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President: Ms TOBING (Indonesia)

Later: Mr ENKHSAIKHAN (Mongolia)

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Abbreviations used in this record:

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
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
CANDU	Canada deuterium-uranium [reactor]
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
ICT	information and communications technology
INDAG	International Nuclear Desalination Advisory Group
LDC	least developed country
LEU	low-enriched uranium
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
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PATTEC	Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SAGSI	Standing Advisory Group on Safeguards Implementation
SAGTAC	Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation
SCCC	(Argentine-Brazilian) Common System of Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
SIT	sterile insect technique
SPECT	single photon emission computed tomography
SQP	small quantities protocol
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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

1. Mr UGOKWE (Nigeria), commending the Agency and its Director General on their excellent work, said that the comprehensive reports on the Agency's activities over the preceding year gave cause for hope that cooperation and dialogue among Member States, underpinned by technological development and adherence to the basic tenets of safety and security and safeguards, would continue to engender peace and progress in the world.

2. His delegation was grateful for the support and cooperation it had received during his country's tenure as a member of the Board of Governors and he assured incoming Board members of his delegation's support and cooperation.

3. Over the preceding five decades, the major pillars of the Agency's work had been enhanced continuously with a view to harnessing the benefits of nuclear technology in an environmentally sustainable manner, while maintaining international peace and security. As a developing country faced with the daunting task of providing for the basic needs of its people, Nigeria was aligning its development objectives with the Agency's efforts. It had been participating in the Agency's technical cooperation programme for over three decades and had benefited particularly in the areas of human resources development and capacity building. His Government was grateful for the Agency's assistance in the fields of energy planning, food and agriculture, medicine and human health (particularly PACT), industry, mineral exploration and exploitation, environmental management, water resources management, and electricity generation, inter alia. Nigeria would continue to partner with the Agency to develop sustainable programmes and promote regional cooperation through AFRA.

4. He thanked the Agency for its assistance with the successful procurement and installation of the 1.7 MeV tandem accelerator at the Centre for Energy Research and Development of the Obafemi Awolowo University, which had been commissioned recently. The facility would be used for basic and applied research in food and agriculture, environmental studies, industrial studies, materials science and manpower training, inter alia.

5. Energy was known to be a major driver of industrialization, which was a critical index of human development. Many developing countries had initiated programmes to deploy nuclear power plants for electricity generation to meet growing energy demands. Nigeria was greatly encouraged by the Agency's commitment to supporting developing Member States in their efforts to introduce nuclear power plants in their energy mix. Such support had to be transparent and without conditions within the framework of the Agency, and Member States should have unfettered access to the development and deployment of the technology.

6. Nigeria's President had made it a priority to diversify the country's energy base to spur on development. In that connection, his country had started implementing a programme to introduce nuclear energy into the energy mix and he thanked the Agency for playing a catalytic role in that endeavour. To further the aforementioned objectives, Nigeria, in partnership with the Agency, had started to identify and characterize possible sites for the country's first nuclear power plants, to develop the human resources needed for the implementation of a nuclear power programme, to develop and strengthen the requisite regulatory platform, and to develop a robust legal framework for a sustainable nuclear power industry.

7. His country had acceded to all relevant laws, treaties and conventions and would pursue the implementation of its nuclear electricity programme in full compliance with the Agency's codes and guidelines on safety, security and safeguards. Nigeria could only partner with Member States that shared its commitment to the basic tenets of the Agency and its respect for international peace and security. It looked forward to continued partnership and cooperation with the Agency and the international community to achieve its national objective to deploy nuclear power plants for electricity generation within the shortest possible timeframe.

8. Nigeria had demonstrated its commitment to compliance with international legal and regulatory requirements for safety, security and safeguards, as illustrated by its signing of the NPT in 1968, its support for the indefinite extension of that Treaty 1995, its signing of a comprehensive safeguards agreement in 1988, and its ratification of the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident in 1990.

9. As part of its efforts to establish a sustained culture of nuclear safety, security and safeguards, in 2006 the country had promulgated national regulations on the safety and security of radioactive sources, a national policy on radioactive waste, and national waste management regulations, thus showing its commitment to addressing radioactive waste issues in a coordinated and cooperative manner.

10. With a population of over 140 million and an estimated cancer incidence rate of about 100 000 new cases annually, Nigeria's five radiotherapy centres and two nuclear medicine facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer were grossly inadequate. The country had therefore embarked on upgrading existing centres and establishing six additional radiotherapy centres and eight new nuclear medicine facilities. It had recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Agency to integrate radiotherapy and nuclear medicine into the National Cancer Plan for the period 2008–2013, which should enhance the use of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine for the management of cancer in the country. Nigeria was also cooperating with the Agency and other development partners in the training of personnel and building of the capacity to train professionals locally in order to ensure the efficient delivery of services.

11. With Agency assistance, Nigeria had developed significant capacity for the application of nuclear techniques. It looked forward to the support and cooperation of the Agency in building regional and subregional capacities in order to enhance regional integration in the development and use of the various nuclear technology facilities in the country.

12. His country remained committed to the basic tenets of the NPT. All of its nuclear activities served purely peaceful purposes and were fully safeguarded. Its commitment to non-proliferation was further affirmed by its untiring efforts, in concert with other countries, to promote the full ratification and entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty. Nigeria appreciated the Agency's pivotal role in promoting non-proliferation. It was concerned, however, that certain core NPT provisions, including Article IV, were being subjected to redefinition and reinterpretation.

13. Proliferation concerns were best addressed in a transparent, comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner through multilateralism. The absence of a demonstrated commitment to nuclear disarmament on the part of some nuclear-weapon States was not only a drawback for the full implementation of NPT obligations by all State Parties, it was discriminatory and could erode the confidence of Member States in the Agency's safeguards and verification system.

14. Nigeria appreciated the Agency's continued support and reaffirmed its abiding commitment to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for sustainable development. He thanked the Director General for his unrelenting efforts to advance nuclear non-proliferation through diplomacy.

15. Mr SYCHOV (Belarus) said that ever more countries were expressing an interest in nuclear power and nuclear technology and many had already embarked on new nuclear power programmes. At the preceding General Conference, his country had indicated that it was reviewing several options for development for its energy sector, one of which was to establish its own nuclear power system. In conducting that analysis, Belarus had taken into consideration many factors and circumstances, such as energy security, reduction of carbon emissions, increased confidence in the safety of nuclear power plants, economic advisability and the competitiveness of nuclear power.

16. Based on those and others important factors, in January 2008 Belarus had taken the decision to construct a nuclear power plant. Activities were under way to put in place the necessary capacity, legislation was being adopted for the nuclear sector, the nuclear and radiation safety regulatory structure improved, and a site for the construction of the nuclear power plant selected. Belarus appreciated its fruitful cooperation with the Agency on all issues related to the launching of a national nuclear power programme and looked forward to further collaboration to ensure the project's safety and reliability.

17. It was highly important that the Agency remain at the forefront of international efforts to provide assistance to States embarking on nuclear power programmes and his country welcomed the Agency's efficient response to the growing expectations of Member States in the area of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and in particular its preparation and publication of a series of documents to assist States introducing nuclear power. Agency assistance in that field, which was of particular importance for creating the bases for safe operation, should be systematic and comprehensive.

18. Nuclear power development could not be considered in isolation from the energy sector as a whole, and resolving the energy problem was essential for sustainable development. The issue of fair access to energy was taking on central significance throughout the world and energy issues were being considered in many international organizations and forums.

