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Later: Ms GERVAIS-VIDRICAIRE (Canada)

Contents

Item of the agenda ¹		Paragraphs
7	General debate and Annual Report for 2007 (<i>continued</i>)	1–122
	Statements by the delegates of:	
	Republic of Korea	1–12
	Austria	13–22
	Sudan	23–33
	Germany	34–41
	Kenya	42–52
	Egypt	53–63
	Uruguay	64–68
	Namibia	69–73
	Iraq	74–80
	Chile	81–89

¹ GC(52)/21.

Contents (continued)

Item of the agenda

Hungary	90–100
Serbia	101–106
Czech Republic	107–115
European Commission	116–122

Abbreviations used in this record:

AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ARCAL	Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EU	European Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMCT	fissile material cut-off treaty
GIF	Generation IV International Forum
GNEP	Global Nuclear Energy Partnership
HEU	high-enriched uranium
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
INSAG	International Nuclear Safety Group
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
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

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

NGO	non-governmental organization
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NTI	Nuclear Threat Initiative
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PATTEC	Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign
R&D	research and development
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SCART	Safety Culture Assessment Review Team
SIT	sterile insect technique
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
WENRA	Western European Nuclear Regulators' Association
WHO	World Health Organization
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

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

1. Mr PARK Jong Koo (Republic of Korea) said that many countries had realized that nuclear energy was the only viable option for meeting the growing demands for fuel while addressing environmental concerns. Countries already operating nuclear power plants were seeking to expand existing programmes, while others with no past interest in nuclear energy were rethinking their policy and were turning their attention to nuclear technology. That trend clearly testified to the importance of nuclear energy now and in years to come.

2. Aware of the significance of nuclear energy as a future energy source, the Republic of Korea had steadily increased its nuclear power activities since the first oil shock in the 1970s. The 20 nuclear power plants built since 1978 now met approximately 40% of the country's electricity needs. Eight more plants would be in operation by 2016. His Government was also considering the construction of ten additional plants by 2030, each with a capacity of 1400 MW(e). Two next-generation advanced power reactors (APR-1400) — which were safer and more economically efficient than the current Korean standard model OPR-1000 — were currently under construction. In 2007, the Government had also approved the continuing operation of Kori-1 for a further ten years.

3. Before any nuclear power programme could begin, infrastructure should be developed to ensure nuclear non-proliferation, safety and security. The Agency's role in that regard had grown in importance. His Government noted with appreciation that the Agency had recently launched a project to assist infrastructure development in emerging nuclear energy countries, and welcomed the report of the Commission of Eminent Persons on the Future of the Agency. The Republic of Korea intended to cooperate actively with other Member States to share its 30 years of experience in designing and operating nuclear reactors.

4. The Republic of Korea planned to design and initiate a long-term R&D programme entitled the Comprehensive Nuclear Action Plan for the Future by the end of the year as a means of promoting the expanded use of nuclear energy and meeting domestic energy demands.

5. It was of the utmost importance for countries developing nuclear energy to participate in bilateral and multilateral efforts, and to share information and experience through international bodies in order to increase efficiency in terms of time and budget and reduce the risk associated with the introduction of nuclear energy. The Republic of Korea had been participating actively in the development of future nuclear energy systems such as the GIF, INPRO and the GNEP. It had also been working closely with the Agency since 2005 in operating a regional office for the RCA and conducting joint research and development programmes.

6. Research and development on radiation technology had been moving ahead all over the world. In 2008, the Republic of Korea had hosted the Sixth International Conference on Isotopes, at which some 1000 experts from 35 countries had shared their knowledge and experience, and discussed ways of applying radiation technology to agriculture, medicine and industry. The Republic of Korea planned to promote the sustainable development of radiation so as to improve public health and quality of life.

7. In view of the expanded use of nuclear energy, it was more important than ever to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and tighten security measures. Given the urgent and grave challenges posed by nuclear proliferation and illicit trafficking of sensitive nuclear material, it was crucial to ensure

universal adherence to and compliance with the Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreement and its additional protocol. His delegation called upon those States that had not signed and ratified or acceded to the comprehensive safeguards agreement and the additional protocol to do so at the earliest possible date. It welcomed the safeguards agreement concluded between the Agency and India and looked forward to its early entry into force, so that India could revitalize its nuclear activities in a peaceful manner.

8. For the Republic of Korea, promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy was an ongoing policy which had top priority. In 1992, his Government had signed the Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and in 2004 it had proclaimed the four principles for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, making a full commitment to non-proliferation. The Republic of Korea carefully implemented its comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol, and his Government had also sought to strengthen the legal and institutional framework in order to reinforce the national nuclear energy control system. On 4 June 2008, the Board of Governors had recognized South Korea's nuclear transparency by drawing the broader safeguards conclusion, and integrated safeguards had been applied in the Republic of Korea since July 2008. His delegation expressed appreciation to the Agency and the Member States for their support and cooperation in that regard. His Government had amended legislation of relevance to the performance of its nuclear regulatory activities under integrated safeguards.

9. A peaceful resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue was vital to securing lasting peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and in North East Asia and to maintaining the integrity of the non-proliferation regime. The Republic of Korea expressed serious concern over the DPRK's move to restart the Yongbyon nuclear facilities, including the reprocessing plant, and urged the DPRK to resume the disablement measures without delay. It hoped that the DPRK would fully implement its commitment to abandon all its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and return to the NPT and to Agency safeguards at an early date, in accordance with the Joint Statement of the six-party talks of September 2005. The Agency would have an important role to play in that process, based on its expertise and experience in promoting non-proliferation and nuclear transparency, and his Government requested the continued support of Member States to achieve the denuclearization of the DPRK within the framework of the six-party talks.

10. The peaceful use of nuclear energy should be based on safety and transparency. The Republic of Korea had complied in good faith with the terms of international treaties, standards and guidelines related to nuclear safety and security. His Government had had an exchange of views on the enhancement of international nuclear safety at the Fourth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety in April 2008. It would cooperate in full in Agency activities aimed at securing nuclear safety and enhancing nuclear transparency throughout the world. His country had also welcomed the standards and preconditions required in connection with the overall safety review by OSART.

11. With the Agency's cooperation, the International Nuclear Safety School had been opened in the Republic of Korea to share with others the nation's advanced nuclear safety control technology and experience in all stages of nuclear power plant construction. Plans were being developed to set up on-the-job training for each phase of construction for those nations that were starting or building new nuclear power plants. Additionally, an international training programme would be run in cooperation with national universities. His delegation hoped for interest and participation in that endeavour.

12. In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the operation of Kori-1, the country's first nuclear power plant, his Government had organized the Special Safety Review Team in 2008 to examine ways of improving safety, thereby demonstrating that nuclear safety had top priority for his country. Over the previous 30 years, the Republic of Korea had laid a sound foundation for the safe and secure

development of nuclear technology. Drawing on its experience, the Republic of Korea would enhance its nuclear energy capability by developing future nuclear technology with an even greater emphasis on non-proliferation, safety and economic efficiency, and by establishing an advanced safety regulatory system. In the decades ahead, it would further strengthen its relations with the Agency and Member States in order to promote the peaceful use of nuclear power.

