
Sixty-seventh regular session

Committee of the Whole

Record of the Seventh Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Thursday, 28 September 2023, at 1.30 p.m.

Chair: Mr CSERVENY (Hungary)

Later: Ms CALLESEN (Denmark)

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¹ GC(67)/24

Abbreviations used in this record

TC	technical cooperation
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
USA	United States of America

23. Restoration of sovereign equality in the IAEA (resumed) (GC(67)/1/Add.3; GC(67)/COM.5/L.14)

1. The CHAIR, noting that the representative of Iran had requested time to consider his country's decision on the draft resolution contained in document GC(67)/COM.5/L.14, asked him whether he could join consensus on the text.
2. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that his country sympathized with Kazakhstan and was prepared to consider any request to enlarge the regional groups on a case-by-case basis. Iran could not, however, agree to an approach based on a list of countries that had to be accepted or rejected as a whole. Some regions were volatile, and consideration of enlargement in such cases was difficult in view of the manifold political and legal dimensions.
3. Noting that his country had expected discussions to be held by the coordinator of the draft resolution, which — regrettably and surprisingly — had not occurred, he said that Iran's three proposed amendments would be distributed in accordance with Rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference.
4. Regarding paragraph (d), he proposed replacing the initial wording with "Noting that some IAEA Member States are yet to be members of regional groups,".
5. Turning to paragraph 1, he said that his country wished to recognize regional groups' right and discretion to consider their own composition and decide on any enlargement. In that vein, he proposed replacing the initial wording of paragraph 1 with "Recognizes the discretion of regional groups regarding their composition and consideration of possible enlargement on a case-by-case approach, taking into account the Statute of the IAEA in this regard;".
6. Lastly, he proposed deleting the entirety of paragraph 2.
7. The representative of KAZAKHSTAN said that his country was grateful for Member States' flexibility and willingness to recommend the draft resolution by consensus. The draft resolution concerned the legitimate right of 'homeless' Member States and was aimed at ending an unfair state of affairs at the Agency. The carefully balanced text had been the result of transparent and inclusive consultations, and Kazakhstan fully agreed with the other sponsors that it was highly undesirable to reopen the text; Iran's proposed amendments were difficult to accommodate at that stage.
8. Noting the enormous support for the draft resolution, he said that the Chair should recommend that the Plenary adopt the original version of the draft resolution.
9. The CHAIR proposed that he report that the Committee had been unable to reach consensus and that he recommend that the Plenary take up the issue.
10. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that, in the light of the political character of the draft resolution and of Iran's proposed amendments, moving discussions to the Plenary was doubtless the best way forward.
11. More broadly, he expressed concern at the slow pace of the Committee's work and that negotiations on other draft resolutions were being held hostage owing to extraneous motivations. There was a risk that the Conference might extend into the following week.

12. The CHAIR agreed that time was limited and that there was a need to compromise. Intensive consultations were under way on the outstanding draft resolutions.

13. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN asked whether it would be possible to gauge reaction to his country's proposed amendments.

14. The CHAIR said that a long discussion had been held the day before and many countries had expressed their support for not altering the wording of the draft resolution; in the interests of time, he suggested that the Committee refrain from further comments.

15. The representative of SWEDEN said that his country agreed with the Chair's proposed course of action.

16. The representative of AUSTRIA said that his country was in favour of keeping the original wording of the draft resolution.

17. The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished him to report to the Plenary along the lines detailed previously.

18. It was so decided.

15. Strengthening of the Agency's technical cooperation activities (resumed) (GC(67)/INF/5 and Supplement; GC(67)/COM.5/L.7/Rev.1)

19. The CHAIR asked the representative of Pakistan to report on the results of his consultations on the draft resolution.

20. The representative of PAKISTAN, drawing attention to paragraph (s) of part 2 of the draft resolution, said that the wording "and encouraging the Secretariat, in close coordination with Member States, to continue its efforts to further advance gender balance, including among experts and lecturers, in the TC programme," had been added at the end of the paragraph. Such wording had been used previously, and also appeared in an operative paragraph.