19. For its part, Belarus was striving to make its own contribution to solving interrelated problems in the energy field. At the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly, it had proposed the creation of a global mechanism for the transfer of alternative and renewable energy technologies. The initiative aimed at promoting collaboration on technology transfer in the fields of energy efficiency and new and renewable energy sources. Such technologies were concentrated in a few countries. The creation of a mechanism within the framework of the United Nations which would guarantee access for all countries to those technologies, making them the common property of all mankind, would make major change possible. Renewable energy sources would become a basis for collaboration, not competition. Within the framework of that initiative, Belarus was proposing to hold thematic debates on the issue of alternative and renewable energy technologies during the 63rd session of the General Assembly. He called upon IAEA Member States to support that proposal. It was clear that a comprehensive, synergistic approach to discussing energy issues was required and Belarus shared the opinion of the Director General that active, coordinated political action was needed in the energy field, and in such related spheres as socio-economic development, climate change, and combating poverty.

20. Belarus was an active participant in the Agency's technical cooperation programme, under which it had received significant help in fields related to the application of nuclear knowledge and technology. All technical cooperation projects conducted in Belarus aimed at solving priority socio-economic problems. In its CPF, which had been renewed in 2007, Belarus had defined its main technical cooperation priorities, which included the development of a national nuclear power infrastructure, environmental protection, rehabilitation of land contaminated by the Chernobyl accident, and public health issues. Projects currently in progress or planned were fully in line with those priorities.

21. Beginning in 2009, the Agency would be providing assistance with the introduction of nuclear power in Belarus. Cooperation with the Agency was envisaged to train personnel to work in the national nuclear power programme and on the development of a national nuclear safety regulatory system.

22. Furthermore, Belarus intended to continue its active collaboration with the Agency related to the rehabilitation of areas contaminated by the Chernobyl accident. Cooperation in that field was in line with the United Nations Chernobyl strategy, which envisaged the transition of the affected regions to sustainable socio-economic development. At the 62nd session of the General Assembly, the Agency's involvement in those efforts had been highly praised. Belarus expected that the Agency would be actively involved in implementing the United Nations Chernobyl action plan.

23. Its successful cooperation with the Agency had enabled Belarus to offer its expertise and technical capacity in support of the Agency's technical cooperation programme. Each year, Belarus organized international graduate courses in radiation protection and the safety of radiation sources in Minsk. In addition, Belarus's customs and border authorities made their experience in the field of combating of illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive material available to other countries.

24. Belarus supported the strengthening and expansion of the Agency's technical cooperation programme and believed that its funding should be more predictable and assured. In that connection, his country was pleased to note the continuing positive trend in the funding situation for the programme thanks to the coordinated efforts of Member States and the Secretariat. For its part, Belarus had for several years paid its voluntary contributions to the TCF in full and on time, and committed itself to doing so again in 2009.

25. Given the growing interest in nuclear power and growing demands for Agency technical cooperation projects, it was extremely important that the Agency continue to play a key role in nuclear and radiation safety. As a State which had taken the decision to construct its first nuclear power plant, Belarus accorded great attention to nuclear safety issues. It was particularly interested in international collaboration relating to the safe and reliable operation of nuclear installations, and the management of radioactive sources, spent fuel and waste. In that connection, he noted the importance of effective implementation of the most important international legal instruments, above all the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. As a party to both conventions, Belarus took a responsible approach to their implementation and intended to continue to cooperate in efforts to universalize them.

26. Earlier in 2008, the 4th review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety had taken place and had confirmed the interconnection between increased expectations of nuclear energy and the increasing attention given to nuclear safety issues. Ensuring the necessary level of safety and the security of nuclear facilities was an unconditional priority in any State's nuclear power programme. In that context, he stressed the importance of the Agency's safety standards. Belarus considered work carried out at national level to ensure nuclear and radiation safety to be an inseparable part of the Agency's general efforts to establish a global safety regime, and it supported the activities of the Agency and its Secretariat in that field.

27. His country was committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and rigorously met its obligations under the NPT and its safeguards agreement. It attached great importance to strengthening the safeguards system. In signing an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement in 2005, it had reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and strengthening of the Agency's authority in that field.

28. Belarus also recognized the important role of international export control regimes. It had set up an effective national export control system and, as a member of the NSG, it strictly applied NSG guidelines when taking decisions related to the supply of controlled items.

29. His country believed that international non-proliferation efforts should be accompanied by concrete steps in nuclear disarmament, and by confidence-building measures between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States.

30. When considering non-proliferation and disarmament as a whole, it was worth remembering that one of the most important aims was to ensure that nuclear technology was used exclusively for peaceful purposes. Under the NPT and the Agency's Statute, every Member State had the inalienable right to conduct peaceful nuclear activities. Belarus believed that the existing international mechanisms should promote equal and non-discriminatory access for all interested countries to the benefits of nuclear energy.

31. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his country's support for the strengthening of the Agency's status as the leading international organization promoting the safe, reliable and peaceful use of nuclear energy for sustainable development.

32. Mr MSOLLA (United Republic of Tanzania) commended the Director General on his statement which highlighted not only the successes and challenges of the Agency in the preceding year, but also the work before the Agency and the priority actions that urgently needed to be taken to ensure a secure and prosperous future world. He also expressed support for the important message for a safe and sustainably prosperous world delivered by the High Representative for Disarmament on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General.

33. His country was grateful for ongoing technical cooperation projects and hoped that the relationship between the Agency and his country would be sustained and strengthened. It was in the third year of executing its second CPF, which focused on eight priority themes. While not all themes had been implemented as envisaged because of the extreme financial constraints and limitations faced by both the United Republic of Tanzania and the Agency, there had been tangible achievements in the fields of health, food security and water resources management in particular. A good number of people in his country were now familiar with the Agency not just in the safeguards role, but also as an agent for sustainable development. As agreement had been reached on the targets for the TCF for 2009–2011, he hoped that the Agency and Tanzania could finalize the technical cooperation programme for his country for the same period so that implementation of its CPF could be completed. He agreed with the Director General that, in future, the targets for the TCF should be based on priority criteria agreed in advance to avoid the all too familiar contentious and protracted negotiations.

34. Tanzania invited the Agency and its development partners to renegotiate its CPF and prepare the third one, as circumstances had changed: for example, capacity building, human resources development and nuclear knowledge management had gained in importance, and mining of uranium in Tanzania was slowly becoming a reality. In that connection, he called on the Agency to continue and intensify its efforts to support Member States, and in particular LDCs like Tanzania, in capacity building, human resources development and nuclear knowledge management, in line with General Conference resolution GC(48)/RES/13.

35. Tanzania was following with keen interest the growing interest in using nuclear technology to produce electricity and in other potential benefits of nuclear technologies. Statements made by the Director General had prompted his country to prepare a comprehensive nuclear technology policy, which could lead to the country's atomic energy legislation being revised to establish a framework for investment of national resources in that field.

36. Peace and development could long not coexist with abject poverty, and democracy and good governance could not grow amid poverty, diseases and deprivation. Poverty alleviation promoted collective world security, peace and prosperity. His country therefore called on the Agency and the international community to strengthen technical cooperation programmes aimed at harnessing sustainable use of nuclear technology and atomic energy, including nuclear power, for development and poverty alleviation. Strategic applications of nuclear technology in targeted areas, such as sustainable energy development, health, food crop and livestock improvement, and water resources management and sanitation, could contribute immensely to poverty alleviation, in particular in LDCs such as Tanzania.