13. Mr KYRLE (Austria) said that, in the past year, the Agency had again demonstrated its reliability and efficiency on the international scene and reinforced its position as an indispensable institution in the global security architecture. More than ever, the international community needed institutions such as the Agency that contributed to building international confidence. Construction of numerous nuclear power plants was planned for the decades to come and many experts predicted a long-term renaissance of nuclear energy. Such a development would pose serious challenges for the international community and a thoughtful examination of those challenges and their implications for the Agency's future work was thus urgently required. In that context, Austria thanked the Director General for having launched a timely discussion on the future of the Agency earlier in 2008, and took note of the background report by the Director General entitled 20/20 Vision for the Future and the subsequent report by the Commission of Eminent Persons.

14. Austria was one of those countries to believe that the risks of nuclear energy far outweighed its advantages: in view of the high environmental and financial costs over time and the lack of a sustainable solution to the nuclear waste problem, nuclear energy could not make a sustainable contribution to the efforts to combat climate change. Nevertheless, Austria was aware of the global rise in energy demand and recognized the right of every State to choose its own energy mix. However the use of nuclear power for energy purposes was assessed, Member States should be united in urgently addressing and preventing: the potential misuse or careless use of nuclear technology; the risks of proliferation connected to the spread of nuclear technology; the existence of clandestine supplier networks; the production of dirty bombs by terrorists; the clandestine development of WMD programmes; and nuclear accidents. It must be the absolute priority of not only the Agency, but also of Member States, to deal with those challenges, in particular by: strengthening and universally implementing the Agency's safeguards system, including the additional protocol; implementing and developing the most stringent security and safety tools; and advancing the multilateralization of the nuclear fuel cycle.

15. The Agency's safeguards system was an indispensable part of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Repeated cases of clandestine nuclear programmes that had gone undetected by traditional safeguards measures had demonstrated the need for a strengthened safeguards system. It was of the utmost importance for the Agency to be able to draw safeguards conclusions regarding the peaceful use of all nuclear material in States. The additional protocol provided the Agency with a much more complete insight into States' nuclear programmes, thereby making detection of clandestine activities possible. Austria therefore continued strongly to advocate adherence to the additional protocol, and called on all States to negotiate and conclude protocols additional to their safeguards agreements without further delay. In Austria's view, the conclusion of an additional protocol was a legal obligation for non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT. It was pleased to note that the number of additional protocols continued to rise steadily, and welcomed the forthcoming conclusion of additional protocols with Iraq, Lesotho and Qatar. Nevertheless, progress remained too slow, since a number of important goals associated with the implementation of the additional protocol would only be realized once the system was universally applied. What is more, a number of non-nuclear-weapon States had still not even concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement.

16. The international community's vigilance with regard to nuclear safety and security was vital for protecting populations and the environment from exposure to harmful radiation. The Agency's assistance to countries in upgrading nuclear safety and security and preparing for and responding to

emergencies therefore remained of utmost importance. The international community must remain alert to the potential of terrorists targeting nuclear facilities or using radioactive sources to incite panic, contaminate property and even cause the injury or death of civilians. In the twelve months leading up to 30 June 2008, 21 of the 243 incidents reported to the Agency's Illicit Trafficking Database had involved the theft or loss of material that was not subsequently recovered. As radiation knew no frontiers, the security of nuclear material and facilities was a legitimate concern of all States, and countries must continue to demonstrate that strong security systems were in place. Austria commended the Agency for its efforts to implement the Nuclear Security Plan for 2006-2009. It looked forward to continuing activities in that regard, in particular in the context of the Nuclear Security Plan 2010-2013, and encouraged the Agency to continue cooperating with international nuclear-security-related initiatives, including the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

17. Austria welcomed the Director General's report on measures to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation and transport safety and waste management contained in document GC(52)/2. In the field of nuclear safety, Austria welcomed the performance of the Agency's SCART. However, recurring events in Europe and worldwide indicated that the safety culture was deteriorating in both operating organizations and in regulatory oversight. That was a cause of concern, and his delegation urged the Agency to increase its activities in that respect. It looked forward to the implementation of measures within the global nuclear safety regime, as proposed by INSAG, but was concerned that, after fifty years Agency safety standards were still not fully applied by the entire nuclear community. Austria therefore supported the Agency's sustained efforts to ensure that all safety standards were applied in full, and encouraged the development of safety guidelines for nuclear installations other than nuclear power plants. His country was also concerned by moves to downgrade Agency safety standards from the highest to the average level. Those safety standards must continue to reflect the best international practices in order to serve as benchmarks for the highest level of nuclear safety.

18. With regard to existing conventions dealing with liability for nuclear damage, he reiterated two of Austria's major concerns: first, that the maximum liability amounts provided would be completely insufficient in the case of a major accident; and second, that the channelling of liability according to which only operators, not suppliers, could be held liable seemed inadequate. It was to be hoped that the ongoing discussions would focus more on potential damages and victims rather than on the interest of related industries and eventually lead to fair, obligatory, unlimited liability.

19. The pressing issue of nuclear proliferation dominated political debate and was a major challenge for the international community. In her welcoming address to the previous session of the General Conference, Austria's Foreign Minister Plassnik had called for a revitalization of the vision of a nuclear fuel cycle under multilateral control as one possible solution. Austria had since participated in the respective discussions in the Agency and continued to maintain that a multilateral approach could make a crucial contribution to overcoming international tensions regarding the potential misuse of sensitive technology. The long-term goal must be a new multilateral framework for nuclear energy that would eventually include converting enrichment and reprocessing facilities from national to multilateral operations and limiting such facilities to exclusively multilateral operations.

20. No distinction should be made between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', only between the 'wants' and the 'want-nots'. For those that had chosen nuclear energy, access to nuclear fuel should be a strictly regulated but impartial and fair exercise. The creation of an international fuel reserve under the auspices of the Agency could be the first step in that approach. Austria intended to present a detailed outline of its proposal later in 2008.

21. Over the 50 previous years, the Agency had made a vital contribution to many important projects related to the development agenda, including in the areas of increasing food production,

fighting diseases and managing groundwater resources. Those activities were vitally important to many nations around the globe, and his Government had decided to contribute to the TCF for 2009, subject to budgetary authorization. The work of the Joint Division had been of great value to Member States, and Austria continued to hope that the FAO would not end its involvement in that Division.

22. Austria was ready to work with other Member States and the Agency on a strategy to enable the Agency to deal with the many challenges ahead in the best possible manner. With political determination, openness to new multilateral partnerships and the reliable, trusted help of the Agency, his country was confident that progress could be made.

23. Mr OMER (Sudan) stressed the importance of the Agency's role not only in applying the safeguards regime and in creating nuclear-weapon-free zones but also in promoting nuclear energy as an option available to all Member States.

24. He was pleased to announce that Sudan had ratified the amendment to Article VI of the Agency's Statute. It had also signed the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, and was taking steps to ensure their early ratification.

