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Plenary

Record of the First Meeting

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Temporary President: Mr HAMZE (Lebanon)

President: Mr GHISI (Italy)

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¹ GC(52)/21.

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Abbreviations used in this record:

AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
G8	Group of Eight
GDP	gross domestic product
GNEP	Global Nuclear Energy Partnership
GUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova
HEU	high-enriched uranium
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
Joint Division	Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture
Kyoto Protocol	Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
LDC	least developed country
LEU	low-enriched uranium
MESA	Middle East and South Asia
MESL	Marine Environmental Studies Laboratory
Moscow Treaty	Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reductions
NDT	non-destructive testing
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund

Abbreviations (continued)

NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
R&D	research and development
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TranSAS	Transport Safety Appraisal Service

– Opening of the session

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared open the 52nd regular session of the General Conference.
2. In accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, he invited delegates to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

All present rose and stood in silence for one minute.

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT said that in 2007 he had had the honour to be entrusted by the General Conference with the task of presiding over its 51st regular session. Like his predecessors, he had done his best to bring about the highest level of agreement on the technical and political questions that had long faced the Agency. Thanks to the support of all delegations, the General Conference had adopted the best possible resolutions, but further efforts were needed worldwide in acting upon them, in order to enhance the Agency's role in preserving global peace.
4. It could hardly be claimed that the General Conference was in a position to resolve regional and international issues to which the United Nations and other international bodies had been unable to find just solutions. That did not, however, diminish the responsibility of the General Conference to take the initiative and, applying the Agency's rules and regulations in a fair and balanced manner, to address the issues of direct concern to the Agency — in particular, halting the nuclear arms race and moving towards universalization of the NPT without delay.
5. Since the end of the Second World War, the Middle East had experienced recurrent wars and conflicts that had caused its peoples great destruction and misery. There was now an acute need for it to be declared a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. A brave and unambiguous stance needed to be taken against any exception to the adherence of all countries in the region to the NPT. There was also an acute need to provide technical incentives for developing the resources of the countries in the region with regard to the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy.
6. During the past year there had been an increase in the number of developing countries that had announced their desire to launch, in collaboration with advanced countries, national programmes for the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. Their aims were to use nuclear energy in electricity generation, seawater desalination, industry, medicine, agriculture and environmental protection. That right could not be denied to any country in the world provided it was exercised in a transparent manner and subject to the safeguards of the Agency and to its regulations concerning nuclear safety and security. The Agency was playing a leading role in striking what was a delicate balance, and no country could have an interest in rejecting or failing to comply with its requirements. Delegations would no doubt pay close attention to that important issue.
7. He hoped that, at its current session, the Conference would make breakthroughs towards solving the problems that had confronted the Agency for more than two decades. Dealing with matters fairly was the basic means of achieving sustainable peace in the world. That meant mobilizing human and material resources for development purposes rather than holding them hostage to tensions and wasting them on endless crises. Allocating more resources to the Agency's technical cooperation programmes would provide developing countries with essential support, something that deserved everyone's continued commitment.

8. On behalf of Lebanon and the MESA Group, he thanked the Director General for his exceptional efforts in confronting the challenges that faced the Agency and for the role he was playing with the highest professionalism and impartiality.

9. He wished the incoming President every success.

1. Election of officers and appointment of the General Committee

10. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT invited nominations for the office of President of the Conference.

11. Mr COGAN (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the Western Europe Group, proposed Mr Ghisi (Italy).

12. Mr Ghisi (Italy) was elected President by acclamation.

13. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT congratulated Mr Ghisi on his election and wished him every success in his task.

Mr Ghisi (Italy) took the Chair.

14. The PRESIDENT said that his being elected President of the General Conference for its 52nd regular session as a great honour both for him and for Italy. He was grateful to the Conference for the confidence placed in him and to the Western Europe Group for nominating him.

15. He expressed the General Conference's gratitude to the Temporary President, Mr Hamze of Lebanon, for the commitment and wisdom demonstrated by him as President of the Conference during its 51st session.

16. With the full cooperation of all delegations and the Secretariat, on which he was sure that he could count, he would endeavour to bring the current session of the General Conference to a successful conclusion. He would pursue to the very end the intensive consultations with Member States that he had started informally before the beginning of the session. Also, he would spare no effort in fostering dialogue among delegations and regional groups so that the "Spirit of Vienna" prevailed and the objectives of the General Conference were achieved in full.

17. He was confident that all would bear in mind the need to progress further along the "Atoms for Peace" path on which the Agency had embarked 51 years earlier. At its current session, the General Conference would have the opportunity to strengthen the Agency's three pillars — safety and security, science and technology, and safeguards and verification. Also, it would have to review what the Agency was doing to assist Member States with the application of peaceful nuclear technologies for economic and social development while ensuring that those technologies were used in a safe and secure manner.

18. The international community was engaged in a tremendous effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals — the only way to ensure a decent future for humanity. Within that context, development and peace were the two faces of the coin. The Agency's role was crucial for international peace and security and for addressing poverty, hunger and disease in the developing world through the

use of nuclear energy. The importance of that role had not diminished; on the contrary, it had increased, with new challenges, stresses and risks constantly appearing.

19. In the general debate, the Conference would hear how many States — including developed countries like Italy — had decided to count more and more on nuclear energy for their development; the ever-increasing costs of fossil fuels, the impending threat of climate change and the worsening of the food security situation were all factors making for a likely ‘nuclear renaissance’. The expanded use of nuclear technologies had immense potential for meeting important development needs, but it also posed complex and wide-ranging safety and security challenges that needed to be addressed effectively. A global resurgence of nuclear power depended on the safe and secure use of nuclear technologies, with the application of rigorous nuclear safety and security standards worldwide.

20. As the Director General had said, the Agency would clearly be needed more and more in the coming decades. Member States had been invited to discuss the future role of the Agency in a scientific forum that would be taking place in parallel with the current General Conference session, as a follow-up to the report of the Commission of Eminent Persons appointed by the Director General. In wishing that important forum every success, he hoped that an equally important forum, on the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East, requested by the General Conference in 2000, would be held at the latest alongside the 2009 session of the General Conference.

21. The 14 scientific side-events and the numerous technical cooperation meetings due to take place during the current week at the Austria Center were an impressive indication of the vitality of the Agency and the organization’s usefulness not only for policymakers but also for scientists, the business community and civil society worldwide.

22. Member States were ‘shareholders’ in the Agency — a solid, efficient and prestigious company that, under the wise and courageous management of its Director General, had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. As ‘shareholders’, they had received their dividends — a share of that prize. They should be proud of that and act accordingly, in the “Spirit of Vienna”.

23. Recalling that Thursday, 2 October was an official Agency holiday, due to Eid al-Fitr, he said that the proceedings of the Conference would be suspended on Wednesday, 1 October and resumed on Friday, 3 October if so decided by the Conference pursuant to Rule 8 of its Rules of Procedure

24. It was so agreed.

25. The PRESIDENT said that, pursuant to Rules 34 and 40 of its Rules of Procedure, the Conference had to elect eight Vice-Presidents, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and five additional members of the General Committee — resulting in a General Committee of 15 members.

26. He proposed that the delegates of Brazil, Canada, Iceland, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Mongolia and the Russian Federation be elected as Vice-Presidents; that Mr Niewodniczański (Poland) be elected as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole; and that the delegates of Croatia, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United States of America and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela be elected as additional members of the General Committee.

27. The President’s proposals were accepted.

28. The PRESIDENT further proposed that the General Conference deal with items 2, 3, 4 and 6 and take up item 7 — in that order — pending receipt of the General Committee’s recommendation on the provisional agenda.