37. Tanzania greatly appreciated the commitment of the international community to tackling the cancer therapy problem through PACT. Under that programme, and with the support of the Agency and the international community, Tanzania had developed and begun to put into effect its first comprehensive and integrated national cancer control strategy. The nuclear medicine and radiotherapy services at the country's only cancer hospital, which served over 35 million people, were constantly improving and coming in line with international standards, while preparations for the establishment of a second unit at the Bugando Medical Centre were at an advanced stage.

38. He expressed appreciation and gratitude for the valuable support given to African Member States, in particular Tanzania, through PATTEC. As a result of that support, application of the SIT to eradicate tsetse fly species in various parts of Africa continued to gain momentum. The support had also facilitated the development of human resources capacity for the African region, and the improvement and tsetse fly proofing of a facility in Tanzania that was now being used to rear tsetse colonies. At that facility, planning and development of stratified baseline data collections using a standardized grid-based sampling frame was progressing well. He appealed for the resumption of the recently discontinued support to his country and that facility so that the fight against the tsetse fly problem in Africa and Tanzania could be sustained.

39. Since its inception in 1990, AFRA had evolved into a stable and credible regional cooperative framework implementing a programme worth US \$2.2 million, and its membership had grown to 32. AFRA was now entering a new phase, into which it had been propelled by a series of high-level policy review seminars, including those held in Algeria and Egypt in 2007 where landmark declarations had been made. The African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa in 2007 had endorsed the Declaration of Algiers and Plan of Action and, pursuant to the latter, the Aswan seminar had adopted conclusions and resolutions on a number of key issues. All the resulting programmes would need the support of the Agency and the international community. He thanked the Agency for the technical assistance, strong support and guidance that was being given to the AFRA partnership and he expressed gratitude to the Agency, AFRA member States and development partners for the funding they provided, appealing to them to sustain their generous assistance and support in the interests of peace and socio-economic development.

40. Finally, his country pledged its full share to the TCF.

41. Mr AL SAUD (Saudi Arabia) said that the Agency's outstanding record highlighted its important role in disseminating knowledge regarding the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and promoting nuclear safety and security. The prospects for expanding that role were set out in the Director General's background report entitled 20/20 Vision for the Future.

42. As continuous global economic growth called for a commensurate increase in energy supply, countries that had opted for nuclear energy relied on Agency technical assistance to establish the necessary infrastructure, imbue human resources with a safety culture, promote exchanges of relevant

information and ideas, prevent proliferation, reduce radioactive waste, and place all nuclear activities under Agency safeguards.

43. Notwithstanding the marked improvement in nuclear safety in recent decades thanks to the Agency's efforts to build a global safety network, further action was needed to reduce the risk of nuclear accidents. Although the indicators pointed to a improvement in the safety of nuclear reactors, the continued use of outdated reactors was a source of considerable concern. He called on the Agency to continue setting standards for the safety of nuclear installations, activities and material, to assist States in complying with them, and to promote international cooperation to develop an acceptable solution to the problem of radioactive waste.

44. The Agency's technical assistance to developing countries made a direct contribution to the well-being of their peoples through peaceful applications of nuclear energy in agriculture, nutrition, hydrology, medicine and industry. The technical cooperation programme also facilitated exchange of information with counterparts regarding diversification of energy sources, impact control, legislation and development of the institutional infrastructure required to implement Agency safety standards. Saudi Arabia had a sound record of technical cooperation with the Agency in peaceful applications of nuclear energy. In addition to its national projects, it participated in Asian regional projects as well as interregional projects.

45. Safeguards were one of the Agency's core activities and its verification responsibilities were set to expand in line with the increase in the quantity of nuclear material subject to safeguards. The organization should take serious steps to apply safeguards in all States with nuclear activities, especially where those activities were of a sensitive nature, without exception, while ensuring that the regime did not constitute an obstacle to development, especially in countries that complied with their obligations.

46. The fact that Israel's nuclear facilities still escaped international verification was a major security concern for countries in the region. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, had met all the constitutional and legal requirements for implementation of its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency. He expressed the hope that the General Conference would be more successful at its current session in tackling the item on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East and other related agenda items, and that the Agency would be able to act on the demand — repeated in numerous General Conference resolutions over the decades — for a response to the urgent need for all countries in the Middle East without exception to agree forthwith to the application of comprehensive Agency safeguards to their nuclear activities. Such a step would be an important confidence-building measure and would prevent a perceived lack of impartiality and application of double standards from undermining the credibility of the non-proliferation regime. It would also promote the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

47. The NPT was based on a vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. It was striking, however, that the nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT had not yet acted on all the commitments to which they had subscribed in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which required them to engage in good-faith negotiations aimed at eliminating their nuclear arsenals. He hoped that action would be taken to achieve that lofty goal so that the countries of the Middle East and the world as a whole could reap the benefits. There were justified fears that, if countries continued to view nuclear weapons as a deterrent and source of prestige, the message that such weapons were essential for security would continue to be propagated. Moreover, the application of double standards in the non-proliferation regime was poisoning the atmosphere and making it difficult to check the spread of nuclear weapons. It was time to heed the warning issued by the United Nations High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, namely that the world was reaching a point where the erosion of the

non-proliferation regime was becoming irreversible. He therefore called on peace-loving nations to mobilize support for action to universalize the NPT and the safeguards regime.

48. Finally, he commended the Agency's action in recent years to counter nuclear terrorism, nuclear smuggling and illicit trafficking by helping countries to enact effective national legislation in accordance with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

49. Ms OHENE (Ghana) said that the Annual Report for 2007 confirmed that the Agency's activities were central to maximizing the utilization of nuclear technology for economic and social development and preventing its misuse for non-peaceful purposes.

50. Ghana attached great importance to the technical cooperation programme and appreciated the Agency's efforts, in partnership with African Member States, to use nuclear science and technology to address the many-sided socio-economic problems of human health, nutrition, agriculture, energy, industry and environment. Her country wished to express its deep appreciation to the Agency, and especially the Director of the Division for Africa and his staff who had made concerted efforts to implement Ghana's national, AFRA and other regional projects.

51. The research scientists at the three institutes and five centres of the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission, and other national research institutions and universities were engaged in various research activities using nuclear and biotechnology techniques which were well aligned to the development agenda of Ghana with the sole objective of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Ghana's nuclear facilities were dedicated not only to research, education and training but also to the promotion of commercialization. To achieve sustainability, Ghana followed the AFRA guidelines and there were business and marketing plans for income generation for major nuclear facilities and projects.

52. It was Ghana's objective that nuclear techniques should continue to play a critical role in crop improvement, pest management, food preservation, medical sterilization, radiotherapy and nuclear medicine. The country would continue to use non-destructive testing techniques, including the use of radioisotopes and radiotracers for troubleshooting and optimization of the petrochemical and mining industries.

53. As part of Ghana's efforts to promote the commercialization of radiation processing of food and medical products, the Government had provided funds for the upgrading of the existing gamma irradiator. It was the country's cherished hope and firm belief that the facility would greatly enhance the export of agricultural produce and contribute to its health care delivery system.

54. With respect to human health, Ghana was happy to note the considerable work being done by the Agency. The WHO statistics quoted in the Annual Report, according to which 84 million people would die of cancer over the coming ten years, 75% of them from developing countries, were frightening. However, according to the Agency, with adequate funding and resources, more than 40% of all cancers could be prevented and 30% could be cured, if detected early and treated.

55. She thanked the Director General for the major role he had played in facilitating the securing of loans from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and the OPEC Fund for International Development to expand and upgrade the two existing centres for radiotherapy and nuclear medicine in Ghana. All the necessary arrangements were being made to establish a comprehensive programme for cancer therapy under PACT in Ghana. Recognizing the upsurge of cancer in Ghana and the West African sub region, her country had decided to establish a radiological and medical sciences research institute to play a leading role in cancer research and the treatment of any radiological emergencies. It would welcome any form of assistance from friendly countries to strengthen the establishment of infrastructure to support research and education in the new institute.