25. Sudan was drafting a law on nuclear energy based on the Agency's guidelines. An important aspect of the legislation was the clear-cut distinction it made between the regulatory authority and users of radiation for different purposes.

26. Sudan was keen to use nuclear energy for electricity generation and hoped it could count on the Agency's support in that regard. The Ministry of Energy and Mining had set up a national committee to undertake a feasibility study, and permission had been given for the establishment in the Ministry of a unit to implement a nuclear reactor project.

27. Major progress had been made under the AFRA Agreement in the areas of food security, health and therapy, and the development of human resources. He also commended the regional projects implemented with Agency support and the coordination of activities involving the application of nuclear technology. Sudan had hosted the first African Conference on Clinical Nuclear Medicine and Medical Physics, which had attracted experts from more than 30 African countries. The Conference had emphasized the need for Africa to introduce advanced nuclear technology and to develop human resources in the area of medical physics. He was pleased to announce that the Sudan Academy of Sciences was launching a master's programme in medical physics, which it hoped would shortly acquire the status of a regional programme.

28. He called for support for the recommendations of the AFRA Regional High Level Policy Review Seminar held in Aswan, Egypt, in December 2007. The Aswan Declaration advocated closer cooperation among African countries, on the one hand, and between the Agency and African countries in the context of AFRA, on the other. He urged African States to allocate more budgetary funds to national science and technology programmes, to set up an AFRA fund for the development of science and technology in Africa, to build a national radiation safety infrastructure, and to comply with international waste disposal regulations.

29. He commended the Agency's increased support for technical cooperation activities, especially those pertaining to nuclear science and technology and their applications. There was an urgent need for joint action to develop the Agency's water management programme, its programme for using small and medium-sized nuclear reactors to produce drinking water and the PACT programme, and to support its campaign to eradicate the tsetse fly in African countries.

30. Isotopic studies in hydrology could lead to the identification of groundwater sources and could determine the relationship between such sources and surface water and rainwater, thereby ascertaining

the quality of the water and ways of exploiting it, particularly in semi-arid regions such as sub-Saharan Africa.

31. The Darfur problem was basically one of competition for limited rainwater resources, which had led to friction between pastoralists and farmers in the region. The problem could be solved in the long term by providing the people of Darfur with an adequate water supply. Fortunately, such a supply was available in the Nubian sandstone aquifer and other aquifers in the region. In that context, he drew attention to an Agency-supported joint project involving Sudan, Egypt, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Chad for the sustainable development of the Nubian sandstone aquifer, and a regional project to incorporate groundwater resources into the integrated Nile Basin water management programme. All such studies and projects made a direct contribution to national and regional peace and stability. He therefore called on the Agency to provide the resources and technical support required for their expansion.

32. In general, he urged the Agency and its Member States to provide more financial resources for the technical cooperation programme, which was no less important than the implementation of safeguards agreements, verification activities and nuclear disarmament. While praising the work of the Commission of Eminent Persons on the Agency's future role, he stressed the need for balance between the Agency's activities so that all Member States could develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy and acquire the necessary skills. He further noted that responsibility for taking crucial decisions on how the Agency could best meet future challenges lay with the Member States.

33. With regard to the Agency's role in promoting international peace and security, he called on the international community to cure itself of its addiction to double standards by adopting policies based on fairness and equality. All Member States were aware of the nuclear proliferation threat in the Middle East region. Sudan shared the concern of Arab and other States about Israeli nuclear programmes, all of which escaped Agency supervision. He called on Israel to accede forthwith to the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. At the same time, Sudan supported the right of every country, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, to implement a nuclear programme for peaceful purposes in accordance with the provisions of the NPT. In that context, he welcomed current cooperation between Iran and the Agency with a view to resolving the issue once and for all.

34. Mr LÜDEKING (Germany) said that the background report by the Director General entitled 20/20 Vision for the Future and the report by the Commission of Eminent Persons on the future of the Agency provided a number of valuable suggestions and insights, and Germany was ready to enter into focused and constructive discussion of the issues raised in those documents. It was clear that the Agency would have a key role to play, since a substantial increase in the use of nuclear energy could be expected in the decades to come. While the Agency's current mandate was sufficiently broad and flexible to cover those future tasks, he said that financial implications must be borne in mind in determining the Agency's future role.

35. He hoped that the safeguards agreement concluded between India and the Agency would bring that country closer to the non-proliferation regime. Germany's consent to the decisions of the Agency and the NSG was based on the premise that India would allow Agency safeguards to be applied to its civil nuclear facilities, as it had announced, and that it would refrain from any proliferation of sensitive technologies and from nuclear weapons tests. He called on India to accede to the CTBT, stop the production of fissile material for military purposes and commit unequivocally to nuclear disarmament.

36. In the five years since it had become clear that Iran had been pursuing undeclared nuclear activities, the Agency had succeeded in clarifying a number of various open questions with respect to Iran's nuclear programme. However, some questions relating to a possible military dimension needed to be clarified. Since Iran was not implementing the additional protocol, the Agency was unable to

provide assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear activities and could not confirm the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. It was deeply regrettable that Iran had not suspended sensitive nuclear activities despite calls from the Security Council to do so, thereby further increasing the lack of trust regarding its intentions. In June 2008, China, France, Germany, Russia the United Kingdom, and the United States had presented Iran with new proposals aimed facilitating negotiations, but had not yet received a clear answer. The six countries remained convinced that a solution must be achieved through negotiation, and were determined to continue their dual track approach. Recalling Security Council resolution 1835 (2008), which underlined the unwavering resolve and unity of the international community in the face of Iranian non-compliance and defiance, he said that Iran must fulfil its international obligations without exception or delay.

37. The nuclear crisis on the North Korean peninsula remained a further source of serious international concern. While Germany welcomed the shutdown of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities, it deplored the fact that the denuclearization process had been halted recently with the removal of Agency inspectors from the Yongbyon facilities, and the announcement of plans to reintroduce nuclear material. Germany called on the DPRK to return to the six-party talks process. The DPRK must comply fully with its obligations and place all its nuclear activities under Agency safeguards.

38. The lack of cooperation by the Syrian authorities concerning the alleged nuclear reactor in Al Kibar was cause for concern, and he called on Syria to cooperate fully with the Agency to clarify the issue. Such developments confirmed the need for an effective and efficient safeguards regime; comprehensive safeguards agreements together with the additional protocol must constitute the relevant verification standard.

39. The prospect of rising demand for nuclear fuel, the high importance of its secure supply and the imminent proliferation risk associated with fuel cycle technologies had led to a growing debate on multilateral approaches. Germany agreed that any such mechanism should be non-discriminatory and available to all States that complied with their safeguards obligations. Germany welcomed the various proposals made on the issue, and had devised its own proposal for a Multilateral Enrichment Sanctuary Project, which it would continue to develop in consultation with interested States and the Agency.

40. The 2005 amendments to the CPPNM made an important contribution to the global prevention of criminal acts involving nuclear materials. Germany had enacted the legal provisions required for ratification in June 2008.

