



International Atomic Energy Agency

GENERAL CONFERENCE

GC(XXXVI)/COM.5/OR.81
13 November 1992

GENERAL Distr.

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

THIRTY-SIXTH (1992) REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

RECORD OF THE EIGHTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at the Austria Center Vienna
on Tuesday, 22 September 1992, at 11.20 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. EL-SAIEDI (Egypt)

CONTENTS

<u>Item of the agenda*</u>		<u>Paragraphs</u>
-	Election of Vice-Chairmen and organization of work	1 - 4
11	The Agency's accounts for 1991	5 - 11
12	Measures to strengthen international co-operation in matters relating to nuclear safety and radiological protection))) 12 - 65)
	(a) Revision of the Basic Safety Stan- dards for Radiation Protection)) 13 - 27
	(b) Education and training in radia- tion protection and nuclear safety)) 28 - 30
	(c) Report on the preparation of possible elements of a nuclear safety convention)) 31 - 65)

[*] GC(XXXVI)/1027.

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document
GC(XXXVI)/INF/313/Rev.2.

Abbreviations used in this record

ASSET	Analysis of Safety Significant Events Team
Basic Safety Standards	Basic Safety Standards for Radiation Protection
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
ICRP	International Commission on Radiological Protection
INES	International Nuclear Event Scale
INSAG	International Nuclear Safety Advisory Group
IRS	Incident Reporting System
Joint Secretariat	Joint (FAO-IAEA-ILO-NEA/OECD-PAHO-WHO) Secretariat (for the preparation of the Basic Safety Standards)
mSv	millisievert
NUSS	Nuclear Safety Standards
NUSSAG	Nuclear Safety Standards Advisory Group
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
RAPAT	Radiation Protection Advisory Team
SAGSTRAM	Standing Advisory Group on the Safe Transport of Radioactive Materials

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMEN AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN, after thanking the General Conference for the confidence it had placed in him by electing him as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, suggested that the Committee begin with the election of the two Vice-Chairmen. In the light of the consultations he had held on the matter, he proposed Mr. Strulak (Poland) and Mr. Verbeek (Netherlands) for those posts. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to elect Mr. Strulak and Mr. Verbeek as Vice-Chairmen.

2. It was so decided.

3. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee take the items which had been referred to it by the General Conference in the order in which they appeared in document GC(XXXVI)/COM.5/113. He further proposed that, in line with established practice, he report orally to the Conference at a plenary meeting on the Committee's deliberations, which would also be the subject of detailed summary records.

4. It was so decided.

THE AGENCY'S ACCOUNTS FOR 1991 (GC(XXXVI)/1005, GC(XXXVI)/COM.5/106)

5. The CHAIRMAN said that the Agency's accounts for 1991, which had been considered by the Board of Governors in June, were reproduced in document GC(XXXVI)/1005, page III of which contained a draft resolution submitted by the Board for consideration by the General Conference. Also, Nigeria had submitted, on behalf of the Group of 77, a draft resolution entitled "Harmony and compatibility of programme and budget and accounts documents", which had been circulated as document GC(XXXVI)/COM.5/106.

6. Mr. BAKSHI (India), referring to the draft resolution prepared by the Group of 77, said that, in the light of recent consultations, he wished to propose adding two phrases to the resolution which, without changing the meaning, would strengthen the text. The first involved including a reference to annual reports in operative paragraph 1, so that the relevant part would read "between the Agency's programme and budget documents, its annual reports and its accounts documents", since the annual reports were also an integral part of the programming, budgeting and accounting system. Second, as further

consultations with Member States would be necessary, he proposed changing the beginning of operative paragraph 2 to read: "Requests the Director General to consult Member States in order to ensure that ... "

7. Mr. LAMPARELLI (Italy) expressed his full support for the draft resolution under discussion and recalled that his delegation had raised the matter unsuccessfully in the Board of Governors a decade or so earlier. With regard to the wording of the draft resolution, he felt it would be more appropriate to speak of consistency than of harmony and compatibility.

