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STATEMENT TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE BY THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

Pursuant to Rule 3(d) of the Rules on the Consultative Status of Non-governmental Organizations with the Agency^{1/}, the Director General is circulating the attached written statement by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

^{1/} INFCIRC/14.

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION
OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

1. At the outset, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, representing 60 million workers throughout the democratic world, wishes to pay homage to the Agency and expresses its satisfaction with the steady progress it has achieved during the past seven years in fulfilling the various tasks for which it was created.
2. At the 8th session of the General Conference of this Agency held September last year in Vienna, our representative stated:

"The ICFTU, considering the bridging of the economic and social gulf between the industrialised and non-industrialised countries as the problem No. 1 of the second half of this century, will use its influence to further the development of international aid and solidarity which are as important preconditions to the fulfilment of this task as are scientific and technological progress including those in the field of nuclear energy."1/
3. At this 9th session, we should like to put special emphasis on this point again.
4. It has been made clear at the past conferences that the non-industrialised countries of the world lack the conventional energy reserves and that only the economic nuclear energy would enable the developing countries to meet their immense energy requirements in order for them to be able to catch up with the living standards being enjoyed in the industrially advanced countries. In this connection, the ICFTU assesses highly the positive role the Agency has been playing not only in providing technical assistance to the developing countries and in serving as a clearing house for scientific and technical information, but also in co-operating with other bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations to work out sets of recommendations on radiological protection in all its aspects which form at present in many countries the basis of relevant national legislation. We also note with great interest in the annual report of the Board of Governors to the present session of the General Conference that the Agency is advancing its research and development projects on six topics regarded as being of particular importance to developing countries, namely:

1/ See document GC(VIII)/INF/78, para. 2.

- (a) The development of nuclear power for electricity production;
- (b) The use of nuclear energy for desalting sea water;
- (c) The use of nuclear techniques to develop water resources;
- (d) The use of radiation to increase the storage life of food;
- (e) The use of radiation to control or eliminate insect pests; and
- (f) The use of radioisotope techniques in research in tropical and epidemic diseases.

5. We are much encouraged by the statement in the annual report of the Board of Governors to the effect that the use of nuclear energy to desalt water is expected to make important progress in the next decade. This promise to replenish the globe's scarce fresh water reserves holds new hopes for covering up the vast semi- and totally-dry areas, especially in the developing countries, with the green by applying the new methods of supplying fresh water. This would certainly prove to be a revolutionary event, making one of the dreams of mankind a reality.

6. Referring to the Third International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, the annual report states that the

"Conference focussed its attention on one main theme - nuclear power - the rapid rise of which as a major source of energy promises to be of decisive importance to the economic development of the world"

and that

"it showed that nuclear energy has reached maturity as a source of power and has entered a period of rapid growth".^{2/}

7. While we evaluate highly the fruits which have resulted from the peaceful use of nuclear energy, we should at the same time like to address our frank appeal to this General Conference by drawing its attention again to the following point.

8. As our representative stated at the 8th session of the General Conference, the almost perfect record of health and safety which nuclear industry so far enjoys in many countries is partly due to public control of the vast majority of nuclear installations and to their running on a non-profitable basis.

^{2/} See document GC(IX)/299, para. 16.

We express our concern that when nuclear installations come under private ownership and are integrated into normal commercial activities, it might not be easy to enforce adequate measures against hazards inherent to the nuclear industry. Therefore, we must be fully cognizant of the fact that the burden of responsibility for adequate radiological protection will grow heavier and more difficult to shoulder for this Agency as well as for all others concerned and last not least for the free trade unions.

9. We are of course fully aware of the fact that the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organization, the International Commission on Radiological Protection as well as this Agency have so far worked out a set of recommendations which at present form the basis of relevant national legislation in various countries and also note with satisfaction in the present report of the Board of Governors that, with the general development of atomic energy, the Agency has been developing or is intending to develop specialized activities in this field, such as the preparation of standards for the safe operation of research and power reactors, detailed technical manuals on subjects such as the production of nuclear fuel decontamination and protective equipment and the management and disposal of radioactive waste. We pay high tribute to the Agency for such endeavours and hope that the Agency in co-operation with other related special agencies of the United Nations will facilitate the development of the researches and activities in the specialized subjects. At the same time, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions on its part pledges that it will make its best efforts on the international field and also through its affiliated organizations on the national level in striving for safety measures.

10. In Chapter V (Safeguards) of the annual report of the Board of Governors, our attention was drawn especially to an important paragraph which reads as follows:

"The past year was marked by increased optimism about the development of nuclear power in both the near and the more distant future. There has been corresponding awareness that nuclear materials produced in power reactors might increasingly add to the world stock of materials capable of use for development of nuclear weapons or their production".^{3/}

^{3/} Ibid., para. 177.

11. Frankly speaking, we cannot shut our eyes to the recent world situation in which, with the progress in the development of the peaceful use of atomic energy, there exists increasing possibility of the nuclear materials being used for military purposes and of the spread of nuclear weapons. This trend shows that the Agency's task in this field is growing in importance more than ever before.

12. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions hailed the Moscow test ban treaty as an important step towards complete and controlled disarmament. Should the world stop stepping towards complete and controlled disarmament or move in the reverse direction, the Agency will not be assured of the complete fulfilment of its tasks of establishing and administering safeguards designed to ensure that nuclear materials are not used in such a way as to further any military purpose; or it will be only partly fulfilled with temporary effect. In order to give full effect to its safeguards, it must be made crystal clear that the heaviest burden of responsibility must be shouldered by major powers which have already developed atomic energy and possess sizable atomic energy installations. So long as the situation continues in which the major powers remain outside the framework of the Agency's safeguards or the authority to administer safeguards is entrusted to other bodies, the Agency will be greatly hampered in the fulfilment of its objectives and tasks. It is in this context that we welcome the Agency's sober efforts in continuing to renovate and steadily develop its safeguard system and support the basic principle of applying the new rules concerning safeguards, which was adopted at the Board of Governors in February this year, to atomic reactors of all sizes.

13. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, having been and still is fighting for peace, freedom, and elimination of hunger and poverty, expresses its heartfelt wishes for the success of this General Conference which is meeting in Japan to further the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity of the entire world. At the same time, the ICTFU pays its tribute to the assembled Government representatives, scientists and experts for their sincere efforts and pledges that it will use its influence on the international field and through its member organizations also on the

national level to strive for preventing dangers inherent in this new source of nuclear energy. Bearing in mind that this Conference, working in an atmosphere of goodwill and co-operation, depends to a great extent on the international political climate, we hope from our heart that the wisdom and the responsibility of every nation in the world towards mankind would facilitate our march in the direction of complete and controlled disarmament throughout the world.