41. The Agency's valuable assistance to Member States within the framework of the technical cooperation programme had led to noticeable improvements in important areas like health, water management, agriculture and environmental protection. Germany remained committed to supporting the Agency's efforts in that regard.

42. Ms KOSGEIZ (Kenya) said that the Annual Report for 2007 contained in document GC(52)/9 reaffirmed the value of the tasks carried out by the Agency in many areas, including human health, water resources, industrial development and nuclear security. The safeguards and verification aspects of the Agency's work attested to the importance of its vigilance and to its solid contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

43. Kenya strongly supported the right of all States to have full use of nuclear technology and scientific applications as provided for in the NPT. The Agency's technical cooperation activities in Kenya had contributed significantly to the Government's efforts towards developing the nuclear science and technology infrastructure. Kenya was in the process of developing a new CPF for the period 2011–2016. It was participating in 11 national projects and 53 regional or interregional projects

covering human resources development, human health, agriculture, livestock production, industrial applications, energy planning, radiation protection and radioactive waste management.

44. Kenyan scientists were pioneers of plant breeding for the development of crops essential to food security. A new variety of early maturing, high-yielding, drought-resistant wheat that had been developed using nuclear techniques was a tangible example of the success of the technical cooperation programme in Kenya, and a concrete manifestation of the Agency's work in addressing the global food crisis.

45. With reference to global efforts aimed at protecting against nuclear terrorism and nuclear proliferation, he said the Agency was in the process of upgrading the physical security for Category 1 sources at research institutions in Kenya as a result of an IRRS mission. Kenya had specifically created security agencies with highly trained personnel to combat crime related to nuclear terrorism and had hosted regional training courses on information systems for combating illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials.

46. Through increased manpower and radiation detection equipment, Kenya's competent authority had opened additional regional offices and had adopted the Agency's Regulatory Authority Information System software for the control of radiation sources. An amendment proposing the autonomy of the Radiation Protection Board in line with the International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources was now going through the country's legislative processes.

47. The Agency's continued efforts to strengthen nuclear safety and security in the transportation of radioactive sources and waste management were commendable. Kenya had improved its capability to detect the illicit trafficking of radioactive and nuclear materials through the training of border personnel and provision of radiation detectors.

48. Kenya's accession to the Joint Convention was at an advanced stage. The designs for a central radioactive waste processing facility took into account the Agency's Radioactive Waste Safety Standards and Principles of Radioactive Waste Management, and his Government had allocated US\$ 480 000 for the first phase of the project. The facility would also be used for the processing and safe storage of orphan sources and illicitly trafficked nuclear and radioactive materials. Kenya invited regional and international development partners to provide support in the full realization of that project.

49. Energy was crucial not only to achieving the Millennium Development Goals but also to spurring national development and economic growth. Nuclear power could make a major contribution to meeting energy needs and sustaining Kenya's development in the twenty-first century. The Government was inviting assistance in the development of nuclear power plants in order to add 1000 MW immediately to the current energy mix and significantly more capacity for the future, thus greatly reducing over-reliance on fossil fuels and biomass, and contributing to the protection of the environment.

50. Tsetse and trypanosomosis posed a major threat to Kenyan communities and were a constraint to livestock production. The Agency's provision of a gamma irradiator had made it possible to improve the mass-rearing of sterile males for the SIT, a technique to be applied by PATTEC in the final phases of the eradication of tsetse flies in Kenya and the region.

51. In the area of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine, projects concerning the expansion of radiotherapy services and the improvement of the nuclear medicine service had been given high priority. Kenya commended the Agency for establishing PACT, under which radiotherapy services at

Kenyatta Hospital and Nyanza General Hospital were being modernized and expanded. Such services would be spread to cover other hospitals across the country.

52. Skills development in the field of nuclear science and technology was crucial. Kenyan universities had been collaborating with the Agency in developing curricula in nuclear technology. The training courses, fellowships, scientific visits, expert missions and equipment provided by the Agency to Kenyan institutions were highly appreciated. Kenya supported technical cooperation for the 2009–2011 programme cycle within the framework of AFRA, and appreciated the efforts made in addressing the problems of the AFRA Member States. Kenya pledged its full share of the TCF target for 2009, and remained fully committed to supporting the work of the Agency.

53. Mr YOUNIS (Egypt) said that Egypt had been cooperating closely with the Agency for more than fifty years on developing peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and noted that technical cooperation activities in his country covered areas such as the efficient use of research reactors and the training of human resources to operate such reactors and related facilities.

54. As water shortages and poor water quality were major challenges in many countries, it was essential to study the impact of climate change on water resources to assist the countries concerned in water resource management. The Agency had been helping the countries of the Nile Basin, including Egypt, to assess groundwater replenishment from rainwater and surface water, and to detect sources of pollution. Egypt had been working closely with the Agency on water resource development and the use of isotope technology, particularly on a project for the integrated management of the Nubian sandstone aquifer.

55. Egypt also continued to cooperate with the Agency on enhancing the quality of agricultural output through the use of gamma radiation to produce high-yield mutant crop varieties and the application of nuclear technology in the farming of desert regions, for instance through the use of an electronic accelerator to produce agricultural hydrogel from polymerized materials with a high moisture absorption capacity.

56. Cooperation on the integrated management of radiation sources included a project to establish a database of depleted radiation sources in Egypt, the introduction of regulations to ensure high-quality management of radioactive waste, and the training of human resources to deal with any accident that might occur during the use, transport or storage of such waste.

57. On 12 December 2006, President Mubarak had inaugurated a new stage in Egypt's use of nuclear energy as a strategic option for electricity generation and had launched a public dialogue on the subject. Egypt was cooperating with the Agency on the preparation of the necessary studies. An integrated cooperation plan had been drawn up with Egyptian experts with a view to assessing the required infrastructure and ways and means of putting it in place. It also covered support for the drafting of legislation pursuant to which an independent nuclear safety body would be established in accordance with international standards. In the light of the outcome of the studies and public dialogue, President Mubarak had announced on 29 October 2007 the strategic decision to build a number of nuclear power plants. Work on building the first plant would begin shortly in cooperation with international companies and the Agency. Egypt had called for tenders from international consultancy firms in February 2008 and had received seven bids, which were currently being assessed. Its cooperation with the Agency would ensure the transparency and efficiency of the project and would assist the authorities in restructuring nuclear bodies and the nuclear safety regime and in training human resources.

58. Egypt supported plans to enhance the effectiveness of the Agency's technical cooperation programme and to focus on projects having a tangible yield and an end-user. It also supported the idea of early consultations with Member States on project details, the preparation of a future project

framework for each State, and the establishment of guidelines for national focal points in order to improve the quality of communication between stakeholders and the Secretariat. He emphasized, however, the need to ensure that the resources available for technical cooperation matched requirements, and kept pace with the ever-increasing appropriations for other Agency activities. The voluntary nature of contributions to the TCF was a major obstacle to efficient programme planning, and serious steps should be taken to remedy that shortcoming.