21. The CHAIR said that the proposed amendment would be distributed in writing.

The meeting was suspended at 1.50 p.m. and resumed at 2.20 p.m.

22. The representative of AUSTRALIA said that it was disappointing that the paragraph in question had been revisited; strong support had been expressed at a previous meeting of the Committee for the initial wording. Whereas achieving gender equality was of high importance to Australia, her country could join consensus on the revised wording, although doing so represented a significant compromise.

23. The representative of FRANCE said that her country agreed with the representative of the Russian Federation that the Committee must not be held hostage.

24. Her delegation remained surprised that the draft resolution had been revisited. Although her country had been in favour of the initial wording, it was willing to compromise significantly and join consensus.

25. The representative of AUSTRIA said that his country shared the perplexity of the representative of France.

26. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that he was confused by the view that the Committee's work consisted merely of rubber-stamping previously agreed draft resolutions; rather, the Committee must agree on every aspect of a draft resolution. The application of psychological pressure would not lead others simply to submit, and he called for such a course of action to be avoided. If a country received instructions, a text must be discussed or reopened in order to improve it. Iran had acted in that spirit and in line with the Committee's standard practice; the rules of the game were very clear.
27. Opinions about gender equality differed. Gender equality in his country's culture was completely different from gender balance and the empowerment of women, and had legal and cultural connotations. Many countries in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation had said that they did not share the opinions coming from certain corners of the world. Accordingly, amendments had been proposed in order to take into account such concerns. Iran would not back down, because cultural diversity should be acknowledged. Certain concepts prevailed in the draft resolution and coloured the whole text, something which Iran could not accept.
28. The representative of SWEDEN, echoing previous speakers, said that his country was very disappointed that the draft resolution had been revisited; nonetheless, in a spirit of consensus, it accepted the proposed amendment.
29. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that his country agreed with Iran — the views of all Member States should always be taken into account. The fact that mutually acceptable wording had been found should be welcomed, rather than focusing on whether or not the paragraph had been closed.
30. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that her country, too, was disappointed that previously agreed wording — consensus language from previous years — had been revisited. Expressing the hope that such a practice would not continue, the USA supported the proposed amendment in a spirit of compromise.
31. The representative of JAPAN said that her country supported the position of other Western countries. The matter had been the subject of lengthy discussions and the initial wording should be retained.
32. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that orchestrated efforts leading to repetitive statements were unhelpful. It was a mistake to dictate how his country should proceed within the Committee. In company with all other Member States, Iran was entitled to propose amendments at any time, and no country had the right to constrain it. Attempts to deny Member States their rights were underhand and ineffective.
33. The representative of GERMANY said that he echoed the remarks of the representatives of Australia and France.
34. The CHAIR, thanking the representative of Pakistan for his efforts, took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(67)/COM.5/L.7/Rev.1.
35. It was so decided.

27. Personnel

(b) Women in the Secretariat (resumed)

(GC(67)/19; GC(67)/COM.5/L.3/Rev.1)

36. The CHAIR invited the representative of Pakistan to introduce the proposed changes in the draft resolution contained in document GC(67)/COM.5/L.3/Rev.1, which the Secretariat had distributed.

37. The representative of PAKISTAN, drawing attention to paragraph 2, said that the wording “which covers gender equality” had been replaced with “which covers gender balance”, and the wording “an enabling environment supportive of gender equality” had been replaced with “an enabling environment supportive of that end”.

38. Turning to paragraph 8, he said that the wording “encourages all interested parties in a position to do so to join both initiatives” had been replaced with “invites all interested parties in a position to do so to consider joining both initiatives”.

39. The representative of the PHILIPPINES said that his country — an advocate of gender parity and equality in the nuclear field, and the drafter of the draft resolution — had preferred the initial wording of the draft resolution. In a spirit of compromise, however, and mindful of the need to make swift progress, it supported the proposed wording.

