DRAFT REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

Addendum

IV. SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

1. In the course of nine plenary meetings, held from 23 to 27 March 1987, the Conference heard statements by 73 speakers from member States, specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations under agenda item 4. The following is a brief account of the main points made in those general statements.

2. Recalling the four principles set out in General Assembly resolution 32/50 of 8 December 1977, a large number of speakers stressed the usefulness and timeliness of an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations system, aimed at promoting international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for economic and social development. While the possibility of such a conference was first considered some ten years ago, the need for greater co-operation, it was stated, was today more compellingly
clear than ever. It was also stressed by several speakers that international co-operation had increased steadily over the past decade. Many speakers emphasized that the world had gradually come to recognize the considerable potential of nuclear energy for the well-being of mankind - not only as a major source of power in a world of diminishing energy resources - but also in a multitude of other applications, such as medicine, industry, hydrology and geophysics, food and agriculture, and mineral exploration.

3. Several speakers noted that their countries were using nuclear power to help meet their energy requirements because of either the high cost of oil, the scarcity of other resources or environmental concerns. Some contended that fossil-fuels being a non-renewable resource, were too precious to be burnt for the generation of electricity when there were other options. Apart from the fact that it was depletable, fossil-fuels had more valuable applications as a source of raw materials for a wide range of industries and it was, therefore, in the common interest of both producers and consumers to exploit alternative sources of energy for electricity generation. Some other speakers indicated that while nuclear power may be an option for some countries, they themselves were not using it due to environmental and safety considerations. And, in at least one instance, nuclear energy was being phased out.

4. Many speakers emphasized that non-power peaceful applications of nuclear technology in general - and the options they offer - were today essential for the economic and social development of any country, and particularly relevant to the needs of developing countries. Most speakers stated that non-power nuclear technology was today being increasingly used and praised the role of
the IAEA in the process. However, a number noted that there remained a large gap between developed and developing countries in this regard. Thus, it was stated, the benefits from the application of nuclear science and technology for improving the quality of life had remained highly concentrated in the developed world.

5. In order to exploit fully the potential benefits of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, international co-operation was increasingly vital. The view was expressed that international co-operation had already transformed the situation which prevailed twenty years ago — namely, a world with a clear distinction between supplier and recipient of nuclear materials and technology. There was hardly a country today whose nuclear industry centred entirely on domestic resources, it was noted. Further, it was maintained that countries which were both suppliers and recipients could in the future play a positive role in furthering international co-operation since they well understood the problems and concerns of both sides. Some speakers stated that there was also considerable potential for South-South co-operation since the developing countries had suffered the most from being denied access to peaceful nuclear technology.

6. Several speakers noted that the splitting of the atom provided a new source of energy which could bring unprecedented benefits for economic and social development and unprecedented destruction. The need to avoid potentially harmful consequences of the use of nuclear technology was another important consideration in favour of closest possible international co-operation.
7. All speakers stressed the importance of non-proliferation. Some spoke in terms of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, while others referred to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. There were differing views as to the actual efficacy of non-proliferation mechanisms. Several speakers maintained that the best way to achieve non-proliferation objectives would be the cessation of the nuclear arms race and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

8. Many speakers referred to the role of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in international nuclear co-operation. Several speakers attached fundamental importance to the NPT as an essential basis for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Some speakers held that the Treaty and its safeguards system had not hampered the economic, scientific and technological development of the Parties to the Treaty or international co-operation in peaceful nuclear activities. They pointed out that strict implementation of the NPT, as well as universal adherence to it, would further promote the establishment of a world-wide framework for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The view was expressed that comprehensive non-proliferation assurances that nuclear supply would not be misused were necessary to provide the confidence needed for peaceful nuclear co-operation.