59. The Agency should also seek to devise new arrangements that would ensure a fairer apportionment of the mounting costs of implementing safeguards. The wide gap in the approach to financing technical cooperation activities, on the one hand, and safeguards, on the other, raised basic questions about the Agency's priorities.

60. Egypt had opened up its facilities and reactors and shared its experience in peaceful uses of nuclear energy with other Arab and African countries. It strongly supported a whole range of projects under the AFRA Agreement. Moreover, it had hosted the AFRA Regional High Level Policy Review Seminar from 25 to 29 December 2007 in the city of Aswan. The Seminar, which was organized in cooperation with the Agency, had been attended by representatives of 32 African States in addition to Egypt, and had provided an opportunity to review AFRA's achievements and launch a dialogue on its strategic aims.

61. The existing safeguards regime failed to ensure nuclear non-proliferation because comprehensive safeguards were not applied to States that had not acceded to the NPT, and because no serious steps had been taken by the five nuclear-weapon States to comply with Article VI of the Treaty concerning disarmament. It was essential to ensure the universality of the NPT and to apply comprehensive safeguards agreements to nuclear facilities in all nations of the world. Referring to continuing attempts to universalize the additional protocol and turn it into the prevailing standard for verification of the non-existence of undeclared nuclear activities, he reaffirmed Egypt's position that the additional protocol was an optional instrument whose implementation depended on a sovereign decision by Member States. No attempt should be made to universalize it until comprehensive safeguards agreements had been universalized.

62. He expressed concern at the Agency's diminishing role in supporting the international community's efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament, although the Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2006–2011 included among the goals of verification that the Agency should participate, as appropriate, in nuclear arms reduction and disarmament initiatives, in accordance with Article II of its Statute. He urged all States to address the issue with the requisite vigour.

63. The current status of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime in the Middle East posed a serious threat to both regional and international security. Although 16 years had passed since the adoption by the General Conference of a resolution calling on all States in the Middle East to apply comprehensive safeguards, Israel had still failed to take any steps towards achieving that goal. The great powers had also failed to take action, although Egypt and all other Member States in the region had ratified the NPT and were implementing safeguards. As a result, the entire region was being drawn into an arms race because the continued possession by a single State of a huge arsenal of weapons of mass destruction gave the other countries of the region the right to seek means of countering the threat. The Agency's credibility depended to a large extent on the seriousness with which its Member States sought to achieve an aim, the importance of which was a matter of consensus. The Conference must reaffirm the responsibility of the Agency, as the executive arm of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime, to deal fairly and in a balanced manner with the draft resolutions relating to the nuclear threat in the Middle East. Egypt had again sponsored a draft resolution, which had been adopted by consensus until the consensus had been broken at the last two sessions on unreasonable grounds. Moreover, a link had been forged with the Arab States' legitimate

efforts to have a resolution on Israel's nuclear capabilities adopted. At the current session Egypt had sought to produce a text that took account of some of the comments on the resolution's wording as evidence of its good intentions and its desire to restore consensus. He trusted that the Member States would respond favourably to those efforts.

64. Mr MARTÍNEZ (Uruguay) said that the use of nuclear technology in Uruguay had considerable social impact; 80% of nuclear applications were used in medicine for both diagnosis and treatment, in particular in the fight against cancer.

65. Uruguay complied in a transparent manner with its safeguards agreement and additional protocol, and had taken a series of steps relevant to its cooperation with the Agency. In 2005, it had established the National Regulatory Authority for Radiation Protection, approved a national radiological emergency response plan and ratified the Joint Convention. In 2006, it had joined the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies and had ratified the ARCAL Agreement. Uruguay was the first Latin American country to approve a national strategy for radioactive waste management; it had drafted an INSSP and had hosted the first Latin American regional workshop on nuclear security in July 2008. A draft law on radiation protection was currently before the Senate. Uruguay also hoped to become a member of the Board of Governors shortly.

66. Uruguay was grateful to the Agency for its ongoing assistance in the area of capacity-building and training activities and the provision of state-of-the-art equipment, which had helped the country to meet the requirements and challenges associated with the peaceful use of advanced nuclear technology.

67. As one of the first signatories to the Tlatelolco Treaty, Uruguay was firmly committed to peace and nuclear disarmament, and considered that conflicts should always be resolved through dialogue without recourse to the use of force. Every possible effort should be made to rid the world of nuclear weapons; multilateralism should be seen as a fundamental tool for addressing an issue as sensitive as the use of nuclear energy.

68. The Director General's visit to Uruguay in December 2007 had been of great importance to his country. It had helped to strengthen the efforts to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and had deepened commitment to the Agency's objectives at all levels. Uruguay had embarked on a study of the viability of using nuclear power to produce electricity. The possibility of nuclear power generation fell within Uruguay's national strategic energy objectives, since it would contribute to diversifying the energy mix at a time of growing consumption. His Government had decided to adopt a transparent, scientifically substantiated and participatory approach that would yield the best strategic decisions. Uruguay looked to the Agency for support and reliable and objective cooperation in that process.

69. Mr KAHUURE (Namibia) said that Namibia had concluded its second CPF with the Agency during the past year, thus laying the foundation for future technical cooperation. He trusted that the lessons learnt from implementing the first CPF would be exploited, and noted that the development of national capacity and capability was essential in order to achieve the CPF's objectives. Human resource development was considered to be key to the fulfilment of national development goals, and he called upon the Agency to assist Namibia in remedying shortcomings in that area. He hoped that the efforts being made in evaluating CPF processes would lead to reforms to enhance the continued monitoring and evaluation of bilateral cooperation, and result in improved operational practices both within the Agency and in Member States. Namibia was pleased that the Agency encouraged the development of CPFs that were consistent with national development goals.

70. His country called upon the Agency to synchronize its operational practices with other United Nations agencies, particularly in areas of relevance to the Millennium Development Goals. A good

example of successful international cooperation was the Joint Division, which was currently being reviewed by FAO. The cooperative partnership between the Agency and the FAO was important to his country, which relied on the technical capabilities of both agencies to achieve national priorities in the areas of livestock disease management, soil conservation, improvement of crop varieties and water resources management. He appealed to the Agency to do its utmost to retain and strengthen cooperation with FAO, and urged it to undertake similar cooperative efforts with WHO in regard to cancer control, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria programmes. Radiation therapy and nuclear medicine unquestionably continued to contribute significantly to the management of non-communicable diseases, and the Agency should continue to strengthen national capabilities in those areas. Furthermore, his Government would like to see better cooperation with WHO to ensure that nuclear applications played a meaningful role in addressing both communicable and non-communicable diseases.

71. Nuclear and radiation safety was an important pillar of the Agency's mandate and the Agency's guidance and capacity-building efforts in that area were commendable. It was vital to establish an effective and efficient regulatory framework to ensure that the peaceful use of nuclear technology did not pose any undue risk to the population. Namibia was working towards the implementation of a legislative and regulatory framework in compliance with international recommendations and standards, in particular the recommendations of the IRRS mission. Continued assistance from the Agency to help Namibia achieve that goal would be appreciated. His Government supported the collaborative efforts of Member States in the African Region and in the Southern African Development Community to strengthen collaborative efforts to develop common approaches and share resources for the enhancement and standardization of nuclear and radiation safety in the region.