29. The President’s proposal was accepted.

2. Applications for membership of the Agency (GC(52)/7, 18 and 19)

30. The PRESIDENT drew attention to documents GC(52)/7, GC(52)/18 and GC(52)/19 containing applications for membership made by the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Independent State of Papua New Guinea respectively. The three applications had been endorsed by the Board of Governors, which had also submitted three draft resolutions for adoption by the General Conference.

31. He took it that the Conference wished to adopt the three draft resolutions.

32. It was so decided.

3. Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations

33. Mr DUARTE (United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs) read out the following message:

“I am pleased to send my greetings to the fifty-second session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

“As the world responds to the challenges associated with the expansion of nuclear energy and technologies for its peaceful use, the Agency continues its diverse efforts to help States develop effective nuclear infrastructures, promote nuclear safety and security and implement safeguards at nuclear facilities around the world. Future progress in nuclear disarmament may also bring opportunities for the Agency in the area of verification, transparency and irreversibility.

“This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Agency’s nuclear safety standards, which have well served the interests of humanity and the environment. I call upon States that have not yet done so to adhere to them as soon as possible.

“The Agency continues to be engaged with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Iran. Its contributions in both of these areas stand to benefit the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

“Finally, the Agency is also looking constructively towards its future. The recent report of the Commission of Eminent Persons on the Future of the Agency underlined the need to reinvigorate the global nuclear order, and to reduce the risk of nuclear proliferation while expanding the contribution of nuclear technologies to human welfare.

“I am strongly committed to working in partnership with the Agency, Member States and the international community to promote the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy and pursue further progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Please accept my best wishes for a successful conference.”

4. Statement by the Director General

34. The DIRECTOR GENERAL said that he was proud of the excellent work done by his colleagues during the past 12 months, but all was not well with the Agency. As he had told the Board of Governors in June, there was a disconnect between what Member States were asking the Secretariat to do and the legal authority and resources available to it. He would elaborate on that issue after presenting a general overview of the work done by the Agency since the 2007 session of the General Conference.

35. The surge in global food prices had pushed millions of people deeper into poverty and hunger. A World Bank report published in August had shown that there were more poor people in the world than previously thought. Some 1.4 billion people in the developing world lived on less than US \$1.25 a day. The number of poor people in sub-Saharan Africa had nearly doubled since 1981, to around 380 million.

36. That made the work being done by the Joint Division — of FAO and the Agency — even more important. One aspect of its work was the use of nuclear techniques to make food crops more resistant to disease, to boost crop yields and to combat pests and animal diseases. Regrettably, FAO had taken steps towards ending its involvement in the Joint Division, which would be unfortunate. The FAO Conference might take a decision in November. The Secretariat was hoping for a decision that would ensure the continuation of the valuable cooperation between FAO and the Agency.

37. Cancer claimed millions of lives every year, but the work being done within the framework of PACT had helped to ensure that cancer patients in developing countries had access to radiation treatment. The need was vast, and PACT was only scratching the surface, but, for the individual cancer patients who benefited, the limited assistance provided could mean the difference between life and death.

38. The benefits of nuclear applications were potentially huge in relation to the costs, and he hoped that the Agency would be able to further increase its efforts in that field in the decades to come.

39. There were currently 439 nuclear power reactors operating in 30 countries, and the number under construction stood at 36. The Agency's updated projections continued to show a significant increase in the use of nuclear power by 2030, with capacity possibly doubling.

40. Nuclear power had obvious attractions for developing as well as developed countries. Developing countries needed access to electricity in order to help lift their peoples out of poverty, and many were turning to the Agency for guidance on how to proceed. They were concerned about the fluctuating prices of oil and other fossil fuels and about uncertainty of supply, and also about climate change.

41. Every country had the right to introduce nuclear power, but also the responsibility to do it right. During the past two years, some 50 Member States had expressed an interest in considering the possible introduction of nuclear power and had asked for Agency support. Twelve countries were actively preparing to introduce nuclear power. The demand for Agency assistance was increasing. It was particularly strong among developing countries seeking impartial advice as regards their options and the choice of optimum energy mix. Naturally, the Agency was not the sole source of expertise, but for many countries its impartial advice was essential.

42. An expansion of nuclear power would create new demands in the areas of spent fuel management and radioactive waste disposal. Experts agreed that the geological disposal of high-level radioactive waste was safe and technologically feasible. However, public opinion would remain sceptical at least until the first deep geological repositories were operational, in a decade or so.

43. The world of nuclear safeguards had changed considerably over the previous few years. Non-State actors had played an active role in several proliferation cases, while a number of States had made efforts to develop nuclear fuel cycles clandestinely. The focus of safeguards was therefore continuing to shift from the mechanistic verification of declared nuclear material to an information-driven system that aimed to understand and assess the consistency of information on a State's nuclear programme as a whole.

44. As he had said many times, there were four essential prerequisites for effective nuclear verification: adequate legal authority; state-of-the-art technology; timely access to all relevant information; and sufficient human and financial resources. Despite some progress, shortcomings remained in respect of all four.

45. With regard to legal authority, it was more than ten years since the Model Additional Protocol had been approved by the Board of Governors. Of the 163 States having safeguards agreements with the Agency, 88 now had additional protocols in force — barely more than half. Regrettably, progress had not been as fast as expected. Also, it was disconcerting that 30 States party to the NPT had not even brought into force the required comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency. All States that had not yet brought comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols into force should do so without delay.

46. He had on several occasions expressed concern about the ageing technical infrastructure and equipment at the Agency's Safeguards Analytical Laboratory, which was key to the effectiveness and independence of the Agency in performing its verification mission. With the support of the Board of Governors, a project for renovating the Laboratory had been initiated. However, full project funding had still not been secured. The project was core Agency business that needed to be put on a sound long-term financial footing.

47. Monitoring and verification of the shutdown of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities in the DPRK had continued, with the cooperation of the DPRK.

48. The previous week, however, the DPRK authorities had asked the Agency's inspectors to remove seals and surveillance equipment so as to enable them to carry out tests at the reprocessing plant. Also, they had informed the inspectors that they planned to introduce nuclear material into the reprocessing plant in a week's time — in other words, during the current week — and that the inspectors would have no further access to the reprocessing plant.

49. Nevertheless, he hoped for conditions to be created such that the DPRK might return to the NPT soon and for the resumption by the Agency of comprehensive safeguards.

50. Six years had elapsed since the Agency had begun intensive work aimed at clarifying the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Substantial progress had been made, especially regarding the scope and nature of Iran's uranium enrichment programme, and the Agency had been able to continue verifying the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran.

51. He regretted, however, that the Agency could still not make progress regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran. He urged Iran to implement all the transparency measures, including the additional protocol, required in order to build confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme at the earliest possible date. That would be good for Iran, for the Middle East region and for the whole world.

52. As delegates would recall, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had acknowledged that from the mid-1980s until 2003 its nuclear programme had been aimed at the development of nuclear weapons but had stated that it had not proceeded with the design of nuclear weapons and that it had not had a complete fissile material production capability.

53. The Agency had not found any indications of work relating to nuclear weapons development in Libya, where it was now able to implement safeguards in a routine manner.

54. The Agency had been rather disturbed, however, to learn that sensitive information provided by the clandestine supply network to Libya, some of it relating to uranium centrifuge enrichment and — even more worryingly — nuclear weapon design, existed in electronic form and hence could easily be disseminated. Clearly, that was a matter of very serious concern.

55. In line with the mandate given to him by the General Conference, he had continued his consultations with the States of the Middle East on the application of full-scope safeguards to all nuclear activities in the region and on the development of model safeguards agreements as a necessary step towards establishing an NWFZ there. Regrettably, he could not report progress on either front.

56. Overall, nuclear safety had improved significantly, but the risk of accidents persisted. It was essential to ensure that a true safety culture took root worldwide, not least in countries new to nuclear power. The Agency was continuing to upgrade its safety standards, including those for addressing threats to nuclear installations from extreme natural hazards such as volcanoes and tsunamis. Also, it had strengthened its programme for protecting patients and staff during the use of ionizing radiation in medicine.