56. Her country was convinced that human resources would ultimately constitute the basis for sustainability and growth of the nuclear industry in Ghana and Africa. Ghana had therefore established the Graduate School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences at the University of Ghana, in cooperation with the Agency, for the preservation, maintenance and enhancement of nuclear knowledge. Enrolment at the postgraduate school stood at 138. Ghana remained grateful to the Agency for its support in diverse ways, in particular for providing funds for some of the students pursuing PhD sandwich programmes. Preparations were also in progress to run the harmonized African masters degree programme in nuclear science and technology and the postgraduate diploma programme in radiation protection during the coming academic year.

57. Over the preceding year, the training department of the Graduate School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences had hosted many IAEA/AFRA training workshops and courses in various fields of nuclear technology, including safety and security.

58. Recognizing the need to strengthen institutional capacity in nuclear science and technology, Ghana had embarked on the establishment of a national accelerator facility, with emphasis on the use of ion beams for teaching and research in the field of nuclear physics and materials engineering. The beneficiaries of the accelerator technology would be research scientists and postgraduate students from universities in Ghana and the rest of Africa. The building to house the accelerator was nearing completion and the Government had provided \$500 000 on a cost-sharing basis towards the procurement of equipment. She appealed to Member States to offer support with extrabudgetary funding.

59. In the light of soaring food prices, and amid the challenges of climate change, energy security and the need for urgent and decisive action to address food security issues, the relevance of the Agency's contribution to agricultural development, particularly in African Member States, could not be exaggerated. It was against that backdrop that Ghana supported the Agency's initiative that had culminated in the development of a groundwater assessment programme using isotope hydrology techniques. Undoubtedly, the initiative would improve water resources management in many African countries facing drought. She also expressed appreciation to the Agency for the development and use of the SIT. As a participating country in PATTEC, Ghana was involved in the mass rearing and irradiation of tsetse flies. The Agency was to be commended on its research and development activities on use of the technique for the suppression and eradication of the mosquitoes that caused malaria.

60. The Government of Ghana had decided to generate electricity using nuclear power plants in the long term. It had been informed by the Agency of its willingness to work very closely with national stakeholder institutions to establish the first nuclear power plant. The workshop on issues related to the introduction of the nuclear power to be presented by Agency staff in the first quarter of 2009 was being eagerly awaited.

61. Her country wished to assure the Secretariat and the international community that Ghana was fully committed to nuclear safeguards, safety and security and would continue to ensure that all nuclear technology practices were conducted in a safe, secure and environmentally friendly manner. She commended the Agency for continuing to support national and international efforts aimed at the safe and secure use of nuclear technology.

62. In Ghana, draft legislation to establish an independent regulatory body had been prepared and was awaiting parliamentary approval. Special attention was also being paid to nuclear security issues. A committee comprising senior officials from national security agencies, operators of nuclear facilities and the regulatory body, oversaw the planning and implementation of actions, including those related to the Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan and the International Physical Protection Advisory

Service. The country was grateful to the Agency for the supply of equipment, provision of expert services and the organization of national and regional training courses.

63. Mr KARIMOV (Azerbaijan) said that, throughout its existence, the Agency had always actively promoted international cooperation on the peaceful use of atomic energy and strict compliance with the nuclear non-proliferation regime. His country valued the Agency's efforts to ensure safety worldwide and was taking all necessary steps to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear terrorism.

64. As new threats and challenges to international security and stability emerged, the NPT and the Agency's role in ensuring its implementation took on particular importance.

65. The problems in the Caucasus in August 2008 had once again demonstrated the exceptional complexity of creating in the world an atmosphere of mutual trust, neighbourliness and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Unresolved conflicts, territories not subject to international monitoring, separatism, and the emergence of self-proclaimed States not subject to any international obligations all posed threats to peace and stability. On more than one occasion, his country had drawn attention to the problem of illegally occupied and uncontrolled territories which might be used for unhindered trafficking in nuclear and radioactive material, or use thereof for unsanctioned purposes. Uncontrolled territories posed a direct threat to the safety of regions that were suffering from inter-ethnic conflicts and prone to all kinds of risk. Nowhere in the world should be outside international verification mechanisms and all conflicts should be resolved through international law, thus minimizing the potential risk of illicit trafficking in nuclear material and the threat of nuclear and radiological terrorism. Azerbaijan appreciated the Agency's efforts to prevent such acts of terrorism and hoped that it could continue to strengthen its role in that area.

66. The Agency's technical cooperation programme was particularly important in resolving issues related to the peaceful use of atomic energy and Azerbaijan welcomed the positive results that had recently been achieved. Further increasing the effectiveness and level of cooperation was one of the main priorities for interaction between his country and the Agency. Azerbaijan participated actively in a number of regional and national technical cooperation projects, one of the priority areas being non-power applications. It supported Agency efforts to promote effective programmes in the fields of nuclear science, technology and applications, aimed at meeting the country's basic sustainable development requirements. Work to preserve and expand nuclear knowledge, which was the fundamental basis for nuclear safety, was acquiring special importance. Improvement of nuclear education was a vital element in developing innovative nuclear technology and the Secretariat should therefore further assist interested Member States to participate in such programmes as the World Nuclear University Summer Institute.

67. Azerbaijan also attached importance to cooperation with the Agency on ensuring safe handling of radioactive sources and strengthening its national system for control, accounting, storage, transport and disposition of radiation sources. In 2008, a presidential decree had established the State Agency for Nuclear and Radiation Safety Regulation to fulfil those functions. Work was under way to complete preparation of the necessary regulatory documents, to set up the structure and to hire staff for the new State body.

68. Under the technical cooperation programme in 2008, the system for the preparation and storage of low- and high-level radioactive waste had become operational. Nuclear medicine equipment for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer had been installed at the National Oncology Centre. In addition, the Agency had assisted with the acquisition, installation and commissioning of a linear accelerator for treating cancer patients.

69. Azerbaijan had been extracting oil on an industrial scale for 160 years. As a result of long-standing production activities at oil deposits, some areas had become polluted with natural radionuclides which posed a serious threat to public health. A priority in Azerbaijan's cooperation with the Agency was monitoring of the radioecological situation on the Abşeron Peninsula and rehabilitation thereof. It was planned to expand that cooperation in the future to other industrial areas, territories and water resources in Azerbaijan.

70. While recognizing the Agency's indisputable authority and its ever growing role in the international arena, Azerbaijan was aware of the need to review a number of its statutory functions, the challenges facing the Agency and the scope for tackling them. It therefore considered the creation of the Commission of Eminent Persons to analyse the nature and scale of the Agency's work up to 2020 both timely and well founded. His country welcomed the report of the Commission on the future of the Agency and was ready to put forward its own proposals on the issues addressed in it.

71. Azerbaijan intended to continue to work with the Agency and to support any initiatives aimed at strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, ensuring nuclear and radiation safety, and using atomic energy for exclusively peaceful purposes.

72. Mr STRITAR (Slovenia) said that the Agency played an indispensable role in global efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. The inspections it carried out were widely respected as impartial and independent and were aimed at detecting any misuse of nuclear material and at deterring any such activity. The Safeguards Implementation Report for 2007 indicated that 82 States had comprehensive safeguards agreements with additional protocols in force, which was an increase from the year before. However, only one additional country party to the NPT had brought a comprehensive safeguards agreement into force. His country believed that a comprehensive safeguards agreement together with an additional protocol should be considered the contemporary verification standard, and NPT State Parties without comprehensive safeguards agreements should be more proactive in meeting that standard. He urged Member States without a comprehensive safeguards agreement in force, and those that were hesitant about concluding an additional protocol, to do so without delay.