72. His Government was firmly committed to meeting its international obligations by ratifying treaties and conventions under the Agency's auspices. The appropriate legislation was now in place in Namibia to provide for the establishment of a national entity responsible for facilitating the process of ratification of treaties and conventions pertaining to nuclear and radiation safety. A comprehensive safeguards agreement would be among the first international agreements considered for ratification by his country.

73. The use of nuclear power in Namibia could help to address current and future electricity needs and might further stimulate industrial development for the benefit of the population, and was an option that would be vigorously investigated. With the nuclear renaissance, the uranium mining sector in Namibia was experiencing accelerated growth. His Government was committed to ensuring that the people of Namibia benefited from the country's natural resources, and would develop the policies and necessary legislative framework and capacity to achieve that goal. National projects had been proposed to address those issues, and he hoped the Agency would respond adequately to the country's needs.

74. Mr FAHMI (Iraq) recalled that the growing demand for nuclear energy had prompted the Agency to set up a Commission of Eminent Persons to discuss the Agency's role during the period up to 2020 and beyond. The recommendations in the Commission's report contained many new ideas. While Iraq appreciated the work done, it felt that some of the subjects addressed called for further study and discussion in order to develop a balanced framework that would enable the Agency to meet the basic demands of its Member States.

75. His Government commended the Agency's support under the technical cooperation programme for projects in Member States, including Iraq, especially the clean-up of destroyed nuclear installations, agricultural pest control, enhancement of crop yields, soil improvement, groundwater studies and the development of human resources. While Iraq was grateful for the Agency's assistance in developing its nuclear knowledge base, it required greater support for a number of national projects,

such as the use of nuclear technology to detect landmines, which had constituted a serious problem in Iraq since the 1980s and an obstacle to agricultural development in a large part of the country, not to mention the rising human toll. The number of landmines was currently estimated at 25 million.

76. His Government appreciated the Agency's humanitarian work as reflected in the PACT programme, under which nuclear technology had produced promising results in early cancer detection and therapy. Iraq was therefore seeking assistance in alleviating the suffering of the growing number of its citizens who had fallen victim to the disease in recent years for various reasons, particularly environmental pollution. Iraq also hoped for greater assistance in disposing of radioactive waste from destroyed nuclear installations and radiation pollution in the southern part of the country.

77. In general, Iraq had strong expectations of closer cooperation with the Agency in the context of regional technical cooperation in the areas of health, water resources, agriculture, radiation prevention and training in medical physics. It also hoped for more training opportunities and scientific visits for Iraqi personnel.

78. The Iraqi Government supported international action aimed at nuclear non-proliferation and prevention of the use of nuclear energy for non-peaceful purposes, especially in the Middle East. It therefore attached great importance to the Agency's role in applying the comprehensive safeguards regime to all States without exception. It stressed the need for Israel to ratify the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards as a first step towards building confidence among the countries of the region and promoting a just and lasting peace.

79. Iraq also attached great importance to the prevention of nuclear terrorism and had taken many steps of a legislative and technical nature to that end, in particular action to control radioactive sources and to prevent illicit trafficking of nuclear material and radioactive sources, the development of controls at border crossings and the strengthening of the nuclear material accounting system. His Government urged the Agency to provide more assistance for the training of regulatory bodies in Member States and the strengthening of their protection systems.

80. Iraq had taken steps during the current year to sign an additional protocol and the CTBT, and would shortly embark on the procedures necessary to sign the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

Ms Gervais-Vidricaire (Canada), Vice-President, took the Chair.

81. Mr EGUIGUREN (Chile) said that his country attached the utmost importance to, and participated actively in, the Agency's activities in the areas of non-proliferation, safeguards, technical cooperation and nuclear safety. Chile agreed that nuclear energy must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and advocated complete disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. It had signed and ratified international instruments pertaining to safety, disarmament and non-proliferation, including the NPT, and the Tlatelolco Treaty, and continued to support the establishment of NWFZs in other regions. It was essential that the CTBT, which his country had already ratified, enter into force as soon as possible, and he called on all Annex 2 States to ratify that instrument.

82. Universal adherence to the additional protocol would significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's safeguards system. Since Chile's additional protocol had entered into force in April 2004, his country had complied fully with the schedule established by the Agency for the submission of declarations and the implementation of inspections. Noting that a strong legal framework had to be the basis for a more secure and predictable international scenario, he said that Chile had expressed its willingness to hold talks on the implementation of integrated safeguards. Chile taken a number of initiatives in the area of safeguards and non-proliferation, including the workshop entitled: "The Nuclear Challenge" held in Santiago in September 2008, which sought to develop a

common regional position on issues and would make a tangible contribution to the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

83. Chile was party to international instruments in the area of nuclear safety and security, including the Assistance Convention and the CPPNM. Noting that the Agency's safety and security guidelines had facilitated the creation of a safety culture, he said that consideration might also be given to the preparation of guidelines for communication management in the event of a radiological or nuclear emergency.

84. Chile attached high priority to the safe transport of nuclear material, and had insisted that the issue remain on the Agency's agenda. It would continue to support actively initiatives, including General Conference resolutions, aimed at strengthening the transport safety regime. The dialogue that had been taking place within the framework of the Agency between representatives of coastal and shipping States was highly beneficial.

85. The Agency's technical cooperation activities had contributed to strengthening and improving Chile's regulatory infrastructure in the area of nuclear and radiation safety. With assistance from the Agency, Chile had organized two regional training courses on advanced detection equipment and medical response to a nuclear and radiological emergency. In addition, the Chilean Nuclear Energy Commission had, in cooperation with the Agency, organized a workshop on integrated management systems in May, as well as a regional training course on radiotracer applications in mining, mineral processing and related environmental systems in March 2008. A workshop concerning the sustainable management of natural resources in the Apalta Valley had also been held in the city of Santa Cruz in September.

86. In February 2007, his Government had set up an interdisciplinary working group composed of 12 independent scientists to study the feasibility of using nuclear energy for power generation. He thanked the Agency for its continued valuable assistance in that regard.

87. His Government had supported the Agency's work aimed at determining the non-diversion of nuclear material and technologies to non-peaceful purposes in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran should extend its cooperation by fulfilling its obligations under relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

88. Chile appreciated the Agency's activities relating to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. It had delegation noted with concern the difficulties being experienced, but was hopeful that the dismantlement process would be concluded successfully and that the DPRK would return to the NPT.

89. Chile welcomed the Director General's initiative to establish the Commission of Eminent Persons to consider the nature and scope of the Agency's programme up to 2020 and beyond. It was important to reflect on the Agency's role in a changing global environment, and Chile was willing to participate actively in that process.