57. During the past year, the Agency had focused on enhancing physical security arrangements at nuclear facilities and at other locations where there were nuclear or other radioactive materials. In addition, it had provided assistance to States in repatriating HEU research reactor fuel and vulnerable radioactive sources, in establishing effective border controls and in developing comprehensive approaches to national nuclear security. Moreover, it had supported security at major public events, including the Beijing Olympic Games.

58. As everyone knew, however, the potential for a malicious act involving nuclear or other radioactive materials remained real. The number of incidents reported to the Agency indicated continuing weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

59. As the use of nuclear energy expanded, the international community must enhance its ability to respond to nuclear and radiation emergencies caused by accidents or malicious acts. The Agency's Incident and Emergency Centre had been created in 2005 to meet that challenge. However, he was concerned about the Agency's ability to respond effectively to a major nuclear accident. The Incident and Emergency Centre needed additional capacity in order that it might respond to large-scale accidents and assist more Member States in building their own emergency response capability. Funding for that was urgently required.

60. Development activities remained central to the Agency's work. The demand for technical cooperation from developing countries was continuing to grow. However, the Agency's resources had long been insufficient for meeting the demand, and the Agency had increasingly been making use of partnerships with other organizations, regional collaborative arrangements and country-to-country support.

61. A new technical cooperation programme, covering three years, had been finalized. It pointed to a trend, especially in Europe, for Member States to focus less on national and more on regional projects. In general, regional programming had been strengthened and was more clearly targeted on common priorities. Member States with more developed nuclear sectors were playing a key role in supporting regional projects, by sharing their expertise with other countries in the region.

62. In the new programme there was an emphasis on food and agriculture, human health and natural resources. Also, the number of requests for support with energy planning and for nuclear energy projects was increasing, and safety was a constant element in all projects.

63. It should be emphasized, once again, that technical cooperation was not a bargaining chip — part of a political ‘balance’ between the development and safeguards activities of the Agency. Nuclear applications provided immense benefits and yielded clearly measurable results. The Agency had shown itself to be a reliable partner across a wide range of activities.

64. As to the future of the Agency, in its first 50 years the Agency had proved its value as a key instrument both for enabling developing countries to use science and technology in support of development and for maintaining international security. It had shown itself capable of adapting to changing circumstances and to the diverse needs of Member States.

65. However, years of zero-growth budgeting had left the Agency with a failing infrastructure and with a troubling dependence on voluntary support, which invariably had conditions attached. For example, no less than 90% of its nuclear security programme, which was aimed in part at stopping terrorists from obtaining nuclear material, depended on voluntary funding; and the corresponding figures for nuclear safety and verification were 30% and 15% respectively. Also, technical cooperation resources were continuing to lag well behind the pressing needs of developing countries.

66. All of the activities in question were core Agency activities, and it was imperative that the resources for them be adequate, stable and predictable. From that situation, together with the Agency’s insufficient legal authority in key areas such as verification, safety and security, it was clear that ability of the Agency to do its job properly was being seriously compromised.

67. Against that background, about which he had voiced concerns on many occasions, he had in 2007 appointed an independent Commission of Eminent Persons to examine the Agency’s work and make recommendations for the future of the Agency up to 2020 and beyond. The report of the Commission had been published in May. The Commission members, under the able leadership of former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, had not disappointed. Their recommendations — some of them bold and far-reaching — related to all aspects of the Agency’s work.

68. His aim in appointing the Commission had been to trigger discussion among Member States, and in the international community at large, on how the Agency could best contribute to the achievement of their common goals of development, peace and security in the decades ahead. The Commission’s recommendations deserved serious scrutiny. He would highlight just a few.

69. First, the Commission said that the Agency, working with supplier and donor States, should help ‘newcomer’ States to put in place the infrastructure necessary for launching peaceful nuclear energy programmes safely and securely. Also, the Agency should give high priority to the establishment of multilateral nuclear fuel cycle arrangements covering both the front and the back end of the cycle.

70. Second, the Commission said that the resources of the TCF should be increased substantially. The Agency’s technical cooperation programmes, focusing on nuclear applications in areas such as food and agriculture, human health and natural resources, needed to be expanded.

71. Third, the Commission said that, in order to help address the threat of nuclear terrorism, the Agency’s Member States should negotiate binding agreements to set effective global nuclear security standards and give the Agency the tools and authority necessary for helping to ensure that they were implemented.

72. Fourth, the Commission said that the Agency should lead an international effort to establish a global nuclear safety network, also based on binding agreements, and that countries should submit to mandatory international nuclear safety peer reviews.

73. Fifth, the Commission said that the Agency's safeguards activities should be strengthened — which meant better equipment, more staff and funding, and greater legal authority.

74. In connection with safeguards, it might be noted that nuclear disarmament — the core of the NPT — had been 'on the back burner' for far too long.

75. The Commission noted that the Agency was not the lead organization in matters of nuclear disarmament, but it added that "Progress towards disarmament, or the lack of it, will deeply affect the success of the IAEA's non-proliferation mission."

76. As the Commission acknowledged, the agenda proposed by it was a bold one. It was now up to Member States to decide what kind of Agency they wanted. With a continuation of 'business as usual', the effectiveness of the Agency and the value of the services it provided to Member States would gradually be eroded.

77. The sums envisaged by the Commission for putting things right were modest when weighed against the costs of a nuclear accident — which could total untold billions of dollars, as in the case of the Chernobyl accident — or of a terrorist attack involving nuclear material. Likewise, the potential benefit to developing countries from nuclear applications was huge.

78. However, it was not just a matter of money. The Agency did not work in a vacuum. Political commitment to the goals of the Agency needed to be renewed at the highest level so as to encourage the transfer of nuclear technology to the developing world and to strengthen safety and security, non-proliferation and disarmament.

79. The problems facing the world in the nuclear arena were plain for all to see. The Agency could do much to address them, however, if given the authority, resources, personnel and technology, and it would be a tragedy of epic proportions if the Agency failed to act until after a nuclear conflagration, accident or terrorist attack that could have been prevented.

80. Making the Agency more effective was therefore critical to international security and to development. The report of the Commission of Eminent Persons spelled out what needed to be done, and it was now time to think big and to think long-term.

6. Contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2009 (GC(52)/22)

81. The PRESIDENT recalled that on 1 August 2008 the Board of Governors had recommended a figure of \$85 million as the target for voluntary contributions to the TCF for the year 2009. Attached to document GC(52)/22 was a table showing the contributions which each Member State would need to make in order to meet its share of that target.

82. The early pledging and payment of contributions to the TCF greatly helped the Secretariat in planning the Agency's technical cooperation programmes. All delegations in a position to do so should therefore notify the Secretariat during the current session of the General Conference of the contributions that their Governments would be making to the TCF in 2009.

83. He would report at the end of the session, under a later agenda item, on the contributions that had been pledged up to that time. He hoped that he would be in a position to report favourably on the percentage of the 2009 target figure already pledged.

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2007 (GC(52)/9)

84. Mr BODMAN (United States of America), having expressed appreciation of the Director General's leadership of the Agency, said that for half a century the Agency had been leading the international effort to make nuclear power safe for the world. Although significant progress had been made in that regard, a great deal remained to be done.

85. The Agency was critical to the global effort to enhance energy security. In a world where fossil fuels alone could not meet the projected growth in energy demand and where energy production and consumption needed to be balanced against environmental concerns as never before, nuclear power was clearly a major part of the energy future. Member States should therefore continue their efforts, forthrightly, in a spirit of cooperation — the alternatives were simply not acceptable.