8. Mr. AGRELL (United Kingdom) asked the Secretariat how the draft resolution would be implemented.

9. Mr. DIRCKS (Deputy Director General for Administration) said that the Secretariat welcomed the draft resolution before the Committee and especially the second amendment proposed by the representative of India. The Secretariat would be pleased to consult with Member States pursuant to the draft resolution once it had been adopted in the form now proposed. The Secretariat had in the past endeavoured to harmonize the programme and budget document on the one hand and the accounts document on the other, but the results had not been considered very successful. The draft resolution in document GC(XXXVI)/COM.5/106 would provide an occasion for reverting to the matter and addressing it with the help of Member States and the External Auditor.

10. The CHAIRMAN, noting that there were no more speakers, took it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Conference that it adopt the draft resolution set forth on page III of document GC(XXXVI)/1005 and the draft resolution contained in document GC(XXXVI)/COM.5/106 as amended by India.

11. It was so agreed.

MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN MATTERS RELATING TO NUCLEAR SAFETY AND RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION

12. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee take separately the various sub-items included in item 12, but that delegations could refer to several sub-items in the same statement if they so wished.

(a) REVISION OF THE BASIC SAFETY STANDARDS FOR RADIATION PROTECTION
(GC(XXXV)/RES/551, GC(XXXVI)/1008 and Add.1)

13. Mr. POPA (Romania) said that his country's regulatory body had begun the revision of its national nuclear regulatory standards with a view to improving them in the light of the latest recommendations made by specialized international organizations and the experience gained during more than 30 years. The new version of the Basic Safety Standards for Radiation Protection reflected the ICRP's 1990 recommendations in a form better suited to Romania's needs and would thus be of great help to it in revising its national standards.

14. His delegation could agree to the proposed reduction of the effective dose limit for occupational exposures to 20 mSv/year, although compliance with such a limit might be difficult in certain cases. For practical reasons and to ensure that the standards were comprehensive in nature, the document should contain all the relevant recommendations and avoid referring the reader to other publications. If the content of such publications was important for a proper understanding of the Basic Safety Standards, those publications, or excerpts from them, should be attached as annexes, as had been done with the ICRP recommendations.

15. Mr. AGRELL (United Kingdom) noted from paragraph 8 of document GC(XXXVI)/1008 that the draft was to be reviewed at a technical committee meeting to be held in December and that, if a consensus was obtained, the resulting draft would be submitted to the governing bodies of the sponsoring organizations for approval. While the draft was commendable, there was still a considerable amount of work to be done before the document was truly acceptable.

16. His country was concerned that the draft dealt with nuclear - as opposed to radiological - safety issues and that much of it went further than the current international consensus would allow. The document was very ambitious and was extending the Basic Safety Standards for Radiation Protection too rapidly to new areas, especially that of "safety". Consequently, while he appreciated the work carried out, he requested the experts to think again. Even if it meant that, despite everyone's efforts, the planned date of

publication would not be met, it would nevertheless be worthwhile to revise the document with a view to improving it and enhancing its acceptability.

17. Mr. HOGG (Australia) endorsed the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom. The revised version of the Basic Safety Standards would be a valuable tool for the establishment of radiation protection procedures in Member States, but the revision work was far from finished and the publication date set by the Secretariat seemed very ambitious.

18. Mr. STRATFORD (United States of America) said that his country supported the formulation of basic safety guidelines by the Agency and was actively participating in the revision of the Basic Safety Standards. The United States had submitted preliminary general observations on the draft to the Secretariat and would also be providing detailed technical comments. However, the proposed schedule for the approval of the final document seemed unrealistic; some more time would probably be needed before a consensus was achieved on several new areas dealt with in the draft. His delegation therefore believed that no deadline should be set for the completion of the draft and that further review was essential in order to reach an international consensus. In addition, no other Agency guidance document that was dependent on the Basic Safety Standards (for example, the Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material) should be submitted to the Board of Governors until it had approved the Basic Safety Standards. Furthermore, his delegation would like the Secretariat to conduct, as part of the review process and before the document was submitted to Member States, an assessment of the expected impact on other Agency programmes and of the interaction between the guidance to be provided in the revised Basic Safety Standards and other existing or planned Agency documents.