90. Mr RÓNAKY (Hungary) welcomed the Director General's initiative to establish a Commission of Eminent Persons with a view to revising the structure and operation of the Agency. The working organs of the Agency were facing increasing difficulty in reaching agreement with all interested parties on issues such as setting the TCF target budget or addressing special safeguards matters, and there was clearly a need for change. The Commission's recommendations report gave further impetus to the work ahead.

91. At a time of growing international concerns about nuclear weapons proliferation, Hungary attributed great importance to strengthening the Agency's safeguards system. Comprehensive safeguards agreements together with the additional protocol were the backbone of that system and

constituted the current verification standard. Hungary had been among the first States to have begun implementing integrated safeguards in 2004, and it supported all efforts aimed at strengthening the Agency's safeguards capabilities further. To that end, it continued to provide training programmes for inspectors and had conducted a complementary access exercise under the additional protocol. It had also extended the scope of its internal central accountancy system for sealed and unsealed radioactive sources to include radioactive waste, and had introduced electronic communication channels to enable licensees to report through a standardized web surface. His country was happy to share its many years of safeguards experience with all parties ready to conclude an additional protocol.

92. As a country with a significant nuclear industry, Hungary attached high priority to nuclear safety and security. After thorough negotiations and meticulous preparations, the highly enriched spent fuel from the Budapest Research Reactor was to be returned to the Russian Federation. That outcome was a major achievement given the complexity of the negotiations, and he thanked all those who had contributed to the success of the project. Hungary was also assisting a neighbouring country in the repatriation of spent fuel from a research reactor.

93. Hungary had participated in the third review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The report it had submitted had been accepted, and several aspects had been deemed good practice. His Government would do its utmost to maintain a high-level of safety performance.

94. With regard to events related to the operation of the Paks nuclear power plant, he reported that the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority, together with the operators, had concluded the periodic safety review of the plant and of the interim spent fuel storage facility. The assessments had shown that sufficient and necessary safety measures were being observed at both facilities. The Paks nuclear power plant, which had produced 36.7% of all electricity in Hungary in 2007, was in the process of a power uprate, and by the end of 2009 all four units would each be able to produce 500 MW (e). Work was also being undertaken to extend the lifetime of the facility. His Government was cooperating with the Agency to take advantage of existing experience in the area of licence renewal, and identify best practices to ensure the safe operation of the units beyond their designated lifetime. The interim spent fuel storage facility had also been granted a unified operating licence for modules 1 to 16, which made it easier to address issues common to all modules.

95. The Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority and the licensees had concluded the revision of the nuclear safety regulations, meeting the safety reference levels developed by WENRA. The new safety regulations would be published shortly.

96. In the field of emergency preparedness, he said that Hungary's revised and modernized national emergency response plan that would serve as a guide in the event of a nuclear or radiological emergency had recently been approved by all partner authorities.

97. The national radioactive waste repository near Bataapati would accommodate low and medium level radioactive waste from the Paks nuclear power plant. The licensing procedure had commenced following preliminary approval by Parliament, and the competent authority had issued the building licence in June 2008. The building of the repository was now under way and the operating licence for the part of the repository above ground had recently been granted.

98. As a donor to the PACT programme, Hungary placed emphasis on improving the irradiation capabilities of its oncology and radiotherapy centres. With the help of the Agency, a thorax phantom had been circulated among the centres, making it possible to increase accuracy and adjust the dose rate. The results of the measurements were being evaluated and a summary report was being prepared for submission to the Agency later in 2008.

99. In accordance with Hungary's commitments to balancing growing energy needs and protecting the environment, Parliament had adopted a decision on the energy policy for the period 2008-2020, under which the Government was instructed to start preparation for a new nuclear power plant or new unit(s), and to submit proposals to the Parliament in due course.

100. In the area of technical cooperation, Hungary had agreed to host 21 workshops, technical meetings and training courses in 2008 organized through the Agency's Department of Technical Cooperation, attesting to its commitment to reciprocate the technical assistance it had received from the Agency. His Government had decided to pledge its share of the TCF for 2009, and called on all Member States to pay their share in full and on time. Specific regional needs should be taken into account to avoid a slowdown of performance at a critical time.

101. Mr DJELIC (Serbia) said that Serbia was a country in transition whose new Government had assumed office in July 2008. His country stood firm in its commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear technologies and energy in compliance with the NPT; the fundamental principles and main goals of the Agency; and the safe and secure application of nuclear technologies for the benefit of human society in accordance with global standards and requirements. Serbia would honour its obligations under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement concluded with the European Union in April 2008, which included obligations pertaining to nuclear safety and non-proliferation.

102. Further expansion of its membership would help the Agency to become a more global organization, better able to perform its role. In that regard, he welcomed the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Independent State of Papua New Guinea and the Sultanate of Oman as new members.

103. A strengthened safeguards system and enhanced verification role for the Agency, including through the application of the additional protocol, were essential in preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and would help address the current challenges to the NPT regime. Serbia would sign and ratify its additional protocol as soon as the new law on ionizing radiation protection and nuclear safety, which was fully consistent with European Union and other international standards, had been approved by Parliament.

104. In view of the risk of possible acts of nuclear terrorism, Serbia was making further efforts to improve the mechanisms for preventing and responding to illicit trafficking of nuclear material and to strengthen the physical protection of nuclear and radioactive materials. The coordinating role played by the Agency in that regard was essential, and his country fully supported relevant Agency programmes and the NSF.

105. Serbia had been among the first countries to have signed and ratified the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and had also signed the amendment to the CPPNM. In the interests of global safety and security, his country would greatly appreciate further assistance from the Agency and other international actors concerning the Vinča Institute nuclear decommissioning programme, particularly in connection with the removal of spent fuel from the RA research reactor. Many international actors and the Agency itself had recognized the importance of the project, which his Government viewed as the top nuclear priority. It was considered as a continuation of the successful removal of fresh fuel to the Russian Federation undertaken in 2002, in cooperation with the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the NTI. In early 2008, Serbia had also conducted the safe removal, conditioning and storage of radium sources from the Institute of Oncology and Radiology in Belgrade, with support from the Agency and assistance received as part of EU/IAEA joint action. His country looked to the Agency and its Member States for support for completion of the removal of spent fuel from the Vinča Institute by September and he invited all interested parties to attend the donor conference for Serbia the following day.

106. His country strongly supported further improvement of technical cooperation, which was one of the milestones of the Agency's activities and had greatly benefited his country. The Agency's expertise, consultancy and assistance in providing the necessary equipment were crucial to achieve project goals in several areas, and were indispensable for Serbia to accomplish the complex decommissioning programme at the Vinča Institute. Serbia's needs had been further reflected in a set of national and regional projects prepared in collaboration with Agency experts. He was pleased to announce that Serbia had regularly fulfilled its financial obligations towards the Agency and would continue to do so. Lastly, his delegation fully endorsed the Agency's Annual Report for 2007 and the Regular Budget for 2009.