86. He read out the following message from President George W. Bush.

"I send greetings to those gathered for the 52nd annual General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency and congratulate the Agency on its long and distinguished record of accomplishments, both in helping bring nuclear technology to improve lives around the world and in seeking to ensure that nuclear energy is not diverted from peaceful use.

"Earlier this year, a Commission of Eminent Persons led by former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo produced a comprehensive report on the future of the Agency.

"The Commission underscored the need for the international community to work together to strengthen safeguards against nuclear proliferation, to promote nuclear safety and security, and to promote the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.

"We support these goals.

"Member States must also do their part. The United States will act to make the advantages of emission-free nuclear energy and technology available to a wide range of States, particularly developing countries, consistent with non-proliferation, safety, and security principles.

"We are prepared to provide assistance in the peaceful development of nuclear energy, by facilitating access to nuclear reactors and assisting with the necessary financing; helping countries build nuclear energy infrastructures that conform to the highest standards for safety, security and non-proliferation; developing solutions for managing spent fuel and waste; and bolstering the international fuel services market to ensure reliable access to nuclear fuel.

"The United States also will work to ensure that the Agency has the technical and political tools necessary to meet its safeguards responsibilities to ensure that expansion of the benefits of nuclear energy does not contribute to nuclear proliferation.

"Please accept my best wishes for a successful conference."

87. President Bush was a strong proponent of nuclear energy and the chief driver behind a number of initiatives on which he would like to report during the present meeting.

88. In the view of the United States, only a considerable increase in the use of commercial nuclear power would enable the world's largest economies to meet the 50% increase in energy demand by the year 2030 which the Agency projected and the carbon reduction goals agreed to at the most recent G8 Summit.

89. The power of the atom should be available to every nation that was committed to its peaceful use and accepted the highest standards of safety, security and non-proliferation.

90. Together, States must address three critical challenges to nuclear power's peaceful expansion — cost, waste and proliferation — and they must address them soon, given the growing interest in nuclear power being expressed in so many parts of the world.

91. The development of a global commercial nuclear infrastructure must be made a high priority, and financing for the capital-intensive projects in question must be arranged.

92. The United States had been revitalizing its nuclear industry through loan guarantees, risk insurance and streamlining of the licensing process. A little more than a year earlier there had been no applications for nuclear power plant construction licences before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission; now there were 15 combined construction-and-operation licence applications being considered, with nine being prepared for consideration. Also, the United States was addressing the issue of nuclear waste, with a licence application filed for the long-term waste storage facility at Yucca Mountain.

93. The world needed a nuclear liability regime based on the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, which would widen opportunities for commercial nuclear trade, make a broader range of technologies available to nations seeking to introduce nuclear power and protect citizens and nuclear industries. The United States had ratified the Convention earlier that year and would like to see other countries ratifying it promptly.

94. He would be travelling to Paris the next day for a ministerial-level GNEP meeting. A year previously, GNEP had had 16 partners; now it had 21, and he expected that there would be more after the meeting.

95. GNEP was the best pathway towards the availability of commercial nuclear power on a global scale. Its members were committed to the promotion of nuclear energy as a clean source of power generated in a way that reduced proliferation risks and nuclear waste burdens. Those countries which shared the vision and values expressed in the GNEP Statement of Principles should support the effort to establish a new framework for the commercial use of nuclear power without the furtherance of any military purpose.

96. GNEP's goals were ambitious, but they could be achieved. The necessary technologies had been identified, at least conceptually, and the question of a mechanism for the assured supply of nuclear fuel was being examined within the Agency framework. In his country's view, nuclear fuel supply assurances based on the market and back-up reserves would provide a viable alternative to the spread of sensitive technologies.

97. In that connection, he was pleased to announce that the United States would be contributing US \$50 million towards the establishment of an international nuclear fuel bank under Agency auspices. His Government welcomed the \$10 million contribution made by the United Arab Emirates and the earlier commitment made by Norway.

98. A good start had been made, but his country would like to see many more Member States contributing in order that the Board of Governors might be able to establish the international nuclear fuel bank before the end of the year.

99. The National Nuclear Security Administration of the United States Department of Energy was helping to strengthen international safeguards through its Next Generation Safeguards Initiative — part of a United States effort to, inter alia, reassess the existing international safeguards system with an view to making it more effective and more relevant to current and future challenges.

100. Not all nations would play by the rules, even though the vast majority of nations insisted that the rules be respected. It was therefore important that the vast majority have the means to assure itself that nuclear programmes declared to be peaceful did not mask military ambitions.

101. Unless international safeguards were strengthened, so as to promote security and confidence, there was a risk of losing the present opportunity for the commercial use of nuclear power on a global scale, and it would become more difficult to bring about an energy-secure future in line with concerns about the global environment.

102. The universal implementation of additional protocols was essential in that context. For its part, the United States hoped to deposit its instrument of ratification of an additional protocol before the end of the year.

103. The world was on the verge of a promising future, in which the peaceful, clean use of commercial nuclear energy would power both developed and developing economies, raising living standards and strictly controlling the nuclear materials sought by proliferators and terrorists.

104. It was important to continue focusing on the military aspects of nuclear energy. Thanks to President Bush's leadership, the United States had achieved historic reductions in its strategic nuclear forces. Four years earlier, the President had ordered a 50% reduction in the United States nuclear stockpile in addition to the warhead reductions agreed to in the 2002 Moscow Treaty. That objective had been achieved five years sooner than planned, and the United States would achieve a further 15% reduction by 2012. Today, the size of the nuclear stockpile of the United States was roughly what it had been when President Eisenhower had been in office.

105. In addition, more safeguards agreements were in force and more nuclear material and borders were secure against illicit trafficking now than ever before, and the international consensus against nuclear proliferation and terrorism had never been stronger.

106. There were those who believed that the fabric of the nuclear non-proliferation regime was coming apart. His country disagreed. Through joint efforts, solid progress had been made in reducing dangers, and the NPT regime was stronger as a result. By any objective measure, the world was safer from nuclear terrorism than ten years earlier.

107. The work foreseen under the United States—Russia Bratislava Nuclear Security Cooperation Initiative was near completion. The United States had purchased more than 300 tonnes of Russian weapons-grade HEU for down-blending and converted 51 reactors in 31 countries to the use of LEU, thereby securing two tonnes of weapons-usable material, and work was continuing on the disposal of 34 tonnes each of United States and Russian weapons-grade plutonium.

108. From the establishment of GNEP to the decision of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to end its nuclear development programme, from the securing of hundreds of tonnes of nuclear-weapons material in the former Soviet Union through the Bratislava Initiative to the United States-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, progress was being made towards the future envisaged when the Agency had been founded half a century earlier; but there was still much to be done.

109. If States continued to act with decisiveness today, when the world had its best opportunity ever to restructure the international nuclear fuel cycle in ways that strengthened non-proliferation, they could prevent the emergence of further nuclear-weapon States and realize the economic and environmental benefits of nuclear power on a global scale.

110. The agenda was a bold one, developed out of necessity, but States could — and must — take the ongoing nuclear renaissance to a global level and thereby usher in an era of worldwide prosperity.

111. Mr CHEN Qiufa (China) said that the Agency's activities in areas such as energy supply, environmental protection, non-proliferation, prevention of nuclear terrorism and nuclear safety were greatly appreciated by the international community. In the past year, the Agency had provided strong support for the establishment of national nuclear power infrastructures and for continued research into innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles and had contributed to activities in the areas of water resources management and cancer therapy. In the areas of nuclear safety and nuclear security, it had promoted the establishment of a global nuclear safety network, conducted IRRS missions and nuclear security training, and assisted countries in upgrading their physical protection systems. Also, the Agency had implemented safeguards in over 160 countries and had promoted the conclusion of additional protocols by Member States in order to strengthen the integrated safeguards approach. Member States, the Secretariat and the Director General were to be commended for their joint efforts.