73. Regrettably, the work of the Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification within the Framework of the IAEA Statute set up by the Board in 2005 had not formulated any specific recommendation to the Board. However, SAGSI worked closely with the Secretariat in developing new safeguards concepts which could be used in the future and which went beyond the current integrated safeguards concepts. Concepts which built on the advantages of unpredictability and verification seemed worthy of additional effort. Such concepts could be used as an alternative to the normally defined level of routine inspections, resulting in a trade-off between further reductions in routine inspections and unannounced, occasional and intensive inspections.

74. The International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism had entered into force in July 2007, which was a clear sign that many countries were ready to prevent and combat nuclear terrorism. The Convention had been opened for signature in September 2005 and Slovenia had been among the first signatories. As terrorism was a global threat, the State Parties to the Convention should make every effort to adopt appropriate measures to ensure the protection of radioactive and nuclear material, taking into account the relevant recommendations and functions of the Agency.

75. Slovenia attached utmost importance to the implementation of the Agency's nuclear security activities to prevent, detect and respond to nuclear terrorism. The responsibility for nuclear security rested with individual Member States which should work hand in hand with the Agency to strengthen non-proliferation, nuclear verification and export controls. Any other practical initiatives and steps that could be taken would be welcome.

76. As evidence of Slovenia's commitment to the Agency's technical cooperation activities, over the preceding year it had hosted six Agency regional workshops, training courses and seminars, and Slovenian organizations and institutions had accepted more than a dozen fellows from various developing countries. Since 2006, Slovenian experts had participated in the ambitious Vinča Institute Nuclear Decommissioning (VIND) programme to assist Serbia in the decommissioning of nuclear facilities. Slovenia had provided assistance to the Serbian regulator by reviewing documents related to the repackaging and transport of spent fuel from the Vinča research reactor.

77. Slovenia had pledged to pay its full share to the TCF for 2009 and had paid its share in full in previous years.

78. His country recognized the effort that had been put into implementing the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies and, in that connection, it welcomed the establishment of a working group on long-term sustainability in Rome in June 2008, which would continue activities in that regard. To strengthen international emergency response, the Agency had invited Member States to register their resources with the Response Assistance Network, whose main objectives were to provide and coordinate assistance and advice, and to promote emergency preparedness. Slovenia had been one of the first countries to register with the Network at the start of 2008 and it was pleasing to see more countries registering. The Network was voluntary in nature and did not assume any obligation. Although still at an early stage of implementation, it could contribute significantly to establishing a robust and sustainable global emergency response network in the future.

79. Expectations were rising as regards the future expansion of nuclear power. The energy consumption forecast for Slovenia showed a clear increase in electricity demand, making nuclear energy a viable option for the country's future energy mix. However the primary concern was the continued safe operation of existing nuclear capacity. Ageing management and life extension activities were a priority for operators and regulators. Exchange of international experience and information could contribute significantly to maintaining a high level of nuclear safety. The Krško nuclear power plant was the largest producer of electricity in Slovenia, contributing almost 40% of the electrical power supplied to the grid. It had an excellent operating record, in spite of a leak in June 2008 that had resulted in a reactor shutdown, but no releases to the environment. That event had triggered an unprecedented media response throughout Europe. His country was ready to discuss openly with international stakeholders improvements that would prevent the repetition of such an unnecessary response in the future.

80. Slovenia attached the utmost importance to maintaining a high level of nuclear safety worldwide. Although the prime responsibility for nuclear safety rested with the operator, the implications went beyond national boundaries, making international cooperation in that regard indispensable. The Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management had review mechanisms that highlighted the importance of ongoing safety improvement and international cooperation on safety-related matters. Slovenia welcomed the successful outcome of the fourth review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety which had taken place in April 2008, and it had prepared its third national report for the review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention in the coming year.

81. With regard to staffing and competence issues, his country attached great importance to nuclear research and education. The Slovenian Government had approved the framework document for sustainable assurance of supporting activities in the field of nuclear and radiation safety. Research projects had been selected covering different areas, such as methods and techniques for ageing

management, improvement of nuclear safety using probabilistic safety analysis, and use of reference benchmarks for managing nuclear facilities.

82. In 2007, the Slovenian Nuclear Safety Administration had been awarded the internationally recognized ISO 9001:2000 certification for its quality management system.

83. With reference to the 20/20 Vision for the Future report, Slovenia agreed that the Agency had vast experience and could mobilize international technical expertise of considerable breadth and quality. The Agency should maintain its statutory role and its primary goal was to respond to the needs of Member States where other institutions could not provide services so effectively. Slovenia appreciated the Agency's initiative to address the issues that would influence its future and considered the key success factor to be human resources. With experienced and capable staff, the demanding tasks foreseen in the report would be much easier to achieve and would be implemented more efficiently. The report also addressed increases and, to a lesser degree, decreases in Agency activities up to 2020. It was difficult to forecast the future. Member States should be the main driving force steering the Agency's activities along whatever route they chose, and the 20/20 report, together with the report of the Commission of Eminent Persons, could be used as a comprehensive route planner.

84. Mr VALLIM GUERREIRO (Brazil) said his country welcomed the fact that the Scientific Forum held in parallel with the General Conference was focusing on the future role of the Agency, based on the report of the Commission of Eminent Persons on the future of the agency. The convening of that Commission by the Director General had been timely, since the world was about to experience a revival of nuclear energy because of growing electricity needs, in particular in developing countries, coupled with a widespread recognition that nuclear energy was an economically competitive and environmentally sound alternative to other energy sources. Very few now questioned the anthropogenic contribution to climate change, especially from burning of fossil fuels. Increased use of atomic energy would present a wide range of opportunities and challenges, and a review of the role of the Agency in that new environment was essential.

85. Although the trend towards growing use of nuclear energy was clear, it was impossible to predict its eventual extent. Several scenarios were being envisaged over different time frames, and the Agency had to be given the tools it needed to adapt as circumstances changed. It would be counterproductive to put the Agency in an institutional and operational straitjacket as if the future environment were already known.

86. In that context, it was important to consider whether the Agency could play an enhanced role without changes to its Statute, whether it should change at all, should change only from a managerial perspective, or should assume more responsibilities, and whether it would be in a position to address future challenges within its present framework. There were no clear-cut answers to such questions and his country looked forward to future exchanges on them.

87. As the use of nuclear energy became more widespread and the international importance of the Agency increased, it would be vital to ensure that all Member States felt a sense of ownership and belonging vis-à-vis the Agency, and that they felt that its priorities were also their priorities. Inclusiveness, participation and commitment would be essential in fulfilling the collective tasks ahead.

88. It was natural that different countries ascribed different degrees of importance to the Agency's different statutory activities, but it was important to implement each activity fully, in a holistic and integrated way, without discrimination or selectivity. Brazil attached equal importance to all pillars of the Agency's activities. Its contributions to peace and security, to development and the alleviation of poverty, and to a clean environment were equally valuable, whether those activities derived from treaty obligations or not, and his country believed that it would be unhealthy for the Agency to be skewed in one direction or another.

89. One of the most daunting future challenges was the battle for public opinion. Brazil was encouraged by the deepening of a safety culture in connection with the use of nuclear energy around the world, and by technological developments allowing the construction of ever safer reactors. There could not be too much zeal on the issue of safety, as even one accident was too many. Having experienced the most serious accident ever involving a radioactive source, in Goiânia 21 years previously, Brazil was particularly aware of the importance of safety.

