resolution on nuclear power applications and nuclear knowledge management contained in document GC(68)/COM.5/L.10 to update the Committee on the consultations held.

31. The representative of FRANCE said that no consensus had been reached on paragraph (l) of section B.1 or paragraph 19 of section C, and suggested that informal discussions continue. She noted that Hungary and Latvia had requested to be added to the list of sponsors.

**The meeting was suspended at 11.10 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.**

## **14. Nuclear security (resumed)**

(GC(68)/7; GC(68)/INF/3 and 6; GC(68)/COM.5/L.15)

32. The CHAIR said that, after having consulted with the delegation of France, he wished to take up those paragraphs in the draft resolution on nuclear security contained in document GC(68)/COM.5/L.15 on which agreement appeared close.

33. Turning to paragraph (dd) bis, he recalled that the delegation of Iran had sought a balance whereby the primary focus was on the growing interest in small modular reactors.

34. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that he agreed with the comments made previously by the representatives of Austria and Germany concerning the need for a link to nuclear security. That said, he proposed mentioning the interest first, followed by the link to nuclear security. With regard to the reference to Member States' "respective obligations", he noted that there was only one other such reference in the draft resolution, in paragraph 18, which also mentioned "legally binding instruments"; however, there were no such instruments with regard to small modular reactors.

35. He proposed the following wording: "Emphasizing the growing interest of Member States in the development and deployment of small modular reactors (SMRs) and other new reactors, and noting the



importance of addressing nuclear security considerations in this context, within their national security regimes”.

36. The CHAIR proposed altering the proposed amendment to read “Noting the growing interest” and “emphasizing the importance”.

37. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA underlined that the original wording in the draft resolution, as in the ICONS 2024 Co-Presidents’ statement, had mentioned nuclear security considerations first, followed by the context: the evolving technology landscape. Noting the apprehensions of some countries regarding making reference to countries’ nuclear power ambitions outside the resolution on that topic, he wondered whether the amendment proposed by Iran might be moving in a problematic direction.

38. The CHAIR said that his proposal to change the order of “noting” and “Emphasizing” might address the concern raised by the representative of the USA.

39. The representative of SWITZERLAND said that his delegation could agree to Iran’s proposed amendment with the Chair’s proposed alteration to put “Noting” first, to be followed by “emphasizing”.

40. The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM requested clarification concerning the proposed change from “in accordance with the respective obligations of Member States” to “within their national security regimes”.

41. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that the only other reference to “respective obligations” in the draft resolution was in paragraph 18, which also mentioned “legally binding instruments”, which did not exist for small modular reactors. Therefore, the phrase “respective obligations” in paragraph (dd) bis was unclear and its scope was not defined. Meanwhile, it was a simple fact that Member States should take the importance of nuclear security into account within their nuclear security regimes.

42. The CHAIR suggested replacing “respective obligations” with “respective national undertakings”, which would be individual to each Member State.

43. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN requested time to consider the Chair’s proposal.

44. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that, with regard to the first part of Iran’s proposed amendment, his delegation was prepared to accept the wording as modified by the Chair. The new formulation seemingly retained all components of the original wording in the draft resolution.

45. The representative of AUSTRALIA said that his delegation had a strong preference to retain the original wording, as it made sense to frame the paragraph in the context of nuclear security.

46. The representative of EGYPT said that his delegation, too, strongly preferred retaining the original wording, although it could support the addition, proposed by Iran, of “national security regimes”. However, the wording “in accordance with the respective obligations of Member States” should also be retained because the paragraph referred to the “development and deployment” of small modular reactors, meaning that it was important for Member States’ security, safeguards and other obligations to be upheld. It might be helpful to add wording underlining the established principle that nuclear security rested entirely with States themselves.

47. The CHAIR asked whether the substitution of “national undertakings” for “obligations” would be acceptable.

48. The representative of EGYPT said that the matter at hand concerned not only national obligations, but also broader obligations with regard to nuclear security and the application of nuclear security regimes, including in the context of developing and deploying small modular reactors. The wording “respective obligations” was broader, encompassing national and international obligations.

49. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that it was important to consider the word “undertakings” carefully. He noted that the Russian interpreters had translated that word in a way that was akin to the English word “measures”, and also pointed out that the word “undertakings” had not appeared a single time in the resolutions adopted at the previous year’s session of the General Conference. His delegation would prefer a different term to be found.

50. The CHAIR suggested retaining the original wording of the proposed amendment.

51. The representative of ARGENTINA proposed the wording “nuclear security regime”, which — according to the *IAEA Nuclear Safety and Security Glossary (2022 (Interim) Edition)* — encompassed States’ regulatory, legislative and administrative frameworks and therefore covered the various options that had been under discussion.