112. His Government was grateful to the Agency and to a number of Member States for helping to ensure nuclear security at the 2008 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, held in Beijing, by providing radiation detection equipment, expert advice and training.

113. His Government had done its utmost to ensure the safety of local nuclear facilities in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Sichuan Province in May 2008. The China Atomic Energy Authority, the National Nuclear Safety Administration and other relevant Chinese organizations had monitored nuclear facilities in the quake-affected areas and had confirmed that all were in a safe condition; no leakages of radioactive material had been detected. Many other governments and many international organizations had provided greatly appreciated disaster relief assistance, and his Government was grateful to the Agency for providing radiation detection equipment and training that had played a critical role in the post-quake recovery process.

114. Because of soaring oil prices and global warming, many countries were beginning to view nuclear power as an important energy option. Over 50 years of practical experience had shown that nuclear power was a safe, clean and economical energy source. The Chinese Government had decided to harness nuclear power for development, with a 2020 target of 40 GW of installed capacity and 18 GW under construction.

115. Besides accelerating nuclear power plant construction, China was continuing to promote fast reactor and nuclear fusion R&D, where good progress was being made. Also, to keep pace with the rapid expansion of nuclear power, it had stepped up its support for uranium prospecting and mining.

116. China stood ready to share its experience in the nuclear power area with other Member States, especially developing countries.

117. Many countries, including several developing ones, were thinking of embarking on nuclear power programmes. That was creating both opportunities and challenges for the Agency. The way in which the Agency assisted those countries would be very important.

118. The Agency should, drawing on its professional advantages, continue to support the establishment of sound infrastructures for nuclear power generation and other nuclear energy applications. Also, it should promote the establishment of nuclear fuel supply assurance arrangements, as, in China's view, all countries had the right to enjoy the benefits of nuclear energy applications, provided that they complied with their non-proliferation obligations. A balanced approach was required, with joint efforts in examining possible multilateral nuclear fuel cycle arrangements. In the meantime, the Agency should continue to foster nuclear technology application in the areas of human health, water resources management, food and agriculture, and environmental protection.

119. The Agency should continue to promote nuclear safety culture and to assist States in establishing effective nuclear security systems. With recent incidents at nuclear facilities making it

clear that there was no room for complacency in the nuclear safety area, the Agency should promote the exchange of nuclear safety-related knowledge among States and help to strengthen the international nuclear emergency response system.

120. The use of nuclear and other radioactive materials was becoming increasingly widespread, and every country engaged in peaceful nuclear activities should ensure that the materials being used by them were not diverted for non-peaceful uses or malicious acts. For its part, the Agency should encourage international cooperation in the field of nuclear security and help States to establish sound nuclear security systems.

121. The Agency should continue to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of its safeguards system, making optimum use of the limited resources available in dealing with verification issues in an impartial, objective and balanced manner under the authority granted to it by international treaties. It should expand its cooperation with and draw on the expertise of Member States, subject to the precondition of guaranteed independent verification. Resource allocation should be optimized, with the focus on weak points in the safeguards system. At the same time, a balance should be maintained between promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy and ensuring nuclear non-proliferation.

122. As host of the Agency-sponsored International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century scheduled to be held in April 2009, China looked forward to the participation of senior officials from many other countries in the examination of major issues relating to the sustainable development of nuclear energy applications.

123. Very much aware of the importance of the Agency's statutory role in seeking 'to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world', China would continue to support the efforts being made by the Agency in fulfilling that role.

124. Mr CHATEL (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the candidate countries Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, and the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine associated themselves with the statement he was about to make.

125. The Agency was an organization of crucial importance for the European Union. Not surprisingly, therefore, its Member States together constituted the prime contributor to the Agency's Regular Budget, the TCF and the NSF and one of two key contributors to PACT. The financial resources made available by them demonstrated the high priority that the European Union accorded to the Agency's work in increasing the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity, preventing the diversion of nuclear activities for military purposes, spreading nuclear safety culture through the application of rigorous safety standards, and averting the risk of nuclear terrorism.

126. Since 2003, the Agency had been at the heart of efforts to deal with one of the main challenges to international security — the Iranian nuclear programme. The prospect of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons was simply unacceptable to the international community. The Agency had a mandate to continue its investigation into 20 years of concealment and to enlighten the international community regarding the nature and possible military dimensions of that programme. However, the Agency could not resolve the crisis alone. It was for Iran to shed light on its nuclear programme, revert to implementation of the additional protocol, open the doors of its facilities, provide access to persons and documents, and answer all the questions put by the Agency's inspectors. Iran must implement the resolutions of the Board of Governors and the United Nations Security Council relating to it and suspend its uranium enrichment activities. The task of Member States was to provide the Agency with the solid support that it needed, by ensuring that the additional protocol, the modified Code 3.1 and transparency were not dangerously eroded. The Agency should intensify its activities in Iran, and all

efforts should converge in Vienna, New York and elsewhere. In that connection, the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1835 (2008) two days previously was very welcome.

127. Another country that had violated its safeguards agreement was the DPRK. Once its clandestine programme had been revealed, it also had engaged in multilateral negotiations. At the same time, however, it had continued working on a military nuclear programme in secret. It had fuelled the international nuclear black market, pursued a ballistic missile programme and then declared its withdrawal from the NPT. The Six-Party Talks had brought about some progress, marked particularly by the 2005 Joint Declaration, but in October 2006 the DPRK had announced that it had carried out a nuclear weapon test. Since then, the international community — and particularly the five countries that were engaged in a dialogue with the DPRK — had been trying to prevent the worst from happening. The DPRK must implement the Security Council decisions relating to it, irreversibly dismantle its nuclear facilities in a verifiable manner and give up its military-grade fissile material, with full Agency involvement in the process.

128. With regard to the Director General's reports to the Board about Agency fact-finding in Syria, the European Union was concerned about the fact that Syria had not yet responded to all of the requests made by the Agency. Syria should grant to the Agency any access requested by it and answer all the questions put by it. The Secretariat should pursue its investigations until such time as it could provide the Board with a full report.

129. Positive developments had taken place in the case of Libya, whose leaders had courageously decided to abandon their clandestine military nuclear programme and cooperate with the Agency. Libya was implementing an additional protocol and had agreed to transparency beyond what the additional protocol required. The European Union welcomed the Libyan leader's decision and congratulated Libya on the positive elements in the Director General's latest report. However, that report shed light on the worrying phenomenon of clandestine nuclear supply networks. Member States should bear in mind that, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), every State must take the measures necessary in order to prevent and interdict illegal nuclear transfers.

130. The European Union was continuing to call for the universalization of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols, which — in its view — together constituted the verification standard. Without an additional protocol in force in every Member State, the Agency could not completely exercise its safeguards functions. Also, the Agency must have the human and technical resources necessary for its verification activities — for example, in the Seibersdorf laboratories. The European Union was supporting the Agency's safeguards system through eight national programmes and one programme organized by the European Commission.

131. The Agency needed to be able to act effectively in order to carry out the verification mission assigned to it by the NPT, which remained the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and the essential basis for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and for the development of nuclear energy for peaceful uses. Nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy were mutually supporting, which was why the European Union was attached to the idea of progress in respect of all three. It wished every success to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, in which it would be participating.

132. As guarantor of international peace and security, the United Nations Security Council was required to take the necessary measures when a State failed to comply with its NPT commitments and fulfil its safeguards obligations. It was, *de facto* and *de jure*, an indispensable partner of the Agency. For their part, Member States needed to act upstream in order to eliminate the risks of nuclear proliferation and illegal nuclear transfers. At a time when the number of countries exporting nuclear and dual-use technology was increasing, States must strengthen their export control capabilities.

Against that background, supplier groups were playing an important role in ensuring a common and transparent framework for export policies.