90. Nuclear energy also had to be secure, as the prospect that non-State actors might acquire, have access to or use weapons incorporating radioactive material, such as radiological dispersal devices, was too dreadful to contemplate. While the responsibility for the safety and security of nuclear material and radioactive sources lay with States, it was in the interests of all to abide by the strictest standards. The consequences of nuclear accidents or malicious acts involving nuclear material had no respect for national boundaries.

91. As the only institution with a mandate to verify compliance with non-proliferation commitments under the NPT, the Agency had a key role in maintaining international peace and security. Brazil appreciated the objectivity, impartiality and professionalism with which the Secretariat applied safeguards, belying the epithet 'United Nations nuclear watchdog'.

92. While the Agency had no agreed mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament obligations arising from Article VI of the NPT, it was unavoidable that Member States brought to the General Conference their perceptions regarding the progress, or lack thereof, in that area. Disarmament and non-proliferation were mutually reinforcing and movement in one area was affected by movement in the other.

93. While much had been said about the proliferation risks that the nuclear renaissance would entail, Brazil considered those risks to have been somewhat exaggerated and saw no well founded reasons to conclude that greater reliance on nuclear power would lead to the spread of sensitive nuclear technologies. The bulk of new nuclear power plants would be built in countries which already produced their own fuel. Given the inherent difficulties of developing isotope separation techniques, the huge investment required, the extensive training of human resources needed and the industrial capacity involved, his country considered it most unlikely that any country wishing to embark upon a nuclear programme for the first time would attempt to set up its own enrichment facility, particularly since the LEU market was working adequately. Nor was Brazil aware of any fear on the part of countries embarking on nuclear programmes for the first time that supplies of fuel for their future nuclear power plants would be interrupted. However, if a country decided to enrich uranium itself, it had every right to do so, provided it complied with its relevant obligations, including supplying the Agency with the necessary design information. Brazil regarded any reinterpretation of Article IV of the NPT as unacceptable and believed that any attempt to establish a new divide between haves and have-nots underestimated the profound concession made by non-nuclear-weapon States on acceding to the NPT.

94. When listening to the debate on the enrichment issue, one had the impression that there was an implicit assumption that Agency safeguards on enrichment facilities were not effective and did not achieve their stated purpose. Such an assumption was simply wrong. There was no record of any case of diversion of nuclear material from a safeguarded enrichment facility.

95. Brazil was currently discussing the future of its nuclear programme, including from an institutional point of view, following the decision to complete as soon as possible the construction of the 1300 MW Angra III nuclear power reactor, for which the commissioning stages had been finalized with the granting of the licences required by law. The actual construction work could begin shortly. It was also planned that, by 2030, between four and eight new nuclear power plants would become

operational, each with an estimated output of 1000 MW. The science and technology section of the growth acceleration programme which had already been approved and funded by Congress provided for the completion of the pilot conversion plant for the production of uranium hexafluoride in Aramar, São Paulo. It also provided for the expansion of the commercial uranium enrichment plant in Resende, Rio de Janeiro, with the ultimate objective of achieving self-sufficiency in LEU. Brazil also planned to increase radioisotope production to meet all domestic demand.

96. In February 2008, the President of Brazil and the President of Argentina had issued a formal declaration on a wide spectrum of bilateral relations. In the section of that declaration dealing with nuclear cooperation, both Heads of State had defined the composition of a bilateral commission to be responsible for the development of a model nuclear power reactor to meet the electricity needs of the two countries and, eventually, of the region. The declaration also stated that the competent authorities in Argentina and Brazil should define a common project in the nuclear fuel cycle field and the intent was expressed to establish a binational uranium enrichment enterprise. Despite the magnitude of the task, work was proceeding at an accelerated pace in the respective national nuclear commissions to fulfil that mandate.

97. The decision of the Governments of Brazil and Argentina to issue the declaration stemmed from the need felt by both sides to take further steps to integrate nuclear activities in the two countries in addition to the existing arrangements embodied in ABACC, which had been operating successfully since 1991. Brazil welcomed the progress achieved in cooperation between the Agency and the ABACC under the Quadripartite Agreement. Significant improvements had been made through the establishment of guidelines for joint safeguards activities at several nuclear facilities, and of procedures for unannounced inspections and for common use of safeguards equipment. More improvements still remained to be made and Brazil hoped that the next meeting of the Agreement's Liaison Committee would be fruitful. Brazil attached great importance to cooperation between the Agency and ABACC and requested that both organizations continue to pursue coordination in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and achieve cost-effectiveness.

98. Mr AL-JASEM (Kuwait) said a major increase in the world's energy supply would be necessary to meet the world's socio-economic development needs during the coming decades. It was for national policy-makers to decide whether to opt for nuclear energy to meet that demand. At their summit meeting in December 2006, the member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council had adopted a joint programme on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and a series of consultations and meetings had since been held between Council experts and Agency staff to identify needs and prepare a feasibility study, which had now been completed.

99. He emphasized the importance of the Agency's efforts to promote regional and international cooperation in finding solutions to the global shortage of drinking water. In resolution GC(51)/RES/14, the General Conference had called for support for a plan to use small and medium-sized nuclear reactors for cost-effective production of drinking water and for nuclear hydrogen production. Water desalination was an issue of vital importance in Kuwait and the Government had donated €10 000 to activities in that area. It looked forward to participating in the meetings of INDAG in order to share experience and find ways of expanding research on the use of nuclear technology for groundwater desalination.

100. The Agency's technical cooperation programme in areas such as agriculture, animal husbandry, water resources, energy and environment contributed to the building of national capacities in developing countries and to the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Kuwait had hosted a variety of regional training courses in cooperation with the Agency. His Government regularly paid its full share of the TCF and called on other States to follow suit.

101. Safeguards were the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. He urged all States that had not yet signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency to do so forthwith and encouraged States that were already implementing an agreement to conclude an additional protocol. States party to the NPT should honour their obligations under the Treaty and their safeguards agreement and work closely with the Agency to dispel any doubts that arose regarding their programme through negotiations and constructive dialogue.

102. With regard to the idea of holding a forum on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, he noted that a prerequisite for the achievement of that goal was the application of comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear facilities in the region and the accession of all States in the region to the NPT. He hoped that an objective and balanced agenda for the forum would be drawn up in order to dispel any misgivings regarding the feasibility of achieving its aim. Noting that all States in the Middle East except Israel were parties to the NPT and had placed their nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, he called on the international community to protect the region against future crises or wars that undermined its security and stability by taking a vigorous and non-discriminatory stand vis-à-vis any State that had failed to sign the NPT.

103. Promotion of the safety and security of radioactive sources and nuclear material was a core Agency task. It was essential to develop regulations and apply guidelines aimed at controlling movements of such material. Kuwait was keen to continue its cooperation with the Agency and other relevant organizations in that regard through the implementation of national and regional projects. The Agency should liaise with Member States that were building nuclear power plants in order to ensure that they took the necessary precautions and applied appropriate safety measures.

104. With regard to the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while Kuwait acknowledged the right of all countries to develop a nuclear energy programme for peaceful purposes in keeping with the NPT, it called on Iran to continue cooperating with the Agency in order to allay fears regarding the nature of its programme and to address all outstanding issues. It also urged all parties concerned to pursue a policy of diplomacy, dialogue and negotiation to achieve the desired objective.

Mr Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia), Vice-President, took the chair.