19. Mr. McRAE (Canada) fully supported the efforts being made by the six multilateral bodies, including the Agency, involved in updating the Basic Safety Standards in the light of the latest recommendations of the ICRP. He welcomed the inclusion in the latest draft of both nuclear and radiological considerations. However, the final document should be designed for easy use. It should not be too detailed or prescriptive, that differences in approach between countries could be accommodated. To that end, his delegation, like

those of the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States of America, considered that the text should be thoroughly revised to focus more on standards, with specific guidance being provided in other documents. The current draft should be seen as part of a continuing process, with each stage allowing scope for Member States to conduct a thorough and detailed analysis. The Basic Safety Standards had an impact on many Agency documents and activities and he would therefore like to see their revision completed quickly. Nevertheless, he cautioned against setting artificial deadlines that were based on the schedules of other organizations.

20. Mr. PENG (China) said that his country's nuclear and radiation safety experts were currently studying the draft Basic Safety Standards and would be proposing some amendments. Delegations needed more time to study the draft and submit further comments before they could accept the document. The result would be an improved draft, which, once accepted, would have greater force.

21. Mr. GIOVANSILY (France) said that the Basic Safety Standards were extremely important and that enough time should be allowed to do the work properly so that a consensus could be achieved. His delegation endorsed the proposal made by the United Kingdom and considered that the problems posed by different sources of radiation should be treated separately – on the one hand, sources used in everyday areas such as medicine or agriculture, and on the other, sources consisting of nuclear reactors or facilities, where the problems were more appropriately classified as nuclear safety issues. The final document should comprise a general part devoted to basic considerations and annexes containing information on more technical aspects.

22. Mr. TABET (Algeria) welcomed the progress made in revising the Basic Safety Standards. His delegation commended the Agency on its efforts in that respect and noted with satisfaction the sound recommendation that the Basic Safety Standards be expanded to cover requirements regarding the safety of radiation sources. His delegation attached great importance to the speedy implementation of revised standards consistent with the ICRP recommendations.

23. His delegation endorsed the Joint Secretariat's recommendation that the Basic Safety Standards should be drafted in the form of concise statements of regulatory requirements which could be used directly in the preparation of

national regulations and that they should be addressed not only to the national authorities responsible for radiation protection, but also to radiation protection specialists working in different areas. The situation prevailing in developing countries, which had been confirmed by RAPAT missions, should prompt the Agency to adopt a long-term strategy for strengthening national radiation protection programmes. That strategy should give particular attention to personnel training, the creation of national and regional infrastructures, and, above all, the establishment as soon as possible of regulations which translated radiation protection principles and concepts into regulatory requirements.

24. Mr. SCHERBA (Ukraine) said his country supported the Agency's nuclear safety activities, and in particular its revision of the Basic Safety Standards. It was to be hoped that the revision could be brought to a swift conclusion and the Standards adopted as soon as possible. The improvements being made to the nuclear liability regime were particularly useful and would be incorporated into Ukrainian legislation. A common international policy co-ordinated by the Agency should enable the highest levels of safety to be achieved worldwide and allay suspicions about nuclear power. Finally, it was essential that international agreement be reached on approaches for assessing the safety and future prospects of "old" facilities and for developing safety requirements for the new facilities which would be the basis of nuclear power programmes in the next century.

25. Mr. GONZALEZ (Deputy Director, Division of Nuclear Safety) said that the Secretariat would take full account of all the comments just made on the revision of the Basic Safety Standards. Those comments would supplement those already received from Member States and international organizations and would be transmitted to the Joint Secretariat.

