

Following the decision of Hans Blix not to seek re-election, the Board at its March 1997 session approved the balloting procedure for the appointment of a new Director General of the Agency. After several rounds of balloting on an original list of six candidates in March and a final list of two candidates in May, the Board on 5 June 1997 decided by acclamation to appoint Mohamed ElBaradei of Egypt as Director General of the Agency for a period of four years commencing on 1 December 1997. The appointment was confirmed by the General Conference in accordance with Article VII of the Statute on 29 September 1997.

The General Conference also agreed to confer on Hans Blix the title of 'Director General Emeritus of the IAEA', which had earlier been recommended by the Board.

The Committee on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Improving the Efficiency of the Safeguards System (Committee 24), which was established by the Board in June 1996 and charged with the task of drafting a Model Additional Protocol to existing safeguards agreements, completed its task in April and the Board approved the Protocol at a special session in May.

The applications of Malta and Burkina Faso for membership of the Agency were approved by the General Conference on the recommendations of the Board of Governors.

The General Conference again requested the Board of Governors to develop within a timetable a process of negotiations among Member States and to submit its report on a finalized formula for a revision of Article VI of the Statute for approval by the General Conference at its 1998 regular session. In contrast to previous years, however, the Board of Governors decided that consultations on the issues related to the review of Article VI should be under the guidance of its Chairman. The first of such consultations was held in November.

The Board established an Informal Working Group on the Restoration of Voting Rights following a request made to it by the General Conference to develop criteria or principles which should govern future consideration of requests for the restoration of voting rights. The report of the Informal Working Group is expected to be submitted to the General Conference in September 1998.

The General Conference, through a statement by the President, also requested the Chairman of the Board of Governors to consult with Member States not yet listed in a regional area, as well as with other Member States and representatives of the regional areas, and submit to the General Conference in 1998 for consideration a report on specific proposals for the inclusion of each Member State within the appropriate area.

The 40th anniversary of the entry into force of the Statute of the Agency was commemorated at the General Conference with the launching of two books on the Agency.

The General Conference extended for a further term of two years the tenure of office of the Agency's External Auditor.

The Board re-established its open-ended informal working group on the financing of technical assistance. It also established, in December, a Joint Consultative Group on IAEA/Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) Co-operation open to Member States of the Agency and States Signatories of the CTBT to make recommendations on possible areas of co-operation.