9. Other speakers declared themselves opposed to the NPT which, in their view, was discriminatory as it now stood. According to them, the Treaty had failed to achieve its key objectives because it placed excessive emphasis on preventing horizontal proliferation, while vertical proliferation continued. It was thus not a balanced instrument as far as rights and obligations were concerned. A view was expressed that there was a genuine need for a new
international nuclear order based on non-discrimination and the sovereign equality of all States, and in better step with existing technical and political realities. Some speakers emphasized that the issue of non-proliferation should not overshadow other important issues, including international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They were in favour of safeguards where relevant, but not for the imposition of full-scope safeguards, and expressed the view that IAEA safeguards, where relevant, should be applied to nuclear equipment and materials supplied and produced from the same.

10. Several speakers expressed the conviction that the elimination of the danger of nuclear war, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the arms race in new spheres, would improve the climate conducive to furthering international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this regard, some speakers referred to the need for a comprehensive system of international peace and security. Some speakers underlined the importance of a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapon tests. The view was also expressed that measures of nuclear disarmament would release enormous financial, material, scientific and human resources, some of which could be used for promoting peaceful applications of the atom, including increased assistance to developing countries in this field. Several speakers noted the importance of on-going negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament.

11. All speakers emphasized the importance of nuclear safety. Several noted that the problem of ensuring nuclear safety could not be a matter pertaining to only one country, but had to be dealt with by the whole international community. Some speakers advocated the creation of an international system
for the safe development of nuclear power. It was stated that the transboundary effects of possible nuclear accidents required international co-operative measures.

12. In this regard, several speakers stressed that international nuclear safety co-operation needed to be strengthened. They expressed satisfaction with the two Conventions concluded in 1986 under the aegis of IAEA – namely, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. It was noted that the recent adoption of those two Conventions was further evidence of the competence and efficacy of IAEA. Several speakers said that there was a need to supplement the two Conventions with bilateral and regional agreements.

13. None the less, a number of speakers emphasized that those Conventions were not by themselves enough. While the Conventions were aimed at mitigating the consequences of an accident, reducing the risk of an accident was even more important, it was stated. It had become evident that there was need for closer cooperation of a long term and comprehensive nature, relating to the safe development of nuclear power in its totality and embracing all stages from planning, to designing, siting and operation, to waste disposal and health and environmental concerns. A suggestion made was that binding rules should be established to guide safety at nuclear installations on a global basis.

14. Many countries, both developing and developed, shared the view that regional co-operation could also assist their nuclear energy programmes. In particular, the benefits could be seen in terms of reduced costs of
construction and maintenance and other factors. It was suggested that regional environmental monitoring systems be established in Africa and Asia, under the IAEA, in order to provide radiological monitoring. It was also proposed that the management of disposal of radioactive wastes should be undertaken on a regional basis. There was also support given by participants to regional arrangements covering, *inter alia*, the CMEA countries, EURATOM, the Nordic Group and the IAEA Regional Co-operative Agreement for Asia and the Pacific. The goals of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries, particularly within regions, were also seen to be relevant.

15. Another aspect of regional co-operation was the support given by some speakers to the creation of nuclear weapon-free zones. In addition to the existing Tlatelolco Treaty covering Latin America and the Caribbean, it was recalled that the Treaty of Rarotonga had come into force in December 1986, creating a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific region. Some countries proposed zones in areas such as the Balkans, Central Europe, South Asia and the Korean Peninsula.

16. Several speakers referred to the constraints which stood in the way of the introduction and development of nuclear energy in developing countries. Some noted that, on the question of the supply of nuclear material, excessive conditions were, in many cases, imposed. In recent years, it was stated, the sanctity of valid supply agreements and contracts had, on occasion, been unilaterally disregarded, even though those agreements had been put under the IAEA safeguards system. Several speakers stressed the importance of a more assured supply system of nuclear material, on a long term and timely basis. In this regard, it was stated that the IAEA and the supplier countries should
devise more effective ways of dealing with assurances of supply on a predictable and long-term basis. On the other hand, some delegations stated that strong non-proliferation conditions were the basis for all peaceful nuclear co-operation, and not a constraint. In their view, in the absence of a universal non-proliferation regime, bilateral arrangements were essential to ensure that the supply of nuclear technology and material was exclusively for peaceful purposes. The view was expressed that while appropriate and effective international arrangements on assurances of non-proliferation are necessary, they should not stand in the way of the economic activities of the countries concerned.