107. Ms DRÁBOVÁ (Czech Republic) said that the Czech Republic very much appreciated the timely release of the Director General's background report entitled 20/20 Vision for the Future, an important document indicating the Agency's future direction. She agreed that all Member States, in cooperation with the Agency, must strengthen the international non-proliferation regime by: upholding preventive measures to lower the risks of nuclear accidents and nuclear terrorism; preventing the spread of nuclear weapons by the use of export control legislation based on the principles of the Zangger Committee and by implementing multilateral nuclear assurances principles in practice; using the Agency's verification skills for future developments in the area of nuclear disarmament, for example for the verification of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

108. As one of the States with integrated safeguards and credible assurances on the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme confirmed by the Agency, the Czech Republic understood the need to increase the Agency's verification budget. The obligation to support such an increase — at least for the NPT States Parties — stemmed from the preamble of the NPT, and the time had come to update Annex II to the additional protocol to reflect the technical progress made in nuclear civil trade. The current list dated back to the 1990s and could not give the Agency necessary means to keep its verification tools updated. That meant less security for all.

109. Her Government also understood that strengthening global nuclear security was impossible without adequate knowledge sharing and exchanges of best practices. That should go hand in hand with the establishment of the Agency's programme for acquiring the best experts in the area of nuclear sciences in general.

110. Her country was very serious about the supporting non-proliferation regime and regularly contributed to the NSF. The Czech Republic had been actively involved in the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, and the first repatriation of spent HEU fuel from research reactors in the Czech Republic had been carried out in December 2007. The Government of the Czech Republic had recently decided to support the safe repatriation of spent fuel from the Vinča RA Research Reactor in Serbia to the Russian Federation, and was going to make a total contribution of approximately US \$1 million over the following three years in view of the importance of that activity.

111. Recognizing the need to enhance the Agency's analytical capabilities and in reaction to the urgent call for the modernization of the Safeguards Analytical Laboratory in Seibersdorf, the Czech Republic had recently officially offered the Agency its own premises and capacities for performing analyses of safeguards samples in the future. Using or investing in adequate capacity in countries near the Agency's Headquarters might be a cost-effective solution for the Agency. The Nuclear Research Institute at Řež, near Prague, a member of the Agency's Network of Analytical Laboratories, had launched a large structural project in cooperation with the European Union, part of which was designed to upgrade its Central Analytical Laboratory. The aim was to extend the scope of services provided in the area of environmental samples analysis, essential for the fulfilling Agency's obligations in the area of safeguards implementation and controlling the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In cooperation with the Agency, the certified laboratory could become one of its

laboratories, ensuring an independent and timely analysis of safeguards samples. The Czech Republic had already initiated discussions with the Secretariat in that regard and looked forward to further dialogue.

112. The technical cooperation programme remained key to the further development of participating Member States and would continue to be so in the medium term. In Europe in particular, it was increasingly seen as a unique platform for exchanges of information, experience and know-how on a regional level, rather than a procurement instrument or tool for responding to individual national needs alone. The Czech Republic had, therefore, been focusing on regional projects and invited other European countries that might benefit from knowledge-sharing to become actively involved in the technical cooperation programme. Her Government very much welcomed the involvement of other international organizations, including the European Commission, and the synergy established with them thus far, and hoped that it would be further strengthened. In line with the changing approach to the technical cooperation programme, the Czech Republic also continued to offer voluntary contributions to support various activities in other Member States. In identifying possible projects, it cooperated closely both with the Secretariat and potential target countries in order to address their needs in the most effective way. Having already provided assistance on a long-term basis, her country preferred earmarked contributions that ensured the consistency and continuity of activities carried out with its donations, and helped it to monitor the use of the financial resources directly and independently. The Czech Republic systematically contributed to the enhancement of the nuclear safety of nuclear power plants in Armenia and Ukraine and supported the strengthening of radiation protection in medicine and radioactive waste management in priority countries, above all in the region.

113. The changing situation in Europe might raise the possibility of reallocating some technical cooperation funds from one region to another in the near future. In that context, the Czech Republic would very much appreciate the timely involvement of the Members States in all crucial discussions relating to financial, budgetary and strategic matters, thereby contributing to greater transparency in the decision-making process and to more effective planning.

114. The Czech Republic also supported PACT, under which it had initiated comprehensive assistance to Moldova, with a view to improving the regulatory body infrastructure and performance, and possibly upgrading radiotherapy services.

115. She concluded by reassuring the Secretariat of the Czech Republic's continuous full support and cooperation.

116. Mr RISTORI (European Commission) said that energy was at the top of the EU's political agenda, owing to its link with climate change and the growing importance of security of energy supply. A majority of the EU's member countries were users of nuclear power, and a majority of the EU's citizens recognized the importance of nuclear energy in reducing CO₂ emissions and improving energy security. The EU was the world's largest producer of electricity through nuclear power, with 146 nuclear power plants. It was vital that the nuclear power industry meet the highest standards in safety, security and safeguards.

117. The joint statement by the EU and the Agency of 7 May 2008 had established the conditions for closer collaboration between Euratom and the Agency, with regular and frequent high-level contacts. The two organizations would work together on a complementary basis to strengthen safety and security, and to generalize safeguards and the additional protocol. The joint project by the EU, the Agency and the Ukraine on the safety of nuclear facilities in that country was an excellent example of such cooperation.

118. Starting in November 2008, the European Commission would put forward a new strategic analysis of energy policy and a programme of nuclear modernization which stressed energy security

and the role of public authorities in making the necessary investments in clean energy sources, in connection with the new emissions trading system. Nuclear safety would be subject to particular attention, and a high-level group had been set up to address it, with the involvement of Norway, Switzerland and the Agency. The EU intended to be a model for the world in turning nuclear safety standards into community-wide legislation.

119. Waste management continued to be an issue of great importance for public acceptance of nuclear power. Technological solutions, such as deep geological disposal, did exist, but national authorities had to take adequate measures in that area. The EU also attached great importance to the decommissioning of old nuclear facilities, which was an issue that had to be addressed in technical and financial terms as existing plants came to the end of their service lives in the coming 20 years. The European Commission was also working to harmonize national conventions on responsibility for nuclear accidents. The Bratislava-Prague European Nuclear Energy Forum brought together all those involved from the public, institutional, industrial and NGO spheres to address questions of opportunity, risk and transparency.

120. The European Commission fully supported the NPT; it would use the new Instrument for Stability and Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation, and would promote the full implementation of the additional protocol. In the field of radiation protection, the Commission hoped to see a significant effort towards harmonizing nuclear medicine and medical applications of ionizing radiation, including a seminar on the matter to be organized together with the Secretariat.

121. The Commission's seventh research and development programme would continue efforts in Generation IV fission development, and in developing sustainable nuclear power, which would be necessary for establishing a link between the public and private sector. It would also continue to support the ITER project.

122. Nuclear power was an important option for ensuring base-load electricity generation, as required by industry. By 2020, the EU would produce almost two-thirds of its electricity without emitting CO₂, through nuclear power and renewable energy sources. Safety, security, non-proliferation, and close cooperation with the Agency would continue to be essential in that effort.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.