105. Ms INTERIANO TOBAR (El Salvador) said that, with the aim of preserving peace, security and stability, 41 years previously her country had adhered to the Tlatelolco Treaty, which was the first safeguards treaty in the world and established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone. In adhering to the NPT, El Salvador had reaffirmed its commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Her Government was firmly committed to supporting all instruments and initiatives related to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and recognized the importance of the three main pillars of the Agency's activities: safeguards, nuclear safety, and science and technology. Multilateralism was the only way to encourage political dialogue aimed at finding formulas for collective cooperation, to promote peaceful coexistence among States and to ensure safety.

106. The CTBT played an important complementary role in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, and El Salvador would continue to support the efforts of peace-loving countries to achieve its early entry into force. Only a few days previously, the Fourth Ministerial Meeting to promote the entry into force of the CTBT had taken place during the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly. El Salvador had supported the declaration calling on States that had not yet done so, particularly those listed in Annex 2 and those which possessed nuclear weapons, to sign or ratify the Treaty and maintain a moratorium on nuclear testing to demonstrate their good intentions and as a confidence-building measure. In that connection, she expressed appreciation to Barbados, Colombia, Iraq and the Dominican Republic for ratifying the Treaty. The international

community should work together to achieve greater transparency in the nuclear field, to create ever more effective international safety standards, and to find new measures to prevent proliferation of and eliminate nuclear weapons.

107. The challenges the world was facing at present were extensive and complex. Food security, climate change, the energy crisis resulting from high oil prices, and financial problems reflected a global crisis which had a negative impact on development efforts. El Salvador supported the Agency's existing cooperation with the FAO and the emerging cooperation with the UNEP Environment Fund, which was of utmost importance to meet the growing needs of Member States, particularly developing countries.

108. Peace, safety and development were intrinsically connected and international cooperation for development played a fundamental role, especially in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It was therefore essential to ensure fair access to technological resources, transfer of environmentally friendly technology and support for the builders of technical capacity, and the Agency made an invaluable contribution to the achievement of those goals.

109. El Salvador appreciated the Agency's technical assistance to developing countries focused on nuclear applications in health, agriculture, industry, the environment, hydrology and research in various fields. That assistance contributed directly to improving the living conditions of people, and human welfare in general. The Agency's technical cooperation projects contributed significantly to sustainable development in all countries, particularly the most vulnerable ones. An example of that was the establishment of an isotope hydrology laboratory at the laboratories of the LaGeo company in El Salvador, which was the only laboratory of its kind in Central America and provided analytical services to various countries in South America and sometimes to Mexico.

110. Her country collaborated with the Agency within the framework of South-South cooperation by providing national experts in such areas as geothermal energy and nuclear instrumentation. It was interested in working together with Agency experts in developing a national cancer prevention programme. It therefore appreciated the efforts to approve a subregional plan in that regard, an initiative resulting from the meeting of health ministers from Central America and the Dominican Republic held in San Salvador in September 2007. Her country welcomed the fact that, in September 2007, ARCAL and the Agency had officially adopted the Regional Strategic Profile for 2007–2012.

111. El Salvador welcomed the report by the Commission of Eminent Persons and was greatly interested in the results of the Scientific Forum taking place during the General Conference which would address, inter alia, the future of the Agency. It was essential to join forces to strengthen the Agency, thus helping it fulfil its mandate. With that in mind, she urged Member States to focus their efforts on a visionary remodelling of the Agency. Her country supported the concept of a revitalized world nuclear order that reduced and eradicated the risks of nuclear proliferation for non-peaceful purposes, while at the same time allowing for the valuable contribution made by the peaceful use of nuclear technology to human welfare.

112. Her country looked forward to a world free of nuclear weapons, through the work of the United Nations and disarmament efforts. The international community had developed instruments and initiatives that formed the basis of the non-proliferation regime, and it should continue work towards complete disarmament.

113. The Agency played an essential role in nuclear energy, nuclear applications, non-proliferation and safeguards. Its valuable contribution was widely recognized and should be promoted, strengthened and legitimized by the Member States. Thanks to the efforts of various Member States, progress had been made in international cooperation to strengthen nuclear safety, the safe management of nuclear

waste and radiation protection. However, many countries had still not undertaken commitments in that regard and El Salvador urged them to do so.

114. With the Tlatelolco Treaty, Latin America and the Caribbean had set an example for other regions of the world. The path to a world that was more humane, free and safe for future generations was in the hands of the international community, and that should guide its actions.

115. Mr BERNHARD (Denmark) said that the world depended and would continue to depend on the Agency in efforts to combat nuclear proliferation. Denmark thus looked forward to becoming a member of the Board of Governors in 2009. The Agency's safeguards regime remained the fundamental instrument in ensuring nuclear non-proliferation. Yet some States with comprehensive safeguards agreements in force had nonetheless developed secret nuclear programmes. All States should therefore recognize that the Agency verification standard consisted of both a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol. The NPT was the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and his country welcomed the improved atmosphere at the second Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2010 NPT Review Conference earlier in 2008 and hoped for a positive outcome at that Conference, avoiding a repetition of the deadlock experienced at the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

116. The United Nations Security Council also had a key responsibility for non-proliferation. To maintain their credibility, both the Security Council and the Agency had to react promptly and consistently when States breached their safeguards commitments or sought to break out of the NPT regime. Denmark supported increased Security Council involvement in the area of non-proliferation, both in general and in specific cases such as that of Iran. The adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) had been an important step in that direction.

117. With regard to Iran, his country continued to support a consistent approach by the Security Council. In adopting Security Council resolutions 1803 (2008) and 1835 (2008), the international community had once more signalled to Iran that its failure to comply with the requirements of the Security Council and the Agency was unacceptable. Denmark shared the concerns expressed by the Director General and urged Iran to take the steps related to suspension of activities required by the Board of Governors and the Security Council, in order to build confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. The generous offer of a revised negotiations package put forward by the European Union High Representative in June 2008 remained on the table.

118. Denmark commented the Agency's efforts during inspection visits to the installation at Al Kibar in the Syrian Arab Republic. It urged the Syrian authorities to cooperate fully with the Agency and show maximum transparency while the samples taken from the site were being analysed and evaluated, including by providing access to additional information and sites.

119. The current stalemate in the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the reports of the DPRK's intention to reopen the Yongbyon facilities and refuse the Agency's inspectors access gave serious cause for concern. The considerable progress made since the October 2007 six-party agreement that had led to the declaration of 26 June 2008 must not be reversed.

120. The threat of proliferation to non-State actors such as terrorists had posed a new challenge in recent years. Denmark was committed to ensuring that sufficient resources were available under the Nuclear Security Fund to address that threat and, in the preceding year, had decided to make a national contribution of €1 million to the Fund. Nuclear and other radioactive material must not fall into the hands of terrorists; therefore, joint action was needed to strengthen non-proliferation, nuclear verification and export controls. His country had contributed from the outset to the Proliferation Security Initiative by playing a lead role with respect to containerized shipments in the maritime domain and by facilitating outreach to industry. As it believed that further regional cooperation in that

area was necessary, it planned to organize a regional Proliferation Security Initiative seminar in November in Copenhagen.

121. Denmark believed that nuclear power was not a sustainable form of energy and that it should not be included in national energy planning. Hence, while respecting others' choice and noting the Agency's mandate as stipulated in its Statute, it was not in favour of a promotional role for the Agency in that regard.

122. Despite reservations about establishing a multilateral nuclear fuel assurance mechanism, his country believed in the importance of ensuring that an expansion of civilian nuclear power would not result in a further spread of sensitive nuclear fuel cycle technology which could be used for military ends. It would therefore consider supporting a multilateral proliferation-safe mechanism that would provide an assured nuclear fuel supply for States that had opted for nuclear power, and it called on the Agency to play a crucial role in that regard.