133. In response to concerns about energy security and climate change, a number of countries were re-examining their energy policies. Also, while stressing that every country was free to determine its own energy strategy, the European Council had adopted an energy action plan for the period 2007–2009 that referred to how nuclear power could help in meeting the challenges of energy security and climate change and to the requirements of nuclear safety, nuclear security and radioactive waste management. As a complement to the action plan, the European Commission would be producing a strategic report on energy before the end of November 2008. Also, it was revising the 2007 Illustrative Nuclear Programme for the Community, which addressed, in particular, the issue of the responsible development of nuclear power.

134. The European Commission's High Level Group on Nuclear Safety and Waste Management, established in 2007, was aiming to produce its final report in 2009, and meetings of the European Forum on Nuclear Energy had been held in Bratislava and Prague in November 2007 and May 2008 respectively.

135. The Agency remained the organization best qualified to ensure the responsible exercise of each country's inalienable right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes — a right predicated on compliance with non-proliferation commitments. In that context, it was to be commended for its assistance with the establishment of infrastructures required for the safe use of nuclear energy.

136. The Agency was also to be commended for the way in which it was supporting INPRO, a project that could lead to significant improvements in the areas of non-proliferation and safety and to reductions in radioactive waste volumes.

137. Nuclear safety was a subject of constant attention within the European Union, whose Member States were further intensifying their efforts in the nuclear safety field. The European Union welcomed the recent work in that field done within the Agency framework, particularly by the Commission on Safety Standards, of which it would be taking full account. It would like to see all States with nuclear facilities availing themselves of the Agency's nuclear safety expertise and requesting OSART and IRRS missions.

138. Pursuant to an Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation established by the European Council and backed by funds amounting to € 524 million, the European Union intended to make nuclear safety expertise available to third countries with peaceful nuclear activities. Such expertise was already being made available by the Agency, and the European Union wished to avoid overlapping and to coordinate the funding of the actions taken.

139. In the European Union's opinion, all countries planning to launch nuclear power programmes should cooperate closely with the Agency and implement its relevant recommendations and should become parties to international instruments such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention and the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Although nuclear safety remained the responsibility of individual States, nuclear power development should take place within the framework of international law. Accordingly, the European Union would like to see Iran — the only country not party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety where a nuclear power plant was being built — acceding to that instrument before the start-up of the Bushehr nuclear power plant.

140. As regards safety and security in the transport of radioactive materials, including their transborder transport, the European Union greatly appreciated Agency activities such as the organization of TransSAS missions. Also, it welcomed the recent establishment of a European association of authorities competent in the field of radioactive material transport.

141. Constant vigilance was essential in the field of nuclear security, the strictest criteria being applied in securing all nuclear facilities and materials. States should take all measures necessary for preventing nuclear and other radioactive materials from falling into the hands of traffickers or terrorists. Among other things, they should ratify the Amendment to the CPPNM and become parties to the United Nations Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The European Union welcomed the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, in which all its Member States were participating.

142. As the prime contributor to the NSF, the European Union was enlarging the geographic scope of its support for the Agency's nuclear security programme to cover south-east Asia. Through its Stability Instrument for the period 2007–2013, the European Commission intended to promote a true nuclear safety and security culture.

143. All Member States of the Agency should participate in the Agency's Illicit Trafficking Database and seriously consider contributing to the NSF.

144. The European Union expected that the International Symposium on Nuclear Security due to be held in Vienna in March–April 2009 would lead to the establishment of priorities for future action by the Agency.

145. Steps were being taken to establish, under the auspices of the Agency, a nuclear fuel bank from which Member States might benefit and whose existence would underline the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The European Union was examining the possibility of making a financial contribution in support of what was an ambitious project, launched by the Nuclear Threat Initiative, and it hoped to participate in the formulation of the precise parameters for the nuclear fuel bank's operation.

146. Another ambitious project in which the European Union was very interested was the ITER project, which had been launched under the Agency's auspices and was now well under way. The European Union was both hosting the ITER project and participating very actively in it.

147. The importance of technical cooperation was recognized by all Agency Member States. The European Union, which was strongly committed to the Agency's technical cooperation activities, believed that the necessary financial resources should be made available for them. It also believed that they should be adjusted whenever necessary in order to meet the changing needs of beneficiaries and to respond to nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation requirements. In its opinion, there should be a thorough substantive debate on Agency technical cooperation, with a view to further increasing its effectiveness and efficiency, and Agency technical cooperation should be relaunched on a partnership basis. In that connection, the European Commission welcomed the contacts established between the Director General and the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid.

148. The European Union believed that all developing Member States of the Agency, including the LDCs among them, should be able to benefit from the Agency's technical cooperation activities, the geographical distribution of which should be equitable.

149. As regards nuclear applications, the European Union welcomed the efforts being made within the Agency framework to — *inter alia* — combat cancer and eradicate insect pests.

150. As regards the future of the Agency, the Commission of Eminent Persons had made its recommendations and the European Union recognized the importance of looking ahead. It stood ready to participate in a dialogue on ways of strengthening the Agency within the framework of the Statute. Clearly, however, such a dialogue could not be a substitute for the work of the Agency's policy-making organs.

151. The European Union would remain a strong supporter of the Agency, which it considered to be an organization essential to the responsible development of nuclear energy and to international security. It would also remain a partner open to cooperation in the “Spirit of Vienna”.

152. Mr KIRIENKO (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had come to the 52nd session of the General Conference ready to participate in it constructively. The main task for the immediate future was to ensure the conditions necessary in order that all Member States might, without hindrance, enjoy the full benefits of the peaceful utilization of atomic energy subject to the requirements of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

153. As regards nuclear power generation, decisions were currently being taken about the form it would take in the next stage of its development. There would undoubtedly continue to be fluctuations on the energy markets, with oil prices rising and falling, but clearly there was not going to be a return to the era of cheap energy. Moreover, CO₂ emissions should be kept as low as possible although there were grounds for scepticism about whether rising greenhouse gas levels were really affecting the world’s climate — a question on which there would no doubt be further scientific discussion.

154. Most renewable energy technologies could play only a complementary role, and some — such as biofuel production — had even more undesirable consequences than CO₂ emissions. Thus nuclear power generation was one of the few means, at the full-scale industrial level, of simultaneously meeting the challenge of energy security and the challenge of compliance with the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol.

155. Accordingly, more and more additional countries were preparing to embark on nuclear power programmes. Everyone was now talking about a ‘nuclear renaissance’ — something that, ten years previously, only a few analysts were forecasting.

156. However, as everyone knew, some of the technology involved in nuclear power generation was dual-use technology.

157. Initially, the civilian use of nuclear technology had been accessible only for the States belonging to the ‘nuclear club’ and a small number of developed countries closely linked to them politically. Now, there was a very wide range of States staking claims, nuclear power generation being regarded by them as a means of ensuring energy supply stability and so promoting further economic development and greater well-being for their peoples.

158. The problem lay in the fact that, while there was no justification (especially in international law) for questioning their right to free access, without discrimination, to nuclear technology for peaceful uses, there was a political responsibility to take all measures necessary in order to prevent the spread of technology and materials that might be used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or for nuclear terrorism.

159. In Russia, the decision had been taken to step up nuclear power generation through the construction of 26 further large nuclear power plants by 2020 — a doubling of the country’s nuclear power capacity.

160. The programme would be implemented by “Rosatom”, now a State Corporation, with competence in respect of all international commitments and agreements entered into by it when it had been a federal agency of Russia’s executive branch. “Rosatom” was responsible for nuclear and radiation safety, the non-proliferation of nuclear materials and technology, nuclear power technology development and training in the nuclear field. In August, it had assumed responsibility also for Russia’s fleet of nuclear-power icebreakers.

