FACT SHEET #1
Information Relevant to the IAEA General Conference

Topic: IAEA General Conference Overview & Issues for the 2013 Meeting

WHAT IS THE IAEA GENERAL CONFERENCE? WHAT DOES IT DO?

The General Conference (GC) is one of the main policy making bodies of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It consists of all IAEA member states and convenes annually, usually for one week in September. Representatives of member states, often at the ministerial level, deliver statements at the General Debate, reporting on their countries' nuclear activities, plans, and cooperation with the IAEA, and outlining national positions on issues ranging from nuclear nonproliferation and verification to nuclear applications in medicine and agriculture.

The General Conference considers the Agency's annual activity reports, approves the IAEA's biennial budget, and adopts resolutions on subjects such as safeguards implementation, nuclear security, power and non-power nuclear applications, and other matters relevant to IAEA activities. Most of the resolutions are negotiated at the Committee of the Whole, an important body of the GC that works in parallel with the General Debate. The Committee often designates additional working groups to develop the text of particularly difficult and contentious resolutions.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR ISSUES THAT WILL BE ADDRESSED AT THIS YEAR'S GENERAL CONFERENCE?

Middle East: In past years, the GC has witnessed controversy surrounding the Arab-sponsored resolution on Israeli Nuclear Capabilities (INC), calling on Israel to join the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. In 2011 and 2012, however, the Arab states refrained from tabling this resolution. It appears that the Arab states will not move forward with the resolution in 2013, as well, although they have requested that the issue be placed on the GC agenda. The GC will also consider the traditional, Egypt-sponsored, resolution on the Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East. The latter resolution has not been adopted by consensus since 2006, with Israel, the United States, Canada, and sometimes EU states abstaining. For more details, please see *Fact Sheet #2* on Middle East issues.

Safeguards Implementation: Traditionally, the General Conference adopts an EU-sponsored resolution concerning the application of IAEA Safeguards and Model Additional Protocol. In recent years, the resolution has been a subject of controversy and since 2007 was put to a vote several times. One of the points of disagreement over the resolution's text is the question of whether the Additional Protocol, a voluntary measure which provides the agency with additional tools to detect undeclared nuclear activities, should be considered the verification standard for non-nuclear-weapon states party to the NPT. Another issue is the IAEA's potential involvement in nuclear disarmament verification – disagreement over this was the main reason that in 2011, the GC was unable to adopt the safeguards resolution at all. A more recent point of contention is the so- called "state-level" approach to safeguards, which emphasizes broader, comprehensive information about a state's nuclear program beyond traditional inspections and declarations. In 2012, objections, primarily from Russia, to endorsing the state-level approach (or concept) in the resolution led the GC to request that the Director General submit a report to the Board of Governors (BOG) on "the conceptualization and development" of the state-level approach. This report was submitted in August 2013, but has reportedly fallen short of Russia's expectations. Several leading non-nuclear weapon states such as Brazil, South Africa, and Singapore also object to the approach, finding it discriminatory. If the issue is not settled at the agency's Board of Governors meeting on September 9-13, 2013, it could once again prove controversial at the GC. Please see *Fact Sheet #3* for more details.

Nuclear Security: The General Conference is scheduled to consider the 2014-2017 Nuclear Security Plan. This will mark the fourth such plan since the agency devoted greater attention to efforts to prevent nuclear and radiological terrorism in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The plan does not represent a sharp substantive break from its predecessors. However, new emphasis is placed on cybersecurity; nuclear forensics; and the development of Nuclear Security Support centers, the International Nuclear Security Educational Network, and International Nuclear Security Support Plans to aid capacity-building. It also points to the need for the conclusion of the Nuclear Security Information Management System, a tool that states can use to assess the quality of their nuclear security. And it calls for improved capabilities to provide advice and assistance to states with regard to unregulated nuclear and radioactive material, such as disused radioactive sources that have not been placed in a secure facility. The GC's consideration of the plan comes as more than 50 IAEA member-states plan to convene the third Nuclear Security Summit in the Netherlands next spring. For more details, please see *Fact Sheet #4* on nuclear security.

Appointment of the Director General: In March 2013, the Board of Governors approved the current Director General (DG) Yukiya Amano for a second four-year term, from December 1, 2013 to November 30, 2017. The General Conference is expected to adopt without a vote a resolution approving the appointment of DG Amano for the second term.

New Board of Governors Members: The IAEA Statute, agreed to in 1957, established eight regional groups for the purposes of elections to the Board of Governors: North America, Latin America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, Middle East and South Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific, and Far East. In accordance with the Agency's Statute, each year the Board of Governors "designates" the Member States most advanced in the technology of atomic energy to serve on the Board for one year. The 13 states "designated" by the current Board to serve in 2013-2014 are: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

In addition, each year the General Conference elects 11 members to serve staggered two year terms on the Board of Governors—the members elected this year will therefore serve until 2015. It is currently expected that this year the GC will elect Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Finland, Kenya, Peru, Qatar, Slovakia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, and Vietnam. Vietnam is also expected to be the next Chair of the Board.

The 11 members elected in 2012 which will continue to serve until September 2014 are: Algeria, Argentina, Costa Rica, Greece, Libya, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Thailand, and Uruguay. The Board members whose terms are ending in September 2013 are Belgium, Bulgaria, Cuba, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Tanzania.