52. The representative of EGYPT said that his delegation would need time to consider the new proposed wording.

53. The CHAIR said that the proposed amendment and the subsequent changes would be circulated in writing.

54. Turning to paragraph 32, he recalled that the delegation of Iran had proposed including the wording “in close consultation with Member States”, on the basis of the previous year’s resolution on nuclear security<sup>2</sup>. The words could be added either following “Encourages the Secretariat” in the first line, or before “to increase its assistance to Member States” in the third line. Noting that in the previous year’s resolution, the phrase in question had been mentioned in conjunction with assistance to States, he asked the delegation of Iran whether the phrase could be added to the third line of the draft resolution under discussion.

55. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that in the previous year’s resolution, the phrase in question had been used in connection with developing, fostering and maintaining a nuclear security culture. That concept was located in the first part of the paragraph under discussion; therefore, his delegation had proposed adding the phrase in the first line.

56. The CHAIR recalled that the UK delegation had been hesitant to add the phrase in the first line and asked whether that delegation wished to put forward a proposal.

57. The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM said that discussions with her capital were under way. The concept of consultation with Member States was implied by the context: promoting international exchange of experience and providing assistance to Member States compatible with States’ nuclear security regimes. The proposed addition did not, therefore, seem necessary.

58. The representative of SWITZERLAND said that although he agreed that the proposed addition was not strictly necessary, a similar phrase appeared several times in the draft resolution when the Secretariat was encouraged to do something.

59. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA drew attention to paragraph 34, where the Secretariat was encouraged to do something “in cooperation with Member States”; the same approach could perhaps be replicated in paragraph 32.

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<sup>2</sup> GC(67)/RES/8

60. The CHAIR asked whether adding “in cooperation with Member States” following the words “Encourages the Secretariat” on the first line would be acceptable.
61. The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM said that her delegation agreed with the proposal made by the representative of the USA.
62. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that paragraph 34 concerned training programmes, whereas paragraph 32 concerned nuclear security culture. There was no cooperation between Member States and the Secretariat concerning nuclear security culture; fostering and maintaining nuclear security culture was very much an internal issue that must be compatible with countries’ nuclear security regimes. Cooperation with the Secretariat on training programmes took place in a totally different context.
63. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that he was merely pointing out the best location for a caveat: following the words “Encourages the Secretariat”. The precise wording thereafter was to be decided.
64. The CHAIR said that he understood that the proposal to insert “in close consultation with Member States” after the words “Encourages the Secretariat” was acceptable to the Committee.
65. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION pointed out that in the previous year’s resolution, the word “close” did not appear in the analogous location. Accordingly, he suggested that that word could be omitted.
66. The CHAIR said that he understood the wording “in consultation with Member States” to be mutually acceptable.
67. Turning to paragraph 52, he recalled that Iran had questioned the source of the notion of “criminal” acts in relation to insider threats.
68. The representative of FRANCE, speaking in his national capacity, said that the terminology had come from Agency publications. He referred in particular to IAEA Nuclear Security Series No. 20 — ‘Essential Element’ 5 of that publication covered aspects linked to criminalization.
69. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that the issue at hand was the need for a clear reference point for the call made on Member States in the second part of the paragraph. On that basis, he proposed replacing “and to mitigate” with “and in this regard notes the importance of mitigating”.
70. The representative of FRANCE, speaking in her national capacity, requested some time to consider the proposed amendment, which seemed to alter the meaning somewhat and to change what was being asked of Member States.
71. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that he agreed that the proposed amendment departed from the meaning of the original wording. During previous discussions on the draft resolution, it had been argued that the operative paragraphs needed to push for action; adding a verb such as “notes” weakened the paragraph and made it less operative. He called for the current wording to be retained.
72. The representative of PAKISTAN noted that IAEA Nuclear Security Series No. 20 consistently used the wording “criminal or intentional unauthorized acts”, while the draft resolution used “criminal and other unauthorized acts”. Consistency was needed.
73. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION noted that everything in the paragraph after the word “transport” was new in comparison to the previous year’s resolution and was of dubious

benefit. His delegation was always ready to reinstate the wording of the paragraph as agreed in the previous year's resolution.

74. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that the wording in the previous year's resolution had been clear and was preferable; the wording that had been added was not even in line with IAEA Nuclear Security Series No. 20. The first and second parts of the paragraph must be separated — having the verb “call upon”, from the first part, also refer to the call made in the second part was not acceptable, but his delegation could agree to use the verb “notes”.

75. The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM said that the wording that had been added was worthwhile and should be retained: if an insider threat were identified, there would surely be a need to address it. Noting the caveat already present in the paragraph — “consistent with their national legislation and regulation” — she said that the terminology used in the paragraph could be slightly adjusted, in line with the comments made by the representative of Pakistan.

76. The representative of SWITZERLAND said that the wording normally used in Agency nuclear security guidance was “mitigating the consequences of malicious acts”. He proposed a broader wording such as “to mitigate the consequences of such acts” or “to mitigate the consequences in case of such an event”, and deleting the rest of the phrase.

77. The representative of BELGIUM said that whereas her delegation could be flexible in terms of bringing the wording closer to agreed texts, the paragraph should remain as actionable as possible.