161. The Government of the Russian Federation had designated the Ministry for National Resources and Ecology as the federal body responsible for the formulation of State policy, standards and regulations for ensuring safety in the use of atomic energy. Responsibility for day-to-day monitoring and supervision remained with Rostekhnadzor.

162. A major feature of the programme would be large-scale training. A National Nuclear University was being established, with bases at the Moscow Engineering Physics Institute and a number of regional educational institutions.

163. "Rosatom" would be pleased to accept students and specialists from other Member States for training and further training respectively, in order that they might participate in their countries' nuclear power programmes.

164. Increasing the effectiveness of the Agency's safeguards system was essential for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Additional protocols were very important in that connection, and they should become the universal basis for verifying compliance with NPT obligations and also a major new feature of nuclear export controls.

165. Russia, which had ratified an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement with the Agency in October 2007, would like to see all countries that had not yet signed an additional protocol — especially countries engaged in significant nuclear activities — signing one with the minimum of delay.

166. His country would continue helping the Secretariat to strengthen the Agency's safeguards system through its safeguards support programme.

167. Russia welcomed the Board's approval of the agreement between the Agency and India for the application of safeguards to civilian nuclear facilities in that country. The conclusion of that agreement, together with the relevant decision of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, marked an important step towards broader cooperation with India in the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy.

168. The most important factor in ensuring the security of individual States and of the international community as a whole was the ability to react adequately and promptly to threats of nuclear terrorism. There were now 75 States participating in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which was a good example of how such threats could be addressed.

169. The Russian Federation, which had ratified the Amendment to the CPPNM, would like to see many States signing and ratifying the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the CPPNM with its Amendment.

170. His country, which attached great importance to the Agency's activities directed towards strengthening nuclear security throughout the world, was supporting the implementation of the Nuclear Security Plan for 2007–2009. It stood ready to increase its practical support and had decided to significantly increase, as of 2009, its contributions to the NSF.

171. His country attached great importance to Agency technical cooperation projects for the return of HEU fuel from research reactors of Soviet design and construction. In 2007, such fuel had been returned to Russia from the Czech Republic, Poland and Vietnam.

172. The Russian Federation intended to assist Ukraine in enhancing safety at the site of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and expediting the start of the plant's shutdown. To that end, it would be paying \$17 million into the EBRD's Nuclear Safety Account and the Chernobyl Shelter Fund.

173. Technical cooperation was an important area of Agency activity, and his country intended to continue paying its full TCF target shares.

174. The Russian Federation intended to assist Armenia in enhancing safety at its nuclear power plant through the Agency's technical cooperation programme, and it would be making \$10 million available for that purpose.

175. In the Russian Federation, assured access to nuclear fuel cycle services was considered essential for a major growth in nuclear power generation. His country greatly appreciated the role that the Agency was playing in promoting the examination of multilateral approaches to the provision of such services and would continue to support the Agency's efforts. It stood ready to cooperate with other countries, wherever possible, in the elaboration and combining of initiatives relating to multilateral nuclear fuel cycle approaches.

176. Work was going ahead on implementation of the initiative — announced by the President of the Russian Federation — for the establishment of a global nuclear power infrastructure that would ensure, for all interested countries, equal access to nuclear power on condition of consistent compliance with the requirements of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In 2007, his country had established, together with Kazakhstan, an International Uranium Enrichment Centre at the site of the Angarsk Electrolytic Chemical Combine. It was grateful to the Agency for its positive response to the initiative and, in particular, to the establishment of the Centre.

177. Membership of the Centre was open to other countries, without any political conditions. Already, Armenia and Ukraine had decided to join, and the legal documents relating to their membership of the Centre were currently being prepared.

178. In January 2008, the Agency had been officially informed that the International Uranium Enrichment Centre was being included in the list of Russian nuclear fuel cycle facilities where Agency safeguards might be applied.

179. It was expected that the Centre would have received all permits and licences necessary for operating as a supplier of material and provider of services before the end of 2008.

180. In addition, his country was supporting the related initiative of the Director General and building up an LEU stock sufficient for two 1000-MW power reactor core loads that, with the Agency's agreement, would be kept at the Centre. In its view, that LEU stock, administered by the Agency, would permit the startup of an 'assured supply' mechanism.

181. Many ideas regarding the establishment of such stocks were currently being examined, and clearly the time had come to think of working out common approaches and principles. As regards principles, his country considered it important that the existence and administration of such stocks:

- help to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime without running counter to States' rights and obligations;
- help to promote the spread of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, especially in developing countries;
- not undermine the market mechanisms in the area of the peaceful utilization of atomic energy;
- be in line with the concept of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle;
- not subject decisions regarding the release of LEU from the stock to political considerations; and
- be in accordance with the Agency's nuclear safety standards and physical protection rules.

182. His country hoped that its ideas would lead to a broad, constructive discussion and ultimately help to bring about a general consensus regarding the basic approaches to the establishment of 'assured supply' stocks of LEU.

183. INPRO, initiated by Russia, was a good example of cooperation, and his country welcomed the way in which it was evolving and the international recognition that it had gained. Russia, which greatly appreciated the efforts being made by the Secretariat with regard to budgeting support for INPRO, would like to see all INPRO member countries sharing in its direct financing. For its part, his country would continue its financial and other support for INPRO.

184. Through INPRO, it was possible to bring together all interested Member States — both technology holders and technology users — for the joint examination of ways of meeting energy needs.

185. During the second phase of INPRO, his country had supported projects relating to — inter alia — the assessment of innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles in national, regional and global nuclear power scenarios and the establishment of an international infrastructure for nuclear power.

186. In that connection, his country, which welcomed the Agency's efforts to assist Member States in developing the national infrastructure necessary for the introduction of nuclear power, believed that the proven INPRO methodology for assessing nuclear power systems could usefully be integrated into those efforts and that the 'INPRO platform' could become the basis for new kinds of partnership among Member States in creating the conditions necessary for the introduction of innovative nuclear power systems.

187. Regarding the response of the Commission of Eminent Persons to the Director General's background report entitled "20/20 Vision for the Future", Russia saw the Agency as an international centre helping Member States to acquire and use nuclear power technology, analysing the global prospects for nuclear power and developing scenarios for the development of nuclear power — including the introduction of innovative technologies that were more proliferation-resistant and safer.

188. Mr PRODAN (Ukraine), speaking on behalf of the GUAM countries, expressed satisfaction with the interaction between GUAM and the Agency in the area of technical cooperation. In 2007, the GUAM countries — Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova — had through the Agency received technical assistance worth more than \$ 1.6 million.

189. The GUAM countries, which were cooperating with the Agency in several areas, attached particular importance to their cooperation with the Agency in tackling common high-priority problems connected with the security of nuclear materials and highly active radioactive sources, with the development of legislation based on Agency standards and the application of nuclear technologies in medicine.

190. The GUAM countries, which the Agency was helping to strengthen physical protection at nuclear facilities and to ensure the security of highly active radioactive sources, had in 2007 signed a memorandum of understanding about mutual assistance in matters of nuclear security and radiation protection.

191. The GUAM countries greatly appreciated the way in which the Agency was helping States to comply with their international obligations, particularly those arising out of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006).

192. The GUAM countries were complying fully with their obligations arising out of safeguards agreements and additional protocols, and all nuclear facilities and materials within their territories were subject to full-scope Agency safeguards. They were, therefore, not happy about the fact that

many States party to the NPT had not yet concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency and several of those which had concluded such agreements had not yet brought additional protocols into force.

193. The GUAM countries would continue to cooperate with the Secretariat in implementing national and regional projects relating to areas such as nuclear medicine and radiation therapy and to the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

194. The GUAM countries would like the Director General and the Secretariat to continue their efforts to establish partnerships for the purpose of attracting additional resources for use in the accomplishment of statutory tasks. In that connection, they would welcome increased technical and political collaboration with the European Union.