17. Several speakers noted that another most important constraint which hampered the development of nuclear energy in developing countries was the problem of financing. The question of financing, it was stressed, must be seriously considered and a formula found to facilitate the acquisition of nuclear plants. In that vein, it was suggested by several developing countries that the international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and regional development banks, should include the nuclear power option in their countries' energy assessments and should make provision for long-term loans on easy terms for nuclear power plants in their energy financing programmes. That concept was currently of special significance, it was stated, since the serious economic situation facing many developing countries, including a decline in foreign exchange earnings and an increasing debt burden, weakened their ability to develop nuclear programmes.

18. Further impediments faced by developing countries were noted by a number of speakers. Several speakers stated that developing countries frequently experienced problems associated with access to the technology and know-how
required to develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The insufficiency of skilled manpower was identified as another problem, as were the lack of facilities and of support for research and development. Also emphasized were infrastructural constraints. In general, it was pointed out, constraints were manifold and embraced difficulties of an economic, financial, technological and political order.

19. It was generally agreed that the IAEA should continue to play its central role among multinational institutions in promoting international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and appreciation was voiced for the assistance the Agency had provided, particularly through its technical assistance programmes, throughout its 30 years of existence. It was generally felt that the role of the IAEA should be reinforced, especially with respect to co-operation and information exchange for developing countries. A number of speakers welcomed the emphasis the Agency was now placing on safety concerns. Many thought the Agency's safeguards system should be strengthened. However, the view was expressed that a greater part of the IAEA's resources should be used for technical co-operation.

20. Several speakers proposed that the Agency's future attention should include the questions of international safety standards, liability for transboundary effects of a nuclear accident, and an internationally acceptable mechanism covering all treatment and disposal of spent fuel. Some speakers from developing countries expressed particular interest in having the Agency assist in the development of small and medium-size power reactor (SMPR) projects.
21. It was generally felt that the IAEA should have the principal role in taking appropriate action with respect to any decisions and recommendations resulting from the Conference. Most speakers expected that the Agency, in collaboration with the other relevant organisations of the United Nations system, could report on its implementation measures at regular intervals to the United Nations General Assembly. Those speakers did not see a need to create any new permanent mechanism or machinery to promote international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. A view was, however, expressed that a follow-up Conference should be held in a few years to review progress made and assess future co-operation issues. Several others did not see the need for such a Conference.

22. Several speakers hoped that one of the effects of the Conference would be to stimulate the IAEA and, in particular, its Committee on the Assurance of Supplies (CAS) to complete its work expeditiously. Some speakers saw an important aspect resulting from the Conference to be an expansion of public awareness of the positive and useful benefits of nuclear technologies. Some felt that lack of knowledge of those benefits constituted a constraint to the peaceful uses of the atom. Still others felt that the Conference should lead to a more flexible and realistic attitude by all countries, both suppliers and recipients, regarding the principles and ways and means guiding international co-operation in this area.

23. Among other issues which were raised in the general debate, several speakers recalled the development of South Africa's nuclear programme for military purposes and the destabilizing effect that its possession of nuclear weapons could have not only for Africa but for the entire international community. Some speakers demanded, therefore, that South Africa should place all its nuclear activities under IAEA-safeguards.
24. Some speakers called for an international convention to prohibit armed attacks on nuclear installations and for the prevention of nuclear terrorism.

25. Various principles and ways and means of international co-operation—especially with a view to assisting developing countries—were recommended during the debate. There was general agreement that a positive and forward looking attitude on the part of all countries was necessary to promote co-operative activities in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for economic and social development.