40. He requested that parties closely involved in the preparation of draft resolutions, and the sponsors of those resolutions, be informed in a timely manner regarding consultations thereon, in particular those taking place in small groups. Such discussions should be as transparent as possible.

41. The representative of AUSTRALIA, echoing a number of the remarks made by the representative of the Philippines, said that her country attached great importance to the attainment of gender equality within the Secretariat and in all of the Agency’s activities, and fully supported the Director General’s goal of reaching gender parity by 2025. It was pleased that the Agency continued to build a diverse and inclusive workforce, endeavours that were important to ensuring that the Agency could discharge its mandate.

42. Australia had been proud to sponsor the initial version of the draft resolution, but regretted that — after consensus had been achieved — the text had been reopened in the Committee. Although Australia would continue to sponsor the draft resolution, given the importance of its principles, and would join consensus on the revised wording if others followed suit, she noted that her country was again making a significant compromise and was disappointed by lack of transparency and openness in the discussions.

43. The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM said that his country had believed the draft resolution to have been agreed, and that some of the topics under discussion had not been raised previously as the wording had been settled in 2022. The UK had been very pleased to sponsor the initial resolution and he was awaiting instructions as to whether it would continue to do so given the significant changes, which required a major compromise from his country. Noting that the UK would ideally have desired additional changes to the wording of paragraphs (h) and 5, his delegation was still prepared to maintain a spirit of consensus.

44. The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that she echoed the remarks made by the representative of Australia and that her country would continue to sponsor the draft resolution.

45. The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(67)/COM.5/L.3/Rev.1.

46. It was so decided.

47. The CHAIR said that he was grateful in particular to the representative of Pakistan and those who had worked with him towards the adoption by consensus of the draft resolutions on technical cooperation and women in the Secretariat.

Ms Callesen (Denmark), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

13. Nuclear and radiation safety (resumed)

(GC(67)/13; GC(67)/INF/2; GC(67)/COM.5/L.12/Rev.1)

48. The CHAIR noted that document GC(67)/COM.5/L.12/Rev.1 had been issued.

49. The representative of AUSTRALIA, introducing document GC(67)/COM.5/L.12/Rev.1, said that Japan, North Macedonia, the UK and the USA had decided to sponsor the text.

50. In paragraph (g), the wording “information sharing” had been removed, and the wording “supporting Member States” had been replaced with “supporting all Member States, as appropriate”.

51. The CHAIR took it that the proposed wording was acceptable to the Committee.

52. It was so agreed.

53. The representative of AUSTRALIA, turning to paragraph (k), noted that consensus had not been reached. She said that the wording of paragraph (o) was the same as in the initial version of the draft resolution.

54. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN said that his delegation was ready to show flexibility and accept the wording “give due priority to” in paragraph (o).

55. The CHAIR took it that the wording was acceptable to the Committee.

56. It was so agreed.

57. The representative of AUSTRALIA said that there had been no progress on paragraph (p) and that it was still under discussion.

58. Turning to paragraph (r), she said that work was under way on a proposal for the end of the paragraph.

59. On paragraph (s), she said that a suggestion had been made to delete the middle of the paragraph. She noted that, although the wording in question had been agreed upon since the adoption of the resolution on nuclear and radiation safety at the 62nd regular session of the General Conference², there was currently no consensus on paragraph (s).

60. The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that his delegation was prepared to accept the wording of paragraph (s) in its current form.

² GC(62)/RES/6

61. The CHAIR took it that the wording was acceptable to the Committee.
62. It was so agreed.
63. The representative of AUSTRALIA, turning to paragraph (v), said that that new paragraph had been proposed by Austria and Switzerland. Those two countries had been undertaking consultations and had some progress to report.
64. The representative of SWITZERLAND proposed the wording “Recognizing that the increase in frequency and severity of weather-related hazards may have an impact on nuclear safety,”.
65. The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, supported by the representative of EGYPT, said that the flexibility concerning paragraph (v) was welcome and that the paragraph was acceptable.
66. The representative of FRANCE said that she would check the new wording with her capital.

The meeting rose at 3 p.m.