195. Speaking on behalf of just his own country, he said that Ukraine, which had voluntarily divested itself of the world's third largest nuclear arsenal, regarded the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy as one of the principal ways of ensuring sustainable economic growth.

196. In the interests of energy security, nuclear power would be an important component of Ukraine's energy mix in the medium and long term.

197. His country, which had considerable scientific potential in the field of nuclear technology and long-term plans for nuclear power expansion, was supporting the work relating to innovative and improved reactor designs being done within the framework of INPRO. Also, it attached great importance to the work being done within the framework of the Generation IV International Forum and the ITER International Fusion Energy Organization.

198. In July 2008, at a meeting of the INPRO Steering Committee, the Ukrainian delegation had presented the results of a study on the use of the INPRO methodology, and on 24 September 2008 Ukraine's Ministry of Fuel and Energy had sent a report on those results to the Agency.

199. Operational safety at Ukraine's nuclear power plants remained high, in accordance with international standards and the requirements of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. With the Agency's help, Ukraine was continuing to improve its nuclear safety legislation and strengthen its nuclear regulatory body. It was continuing to implement its nuclear safety plan for 2006–2009 and was grateful to the donors that were supporting its efforts financially.

200. The State Nuclear Regulatory Committee of Ukraine had greatly appreciated the IRRS mission organized by the Agency in June 2008, during which there had been very useful consultations on the design and operational safety of Ukraine's nuclear power plants. Ukraine would welcome an expansion of such safety-related Agency activities, perhaps to some extent through the Agency's technical cooperation programmes.

201. The fact that the Chairperson of the State Nuclear Regulatory Committee of Ukraine was currently a member of the Agency's Commission on Safety Standards was an indication of the excellent reputation enjoyed internationally by Ukrainian nuclear safety experts.

202. Ukraine, which was aiming for a high level of safety in the management of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste, had completed the construction of the 'Vektor' radioactive waste storage facility — the first such facility to be built in Ukraine since independence.

203. Ukraine, which would like the regime for the physical protection of nuclear materials to be strengthened and whose Parliament had in September 2008 ratified the Amendment to the CPPNM, was taking a whole range of measures envisaged in the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of

Radioactive Sources and in the supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources.

204. His country was grateful to Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States of America for the assistance provided to it by them within the framework of the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. It was also grateful to Sweden for its help in resolving problems with radioactive waste from earlier defence programmes.

205. Wider international cooperation within the Agency framework was needed in order to address the global threat posed by the possible use of nuclear and other radioactive materials for terrorist purposes. Accordingly, Ukraine greatly appreciated the activities of the Agency's Incident and Emergency Centre and welcomed the establishment, under the Agency's auspices, of the Response Assistance Network (RANET).

206. Wishing to help ensure that terrorists did not acquire nuclear or radiological weapons, Ukraine was supporting — inter alia — the G8's Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, the Global Threat Reduction Initiative and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Along with 22 other countries, Ukraine was participating in the Agency's Illicit Trafficking Database.

207. Ukraine, which attached great importance to the Agency's safeguards system, believed that the documents developed during the two years in which the Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification within the Framework of the IAEA Statute had met would be very useful for the future safeguards activities of the Agency.

208. Comprehensive safeguards agreements, when combined with additional protocols, enabled the Agency to verify not only the non-diversion of declared nuclear materials but also the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities. The universalization of additional protocols would therefore strengthen the international non-proliferation regime, to the benefit of all States. For its part, Ukraine was fulfilling all the obligations arising out of its additional protocol.

209. In building up a universal system of comprehensive safeguards, the Agency should focus particularly on the application of safeguards in countries conducting intensive nuclear programmes.

210. One such country was the DPRK, and Ukraine shared the deep concern of the international community with regard to recent developments relating to its nuclear programme. It was essential that the DPRK fulfil, without delay, all its obligations arising out of the Six-Party agreements and take steps to shut down the Yongbyon reactor irreversibly.

211. Ukraine recognized the right of the Islamic Republic of Iran to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. At the same time, it attached great importance to the efforts of the Agency to assure itself of the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. In his country's view, the 'Iranian file' could be closed if Iran provided exhaustive answers to the Agency's outstanding questions.

212. Overcoming the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant was still an extremely important issue for Ukraine, which was counting on further Agency support in that connection. It greatly appreciated the support already provided by the Agency within the framework of the efforts promoted by the United Nations to expedite recovery and sustainable development in areas affected by the accident. It also greatly appreciated the support being provided, within the framework of the United Nations Action Plan on Chernobyl to 2016, for the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network and for the holding of an international Chernobyl conference on radiation protection and safety in 2011.

213. Ukraine was close to embarking on the construction of a stable confinement for reactor No.4 at Chernobyl. The project would have safeguards and nuclear material security implications, to which Ukraine and the Agency would have to pay close attention.

214. Ukraine fully endorsed the priorities set for Agency technical cooperation in Europe, where the main emphasis was on human health, nuclear science, radioactive waste management and nuclear installation safety. Also, it welcomed the Agency's technical cooperation activities relating to the operational life extension of nuclear power plants, the preservation of nuclear knowledge and experience and the strengthening of nuclear regulatory bodies.

215. Mr BOUOUNY (Tunisia) said that his country was promoting R&D as part of its overall development policy and that R&D workers now accounted for some 4.5% of the working population of Tunisia — close to the average for developed countries. Its expenditure on R&D would account for 1.25% of GDP in 2009.

216. As its fossil fuel reserves were very limited, Tunisia had decided, in the light of the continuing rise in petroleum and natural gas prices on international markets, to embark on a nuclear power programme for electricity generation. It had launched feasibility studies in 2006 and was setting up a national legislative and regulatory regime based on international standards to govern the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Also, it was preparing to ratify relevant international instruments — in particular, an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement with the Agency.

217. Tunisia, which had welcomed the Director General's initiative in setting up the Commission of Eminent Persons, endorsed the Commission's call for "a global nuclear order that will reduce risks while allowing rapidly growing contributions to human well-being from nuclear technologies" and agreed with the Commission about the importance of partnership and transparency in that connection. It also agreed with the Commission about the need for budgetary increases if the Agency was to meet future challenges.

218. During the past year, Tunisia had benefited from numerous national, regional and interregional technical cooperation projects organized through the Agency, and it was counting on strong Agency support for its technical cooperation programme for the period 2009–2011. Tunisia, for its part, would be paying its full TCF target share for 2009.

219. Tunisia, which was participating in regional activities relating to the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy that were being carried out by the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, based in Tunis, would like to see the International Atomic Energy Agency supporting the efforts of its regional counterpart through — for example — the provision of training.

220. Tunisia, which was continuing to cooperate with other African countries within the framework of AFRA, had in March 2008 hosted the 5th African Conference on Non-destructive Testing — an event attended by experts from 30 African countries and from several European countries and by representatives of corporate stakeholders such as the oil industry and NDT service providers.

221. Earlier in the current year, Tunisia had concluded with France an agreement on cooperation in the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. It was expected that the agreement would provide the basis for support for the construction of a reactor as part of Tunisia's envisaged nuclear power programme for electricity generation. Already, a nuclear science and technology programme for Tunisian students had been launched at French nuclear establishments. His country was very grateful for France's supportive attitude.

222. Tunisia was of the view that countries wishing to enjoy the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy should not be subject to constantly tightening restrictions. To achieve real progress in nuclear disarmament, it was essential to build confidence and to preserve the existing balance between States'

rights and obligations under the NPT, and all States — without exception — should accede to that treaty.

223. Tunisia continued to advocate the speedy establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in the Middle East, with all nuclear facilities there under Agency safeguards. His delegation hoped that the General Conference would contribute towards the attainment of that goal.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.