26. With regard to the timetable, it was clear that it would not be possible to reach a consensus on such an important document in the near future, and certainly not by December 1992. That had, in fact, been indicated in the Addendum to document GC(XXXVI)/1008. The Secretariat had never intended to press for the hasty adoption of the document. The representative of Canada had expressed concern about the setting of deadlines according to

the schedule of other organizations, and it was true that the European Community was currently engaged in revising its own directives to bring them into line with the ICRP recommendations. The CEC, which had not been able to join in the work of the Joint Secretariat, had a very tight schedule for its revision work, and the Community's directives were to be adopted very soon. In contrast, the revision of the Basic Safety Standards would take a long time, and the discrepancy in timing could be harmful from the point of view of the harmonization of the texts.

27. The United States delegation had emphasized that no document derived from the Basic Safety Standards should be published before those Standards had been revised. That was fully in line with the Secretariat's plans, particularly with regard to the Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material; they were due to be revised only in 1995, which should leave ample time. In any case, the Chairman of SAGSTRAM had taken part in the revision of the Standards, which ought to ensure consistency and harmony between the documents.

(b) EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN RADIATION PROTECTION AND NUCLEAR SAFETY
(GC(XXXV)/RES/552; GC(XXXVI)/1016)

28. Mr. BAKSHI (India) said that document GC(XXXVI)/1016 concerning education and training in radiation protection and nuclear safety was useful and very clear. He hoped that resources would be found to implement the proposals contained therein. The Secretariat had accomplished a considerable amount in that area, yet much remained to be done. The main problem was, of course, resources. In that connection he suggested that, as education and training were primarily targeted at developing countries, more consideration should be given to ways of using the expertise and trained manpower available in those countries. Such a policy would have the double advantage of enabling better use to be made of specialists trained with the Agency's assistance and of cutting the cost of training programmes, since manpower was less expensive in developing countries. That idea was worth looking into, as some developing countries had accumulated considerable expertise in the past 20 years.

29. Mr. PENG (China) said that the Secretariat had done an admirable job in providing training in radiation protection and nuclear safety. The implementation of a well-conceived programme of education and training would

help Member States to establish and improve their national radiation protection systems, which could not fail to enhance nuclear safety worldwide. China therefore supported the efforts being made in that area and would do everything possible to promote their success. Through its technical assistance programme, the Agency had been very active in the area of training in radiation protection and nuclear safety and had achieved good results. Any new training programmes should build on that success.

30. Mr. ORNSTEIN (Argentina) recalled that, at the previous year's session of the General Conference, his country had been one of the sponsors of resolution GC(XXXV)/RES/552, in response to which document GC(XXXVI)/1016 had been drawn up. He endorsed the contents of that document, which represented an important step towards achieving the objectives of the resolution.

(c) REPORT ON THE PREPARATION OF POSSIBLE ELEMENTS OF A NUCLEAR SAFETY CONVENTION (GC(XXXV)/RES/553, para. 4; GC(XXXVI)/1020 and Add.1)

31. Mr. LAMPARELLI (Italy) said that he wished to speak on sub-items 12(c), (d) and (e) together. Italy had always fully supported the establishment of an effective international nuclear safety regime based on internationally agreed and enforced safety standards and fully endorsed the initiatives taken by the Secretariat to strengthen safety worldwide. It was a matter of concern that not all Member States with significant nuclear programmes made use of the safety services offered by the Agency (for example, OSART, ASSET and RAPAT missions and engineering safety review services) or participated in IRS or INES activities. It was similarly disappointing that very limited use was made of the regulatory review team programme, for national regulatory capabilities were an area in which a great deal remained to be done. Although useful, peer discussion groups on specific regulatory issues were insufficient to provide the transparency required to assure the international community that nuclear activities were being conducted in accordance with high standards and good practices. Moreover, a major shortcoming of the Agency's services was that they depended entirely on voluntary acceptance by Member States.