78. The CHAIR asked the representative of Iran whether the suggestions put forward by the representative of Switzerland would be acceptable to his delegation.

79. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that he required some time to consider the proposed amendment.

80. The representative of COLOMBIA said that, in his delegation's view, the purpose of the paragraph in question was not merely to note the importance of doing something. The proposal made by the representative of Switzerland could offer a potential way forward.

81. The CHAIR said that the proposal by Switzerland seemingly had the best chance of eventually commanding consensus.

82. The representative of INDIA, referring to paragraph (u), said that the insertion of a reference to separated plutonium was not acceptable to her delegation.

83. The CHAIR said that consultations on the matter were under way.

84. Turning to paragraph 54, he recalled that the Russian Federation had proposed deleting the words “and to consider holding such conferences on a regular basis”.

85. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that the wording “on a regular basis” was not customarily used in General Conference resolutions and therefore seemed inappropriate. Mindful that some countries hoped that another computer security conference would be held, he noted that that would not take place during the coming year. Given that the primary purpose of resolutions was to set out work to be done in the coming year, he proposed that wording on a future conference could perhaps be included in the subsequent year's resolution on nuclear security.

86. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that the wording “on a regular basis” was helpful because eight years had elapsed between the previous two conferences, which was perhaps excessive in a rapidly evolving field such as computer security. His delegation was open to compromise on the phrasing “on a regular basis” — he noted that the previous year's resolution had

made reference to regular technical exchange meetings and regular briefings — but the ultimate aim should be to encourage regular exchange and conferences on the topic in question.

87. The representative of SWITZERLAND reiterated his suggestion made at the previous meeting to include wording along the lines of considering holding a subsequent conference.

88. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that the suggestion by Switzerland was promising and proposed the wording “looks forward to a future conference on this topic”.

89. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that his delegation found the wording to represent a reasonable compromise.

90. The CHAIR said that a solution for paragraph 54 appeared to have been found.

91. Turning to paragraph 57, he recalled that the Russian Federation had proposed changing “Welcomes” to “Notes”. He asked whether the Russian delegation could show flexibility in that regard.

92. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that his delegation had heard no real arguments for the use of “Welcomes”. That verb was apposite in the case of a new activity, or some significant achievement. But the verb “note” was appropriate in connection with something regular, such as CRPs. He underlined that nothing in the Agency’s work would change if “Welcomes” were to be replaced by “Notes”.

93. The representative of SWITZERLAND said that, as research was one of the Agency’s principal activities and could help in solving global problems, he could not understand how it could not be welcomed, although his delegation did not have a strong preference in that regard.

94. The representative of FRANCE, speaking in her national capacity, underlined the importance of the paragraph and of the Agency’s research work and said that her delegation too found it difficult to fathom why research would not be welcomed. She called for the word “Welcomes” to be retained.

95. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that she agreed with the statements by France and Switzerland. Noting that her delegation had already ceded many of its preferences on the draft resolution, she said that, in the light of the strong preference of the USA and others, retaining the word “Welcomes” appeared to be the way to achieve consensus and called on the Russian delegation to show flexibility.

96. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that the wording in the draft resolution was quite different to the previous year’s resolution, which had started with “Requests”. His delegation preferred to start the paragraph with the word “Notes”.

97. The representative of ITALY, echoing the statements by the representatives of France, Switzerland and the USA, said that his delegation would strongly support retaining the word “Welcomes”.

98. The representative of GERMANY said that his delegation, too, had a strong preference for “Welcomes”. If the previous year’s draft resolution had requested the Agency to do something and that request had been satisfied, that should be welcomed.

99. The representative of AUSTRALIA said that he fully agreed with the representative of Germany. The Agency had done sterling work on implementing CRPs, which was why the word “Welcomes” had not been questioned in previous informal consultations.

100. The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM said that her delegation too supported the word “Welcomes”.

101. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that he was grateful in particular to the representative of Iran, who had made a very important point — in previous years, the Secretariat had simply been requested to continue the implementation of CRPs. Noting the argument that it should be congratulated for having responded to that request, he said that the Secretariat was not a schoolchild whom the Member States needed to congratulate, and also asked why there had been no need to express such praise in previous years. There was no need to do so in the current draft resolution, and if other delegations were unwilling to change “Welcomes” to “Notes”, he suggested reinstating the previous year’s wording.

102. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA proposed the wording: “Requests the Secretariat to continue the implementation of and to report on the coordinated research projects (CRPs) in the field of nuclear security, and welcomes the progress made in the past year, and calls on the Secretariat to provide further information in this respect”. He noted that the proposal incorporated combined elements of the draft resolution and of the previous year’s adopted resolution.

103. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that he did not understand how the proposal would achieve consensus given that the word “Welcomes” remained and was entirely inappropriate in that context. He again asked what had happened over the previous year to require the paragraph to be changed after years of maintaining the same wording.

104. The CHAIR encouraged consultations to continue and expressed gratitude for the progress made.

**The meeting rose at 1 p.m.**