Budget Issues: IAEA program and budget are developed and approved biannually. The Board of Governors first considers budget proposals submitted by the Director General and then recommends them for GC approval. This year, the General Conference will consider several resolutions containing budget-related proposals, including regular budget appropriations and Technical Cooperation Fund allocations for 2014. This year's agreement at the Board was a result of prolonged negotiations, as several states continue to oppose real growth in the Agency's budget. For more details, please see *Fact Sheet #5* on budget issues.

Other issues: Any member state can propose an inclusion of an additional item in the GC agenda. In July, Iran sent a letter to the IAEA Director General requesting that the GC consider an item titled "Promotion of Efficiency and Effectiveness of the IAEA Decision Making Process." Iran has been locked in a dispute with the IAEA over its nuclear program and particularly over the Agency's access to a site in Parchin, where it is suggested Iran has conducted activities relevant to developing nuclear weapons. In explaining its request, Iran referred to "limited and inequitable" representation of member states on the Board of Governors, failure to expand the Board membership since the last decision to do so in 1999, and the need to "restructure" the Board and its mandate, presumably to give more power to the General Conference. Iran proposed this agenda item for the first time in 2012 but did not table a resolution. The issue was discussed at the Committee of the Whole, a subsidiary body of the General Conference, but did not receive much attention overall. With a new leadership in Tehran, a new Permanent Representative of Iran in Vienna, and the next round of IAEA-Iran talks scheduled for September 27, it is unlikely that Iran would table a resolution this year or otherwise raise controversy around this agenda item at the General Conference.

WHO ARE THE MAIN ACTORS?
WHAT ARE POLITICAL & REGIONAL GROUPINGS?
HOW DO THEY INTERACT?

Given today's geopolitical realities, states do not necessarily keep to the regional group arrangements put forth in the IAEA Statute, and political alignments cut across various regions.

One of the largest political groupings at the IAEA, the **Group of 77** (G77) was initially formed by 77 developing states; the group currently includes 132 countries. At the IAEA, the G77 Vienna chapter is active primarily in pushing for technical assistance and cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Group's mission is to represent and defend the interests of developing nations. G77 representatives often argue that the assistance and cooperation activities of the IAEA should be given the same priority as verification and safeguards, and be funded from obligatory, rather than voluntary, contributions. Donor states object to such proposals, and debates between the two groups take place during the consideration of Budget Appropriations and Technical Cooperation Fund resolutions.

A large and important political grouping that has in recent years increasingly been involved in issues related to IAEA matters is the **Non-Aligned Movement** (NAM). The NAM currently has 120 members and 17 observers, all of whom identify themselves as developing countries. The NAM Vienna Chapter was established in 2003, and it is presided over by the current NAM Chair (Iran). The Movement's focus at the IAEA is more political than that of **G77**, whose membership greatly overlaps with that of NAM. The latter has addressed the Board of Governors on the subjects of safeguards implementation and compliance, particularly in relation to Iran and Syria, multilateral nuclear fuel arrangements and assurances of supply, and other issues. In recent years, key NAM states, including Egypt, Brazil, and Iran, and the Western group have disagreed about the voluntary vs. compulsory nature of the Additional Protocol and the role of the IAEA in nuclear disarmament verification, which affected the negotiation of the safeguards resolution (see above). NAM has also supported the Arab states' initiative to return the INC resolution to the Conference's agenda. The Movement has not been as united, however, in endorsing the actual text of the resolution, with several states abstaining. This is indicative of the Movement's diversity and variety of positions among its members and observers. On highly political and controversial issues, the NAM may not be as powerful a voting bloc as the membership numbers suggest.

The group that has lately been more disciplined and consistent in its voting is the **European Union** and "associated" states. Many countries from the Eastern European Group are now EU members, and several more are aspiring to accede, which leads them to support EU positions. Other non-EU Western European states join this bloc, as well as non-European developed states such as Australia, Canada, Japan, and the United States, especially on the issues of safeguards and verification. Together, they are known as the Western European and Other States Group (WEOG). EU traditionally sponsors a resolution entitled "Strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system and application of the Model Additional Protocol." For more on this resolution and some of the debates surrounding it, see *Fact Sheet #3*.

On budget matters, there is greater diversity of opinion within the EU and other developed states, particularly on the subject of increasing the regular IAEA budget. The major contributing states to the IAEA (and the UN more broadly) are known as the **Geneva Group** of 14 countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. For more than two decades, this group insisted on "zero real growth" in the IAEA budget, but more recently, some countries such as the United States and the Netherlands have supported small increases in the budget in response to growing safeguards implementation needs.

Arab states in the IAEA also act as a group at the General Conference, particularly on issues related to the Middle East. Every year since 2006, this group has requested that the Israeli Nuclear Capabilities item be returned to the General Conference agenda, and in 2006-2010 jointly sponsored a resolution under the same title. The resolution has become a source of major controversy, with many states viewing it as politically motivated and covering issues outside the purview of the Agency. The re-introduction of the INC resolution had also lead to a breakdown of consensus on the Egypt-sponsored resolution "Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East." In 2011 and 2012, citing goodwill and desire not to thwart preparations for the 2012 Middle East Conference, Arab states decided not to table the INC resolution. The Middle East Conference was subsequently postponed without any agreement on a new date. Still, it appears that the Arab group will not propose the draft resolution in 2013, although it did request that the item be put on the GC agenda.

The president of the General Conference this year is a representative of the Group of African States, Ambassador Xolisa Mabhongo of South Africa.

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