32. Italy highly appreciated the Secretariat's efforts to improve and update those services, in particular OSART and ASSET missions, and hoped that the same effort would be devoted to RAPAT missions, for which a review should

be made of the objectives and expertise required. It was discouraging to note how long such a process took. Since 1986, his delegation had been urging that the scope of the IRS be enlarged and that the range of events to be reported be widened. Recommendations to that effect had been made by the General Conference at its thirtieth session, and it was high time they were implemented.

33. A nuclear safety convention would undoubtedly be the cornerstone of the long-awaited international nuclear safety regime. As the representative of the CEC had emphasized at the meetings of the Board of Governors in June, such a convention should be more than a simple code of good practice. Parties should undertake to apply the safety standards set forth in the convention and to accept independent supervision of its application through regular peer reviews conducted under the Agency's auspices. In that respect, the results of the first meeting of the group of experts failed to meet his delegation's expectations. Many misunderstandings needed to be clarified, and more co-operation was needed not only between the experts, but also between some of them and members of the Secretariat - whose support and advice were indispensable. The difficulties encountered by the expert group seemed to stem from its present structure and the fact that technical and legal issues were being discussed at the same time. Agreement must first be reached on the technical content of the convention and on the technical means of implementing it - including the Agency's role - before moving on to the stage of drafting the provisions themselves.

34. With regard to the report of the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage, he noted with regret that very little progress had been made on State liability and its relationship with civil liability. There seemed little point in concentrating on amendments limited to certain aspects of the Vienna Convention when there was no agreement on other important issues which needed to be incorporated into that Convention. Under the circumstances, the holding of a review conference in 1993 seemed out of the question. His country was interested in achieving good rather than quick results, and the same applied to the convention on nuclear safety.

35. Mr. ORNSTEIN (Argentina) said that the preparations for a nuclear safety convention had progressed significantly in a short time. It seemed that the work had focused more on drawing up a preliminary text of a general nature as the framework for future requirements than on defining the possible elements of a convention. The work done by the group of experts was extremely valuable, but certain problems associated with safety activities being carried out simultaneously in the Agency would nevertheless have to be resolved. That applied to the comprehensive revision work on the Basic Safety Standards, which would have to be reflected in the convention's technical provisions. Those provisions would, in turn, have to be reviewed by INSAG. At all events, the obligations of parties to the convention should not be specified in such detail that they hindered further progress on nuclear safety, whether with regard to new technologies or to new design developments.

36. The proposed "meetings of the parties" seemed to be a suitable mechanism for reviewing nuclear safety at the international level. However, the provisions of the convention should not be such as to absolve operators or national regulatory authorities from their responsibility for the safety of facilities. The meetings would ensure that responsibilities were shared in an appropriate way and would thus promote balanced and equitable co-operation between the parties, thereby contributing to the steady improvement of nuclear safety.

37. Mr. BAKSHI (India) recalled that his country had always been a vigorous supporter of the Agency's nuclear safety and radiation protection activities. The main objective of a safety convention should be to encourage all Member States to apply international safety standards and make the most of the experience acquired. That would only be possible if the convention was widely accepted and a large number of Member States, including those with significant nuclear programmes acceded to it. Some elements essential for the wide acceptance of the convention already enjoyed a general consensus. One example was the principle that safety was primarily the responsibility of national regulatory bodies and should be enforced at the national level. The preparation of the draft convention would progress more quickly if experts from developing countries were encouraged to take part in that work, and he

therefore felt that, despite the Agency's financial constraints, some resources should be allocated for that purpose.

38. Member States were fully aware of the importance of the safety of their facilities, and he was confident they would be happy to receive any assistance they might require from the international community in that area. It would therefore be useful if the Agency organized periodic meetings at which Member States could review the implementation of the convention. Finally, many States were of the view that the scope of the convention should be broad. An artificial partitioning of safety issues on the basis of peaceful or military application would be neither logical nor desirable. Since no inspections or verifications were envisaged in the draft convention, there should be no practical or political obstacles to its covering all facilities.

39. Mr. PAPADIMITROPOULOS (Greece), recalling that his country had participated in the work of the expert group entrusted with preparing a draft nuclear safety convention, thanked the Secretariat for compiling a document which constituted a good starting point for the discussions and negotiations to come. He would really like to see a convention which could command a broad consensus and to which all Member States would be willing to accede. However, the convention should incorporate elements representing a harmonization of international standards and regulations. It should also deal with certain technical issues, although it should do so in a general manner designed to provide guidance for the future and not attempt to prescribe industrial norms. The convention should also provide for an expansion of the Agency's role in line with its Statute, and be broad enough in scope to cover as many installations as possible. Finally, he supported the statement made by India concerning the usefulness of periodic meetings between the parties.

40. Mr. TURVEY (Ireland) said that he had a number of preliminary comments to make on document GC(XXXVI)/1020, which the Irish delegation would expand upon during the forthcoming meeting of the group of experts.

41. The Irish authorities remained firmly convinced that the general principles contained in a convention must be given substance by technical annexes and consequently regarded the Secretariat's draft as fundamentally incomplete. They therefore requested the Secretariat to prepare brief

technical annexes based on the NUSS codes for consideration by the expert group. Also, if the title of the convention was to be meaningful, its scope must extend to all phases of the nuclear fuel cycle, including reprocessing facilities. The general principles of the convention would be valid for those facilities and, if necessary, appropriate technical annexes could be added at a later date. Accordingly, the definition of a "nuclear installation" should correspond to that contained in the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and should not exclude military installations.

42. Mr. VERBEEK (Netherlands) said that he was completely satisfied with the progress achieved and the excellent draft prepared by the Secretariat.

43. The expert group was on the point of giving its verdict on a number of crucial questions: the scope of the convention, its nature - framework convention or a simpler single instrument - and ways of securing international co-operation in implementing the basic safety principles that would be set forth in it. On all those questions, the Dutch delegation would be presenting its comments in writing at the meeting of the group of experts. At present, he nevertheless wished to state that the convention should not be restricted to highly abstract minimum principles, but should also set out in sufficient detail the specific measures of international co-operation essential for the attainment of a high level of nuclear safety everywhere. In that connection, he associated himself fully with the comments made by Italy on the importance of the role of OSART, ASSET and RAPAT missions and with the view expressed by the Indian delegation that wide participation was vital to the success of the convention. The convention should also pave the way for further progress in formulating, reviewing and implementing international safety standards. On all those points there were crucial decisions to be taken by the expert group, and it would thus be useful if the General Conference expressed its views on them in a resolution.

44. Mr. MAGNUSSON (Iceland) said that his country attached great importance to the efforts being made to draw up a nuclear safety convention and welcomed the progress achieved. However, the elements currently foreseen for inclusion in the convention were too restrictive. The scope of the convention should be widened and should cover not just civilian nuclear power reactors but all nuclear reactors, installations and activities.

45. He wished to draw the Committee's attention to a resolution entitled "Nuclear Safety Guidelines for Nuclear-Powered Vessels" adopted by the General Conference at its thirty-fourth session. His delegation was looking forward to further progress being made with its implementation.

46. Mr. BILBAO ALFONSO (Cuba) said that his delegation had closely followed the work being done by the Agency to prepare possible elements of a nuclear safety convention. Such a convention should be an international instrument designed to strengthen safety on the basis of established principles and criteria and it should take into account the fact that nuclear safety was ultimately the responsibility of each State. Such an ambitious instrument should be adopted on the basis of a broad consensus, and there should first be agreement on its scope and content, which should not exclude non-civil fuel cycle activities and should take account of the distinct features of the law and legislation of each country. Finally, the measures to be adopted should not hamper the peaceful nuclear programmes of developing countries by establishing binding standards which could not be implemented within a reasonable time.

47. It was undoubtedly right to aim at the highest possible safety levels, but that should be done on an objective basis in line with scientific and technical progress, and it should be accompanied by the promotion of international co-operation and mutual assistance in that area. Lastly, since the expert group would now be working on the final version of the draft convention, he felt that it should be provided with interpretation services in all the working languages.

48. Mr. SHINOTSUKA (Japan) commended the Agency on its nuclear safety activities, which contributed significantly to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. His Government fully supported the idea of establishing a convention to strengthen nuclear safety. Safety was the responsibility of individual States, and the convention should assist States in discharging that responsibility. The convention should concentrate on general principles and should take into account the particular circumstances of each State so that it would be acceptable to a large number of countries. His Government had contributed to work on the convention by sending

representatives to the meetings of the group of experts in December 1991 and May 1992 and it would continue to co-operate in the future.

49. Mr. CAMPUZANO PIÑA (Mexico), recalling that his country had always participated actively in the Agency's nuclear safety work, said that primary responsibility for nuclear safety lay with individual States. The scope of the planned convention should be as broad as possible and must not be limited to civil reactors. With respect to OSART and ASSET missions, which were very useful, his delegation believed that local expenses should be met by recipient countries and that other costs should be covered by the Agency's Regular Budget, and not its technical co-operation programme. Lastly, he agreed with the representative of Cuba that the nature of the work made it essential for the expert group to be provided with interpretation services for all its meetings.

50. Mr. STRATFORD (United States of America) said that his country supported the elaboration of an international nuclear safety convention within the framework of the Agency and would continue to participate actively and positively in that effort. Work on the convention should be guided by a number of criteria.

51. An international nuclear safety convention should be based on fundamental principles and avoid detailed prescriptive rules or standards. Such a convention should recognize that each country was primarily responsible for regulating the safety of its nuclear facilities and should not dilute that responsibility through provisions which would establish the Agency or any other body as a multilateral regulatory mechanism. Furthermore - and it was on that point that the position of the United States differed from that of some countries - the initial convention should be negotiated as a single, unified instrument, not in the form of a series of documents (such as technical annexes) prepared over a long time. Initially, its scope should be limited to civil nuclear power reactors, which represented the greatest nuclear safety risk and about which the broadest consensus existed concerning measures needed to ensure safety. Other facilities could, however, be included at a later stage, although military facilities should be regarded as being outside the scope of a safety convention. Finally, the implementation

of the convention should be the responsibility of the parties, which should meet periodically to review compliance with its provisions.

52. The use of those criteria would enable the elaboration of the nuclear safety convention to proceed in the most effective and expeditious way and should make it possible for the Secretariat to submit a draft to the next session of the General Conference for approval and implementation.

53. Mr. GIOVANSILY (France) stressed his Government's support for all activities aimed at ensuring and enhancing the safe application of nuclear energy. Safety was an essential condition for the preservation and expansion of the use of nuclear energy worldwide and therefore required particular vigilance. Significant steps had been taken to establish an international safety convention, and it was to be hoped that the work would proceed rapidly and in accordance with certain essential principles - for example, that States must retain prime responsibility for safety and that the convention should be based upon fundamental safety principles and should not attempt to set industrial standards.

54. The initial meetings of the group of experts had identified the questions of substance and the practical problems which needed to be resolved. That was an important first stage and its results seemed satisfactory. France wished to see the work continue and hoped that further progress would be made at the group's forthcoming meeting.

55. Mr. PAPADIMITROPOULOS (Greece) expressed his support for the Irish delegation's proposal that the Secretariat prepare technical annexes for the October meeting of the group of experts and asked whether it would be possible for the Secretariat to do so in the short time available. The idea of supplementing a convention with technical annexes was not new, and conventions which included such annexes were, in fact, currently under negotiation in other forums. Moreover, while nuclear safety was primarily the responsibility of the individual State, it was also a matter of concern to all States. It was for that reason that the scope of the planned convention ought to be enlarged.

56. Mr. HOGG (Australia) said that it was important to establish an international nuclear safety convention because of the need to achieve and maintain a high level of nuclear safety worldwide. Also, it was to be expected that a well-structured and well-thought-out convention would have a considerable impact on public acceptance not only of nuclear power, but of nuclear technology as a whole. He welcomed the progress made and hoped that the present momentum would be maintained at the next meeting of the group of experts. He expected substantial progress to be made at that meeting and perhaps even the completion of a draft convention by the end of the year.

57. The safety convention, which should be concluded within a reasonable time, should provide for broad coverage of civil nuclear facilities and should be widely acceptable to Member States. To achieve that, it might be necessary to limit coverage to civil nuclear power plants at first. A framework-type convention would allow other types of facility to be included later. Technical annexes would probably be needed to provide necessary guidance to States which acceded to the convention. Such annexes should be based, to some extent at least, on the considerable work already done by INSAG and NUSSAG. A peer review mechanism and an amendment procedure should also be included in the initial instrument. However, the convention should not assign a major institutional role to the Agency.

58. His delegation wished to commend the Secretariat for its efforts so far and for the working documents it had prepared for the next meeting of the group of experts. Although the proposed draft was not yet complete, it provided a sound basis for further work, and his delegation looked forward to the early conclusion of a widely acceptable convention.

59. Mr. IONESCU (Romania) said that his country wholeheartedly supported the Agency's efforts to strengthen nuclear safety and welcomed the progress made in that sphere, since it believed that efforts to maintain and raise the level of safety at nuclear facilities throughout the world benefited all countries.

60. A nuclear safety convention would undoubtedly have an important impact on the establishment by Member States of their own laws and regulations concerning safety. The Director General had reacted promptly - for which he

was to be congratulated – to the Board's recommendations by arranging for the production and distribution to national authorities of the draft convention which was to be discussed in early October at a meeting of the group of experts. Romanian experts would be taking part in that meeting and he hoped that they would make a useful contribution. His delegation, which had made detailed observations in the Board of Governors on the possible elements of a nuclear safety convention, was of the view that it should also cover radioactive waste processing and storage facilities.

61. His country highly appreciated the very valuable assistance provided by the Agency to national regulatory bodies. In particular, it wished to thank the Director General for the support it had received in 1992 in the form of an international mission which had assessed Romania's ability to evaluate the safety of the nuclear power plant which it was currently building and had put forward recommendations which were in the process of being implemented.

62. His delegation was very pleased with the efforts being made by the Agency to draw up safety principles for future nuclear power plants using a step-by-step approach based on the work of INSAG. Romania was keenly interested in the results of the work which the Agency was planning to carry out in that respect.

63. The Agency was playing a highly constructive and dynamic role in ensuring the application of the two international conventions adopted in 1986. It had provided, and was continuing to provide, valuable assistance to Member States, including Romania. Following discussions between the competent Romanian organizations and the Secretariat, several measures had been agreed upon for assistance in the area of emergency planning and preparedness. Also, the Romanian parliament had just ratified the 1963 Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Joint Protocol Relating to the Application of the Vienna Convention and the Paris Convention.

64. During the past year, the Agency had conducted a number of activities concerning liability for nuclear damage. Romania had sent representatives to participate in the work of the Standing Committee for several reasons: the importance of the problem as a whole; the fact that the first unit of

Romania's nuclear power plant was due to become operational towards the end of 1994; and the situation in the region, where some of the operating nuclear power plants that had been build to earlier safety standards were deficient from the nuclear safety point of view. Romania had taken note of the Standing Committee's work, which it believed should be continued and intensified.

65. Mr. GONZALEZ (Deputy Director, Division of Nuclear Safety), referring to the request by the representatives of Ireland and Greece concerning the preparation of technical annexes, said that such annexes had already been drawn up - in the form of the NUSS codes - and approved by Member States under a programme which had lasted many years and had involved the participation of hundreds of experts. It would be technically irresponsible to attempt to summarize those documents in one week for the meeting of the group of experts, and it was for Member States to decide if they wished to use those codes as technical annexes.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.