123. Ms DELA ROSA (Philippines) recalled that, since its inception, the Agency had played an essential role both in helping Member States achieve their development goals and in upholding global peace and security. However, the world faced major new challenges such as high fossil fuel costs, climate change and a transformed political environment, all of which affected the relevance and effectiveness of the Agency. In that context, the Philippines welcomed the 20/20 initiative of the Director General and his establishment of the Commission of Eminent Persons. The Commission's report contained a wide-ranging set of bold and innovative initiatives and provided a good basis for discussions on the future of the Agency.

124. An enabling environment for a strengthened global nuclear order was necessary for the Agency to meet the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades. The Commission's report referred to four important partnerships in that regard, to which the Philippines believed a fifth should be added: partnership between nuclear-weapon States, de facto nuclear-weapon States and even States strongly believed to have nuclear weapons. Such a partnership was necessary to ensure that neighbouring States did not seek to acquire nuclear weapons because they feared for their security.

125. The renaissance of nuclear energy in the coming two decades would create opportunities and challenges for both Member States and the Agency. There was a need for training of a new generation of human resources, design of safe, secure, economical and proliferation-resistant reactors, assured nuclear fuel supplies, radioactive waste management including disposal, an effective and quick radiological emergency response system, and public acceptance. To that end, the Philippines supported strengthened cooperation at regional and international level. Her country also viewed with interest the Commission's proposals to limit the number of complex nuclear facilities and, with the Agency's help, convert them into multinational facilities, such as regional nuclear fuel cycle centres.

126. Enlarging the contribution of nuclear applications was important not only for the well-being of humanity, but also for the universality of benefits to Member States. The Philippines believed that expanding the mandate of the Agency in that regard would increase developing countries' support for the organization.

127. As the Commission had rightly stated, the Agency would need a considerable increase in resources from Member States in order to be able to carry out its duties properly. Furthermore, the statutory and promotional activities of the Agency should be given sufficient, assured and predictable funding.

128. The Agency's safeguards and verification activities played a critical role in ensuring nuclear non-proliferation. With regard to the implementation of safeguards in Iran, her country welcomed the Director General's report to the Board of Governors which indicated that the Agency had been able to

continue verifying the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran. However, it was concerned over the lack of substantive progress in resolving outstanding issues. Her country called for all parties to cooperate fully with the Agency so that it could provide credible assurances of the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran. It urged Iran to implement the additional protocol and to comply with relevant United Nations Security Council and Agency resolutions as a confidence-building measure.

129. With regard to the DPRK's nuclear programme, the Philippines noted with concern that country's recent announcement of the suspension of its disablement activities. The Philippines believed that the six-party talks were the most comprehensive, practical and logical approach to achieving the results needed for lasting peace and sustained prosperity in the region.

130. The Government of the Philippines placed emphasis on the role of science and technology in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, and in particular nuclear science and technology. Fifty years previously, the Philippine Atomic Energy Commission — now the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute — had been established to promote and regulate peaceful applications of nuclear energy. Over that period, the Philippines had worked in partnership with the Agency and had received consistent support for the development of nuclear science and technology in the country. Nuclear science had been applied in the priority areas of agriculture, health, biotechnology, earth and marine sciences, materials science, manufacturing and process engineering, and environment. Her country commended the Agency for giving priority to PACT and urged Member States to continue supporting the programme through additional contributions.

131. The Philippines had achieved significant milestones in its environmental activities, using stable isotopes and nuclear techniques. Under the RCA programme it had led regional efforts to provide more sensitive, faster and cheaper assays for the key toxin in harmful algal blooms. It used nuclear and analytical techniques to determine sources of pollution and to establish standards for air quality, to characterize groundwater systems, delineate watershed protection zones and put in place preventive measures to decrease water quality degradation.

132. Driven by concerns over global warming and the rapid increase of global oil prices, the Philippines was again looking to develop a nuclear power programme to support its development needs. Following the Agency expert mission to the country earlier in the year, it was setting up a core group to study the rehabilitation of the Bataan nuclear power plant and the national infrastructure requirements for launching a nuclear power programme. Preliminary assessment of the existing infrastructure had shown that, as a priority, the group needed to address the issues of an independent and effective regulatory system, human resources development and stakeholder commitment. A bill creating a separate nuclear regulatory commission had just gone through its first public hearing in Congress. The Philippines was committed to exploring the possibility of using nuclear power in a manner that would ensure nuclear non-proliferation, safety and security.

133. As many countries turned to nuclear power, nuclear technology would again be put to the test and it was therefore essential that the global community address nuclear safety and security and public acceptance in a united manner. The Philippines would continue its participation in relevant international and regional networks to ensure nuclear and radiation safety and security, nuclear education and training, and knowledge management.

134. Her country commended the work of the Agency to combat the risk of nuclear terrorism and assist Member States, including her own, in improving nuclear security. In that area, the Philippines also continued to participate in a number of multilateral initiatives.

135. As more countries looked to nuclear power to meet their increasing need for energy, and as the demand for technical cooperation from developing countries rose, the Agency would continue to play

a vital role in enabling developing countries to use science and technology for development, and in upholding international peace and security.

136. Mr UZCÁTEGUI DUQUE (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his country's pacifist stance and rejection of nuclear weapons were enshrined in its Constitution, which stated expressly that the State would prevent the manufacture and use of weapons of mass destruction and promote nuclear disarmament. In that connection, at the start of 2008, a multidisciplinary group comprising representatives from Venezuelan ministries and institutions and Agency officials had developed a national integrated safety plan for Venezuela covering activities related to nuclear safety and security that should be implemented between the end of 2008 and the end of 2011. The Agency had also provided assistance in implementing projects related to health, the environment, industry, agriculture and radiation safety, including projects to strengthen the national regulatory infrastructure for the control of radiation sources, to strengthen the national system for preparedness and response to radiological emergencies, and to strengthen and update technical capabilities for protecting the health and safety of workers exposed to ionizing radiation.

137. It was of great importance to his Government to develop integration with other States of Latin America and the Caribbean, to strengthen South-South relations and to promote solidarity among peoples. Both ARCAL and the Agency provided a favourable setting for working towards those objectives, since nuclear science and technology could be tools to drive social and economic progress and hence could serve to promote cooperation, solidarity and peaceful coexistence among States. Venezuela had chaired the ARCAL Technical Co-ordination Board until May 2008 and would chair the Board of ARCAL Representatives until October 2008. During that time it had worked hard on institutional strengthening of ARCAL to ensure it met the region's development needs. His country welcomed the Dominican Republic's ratification of the ARCAL agreement and hoped that those States that had not yet ratified it would intensify their efforts to that end.

138. He stressed the need to maintain a balance between the three pillars of the Agency's activities. It was also important to train human resources at all levels and to transfer technology, which was of key importance for development. His country objected to proposals with purely commercial aims that imposed limitations on countries in developing nuclear technology.

139. Venezuela upheld the international principles of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and believed that the total elimination of such weapons was the most effective way of tackling the challenges posed by their existence, including the possibility of a nuclear accident or attack. Practical steps taken by his country over the preceding year included renewing the authorization required to operate the three detection and monitoring antennae set up under the CTBT which were located on Venezuelan territory and were part of a global network. Negotiations had also been resumed on the agreement on the conduct of activities, including post-certification activities, relating to CTBT international monitoring facilities. Venezuela was convinced that support for the CTBT would help meet the objective of ensuring a higher level of security. The entry into force of the CTBT was a moral imperative, as it would check the development of new nuclear weapons.

140. Venezuela had participated in the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference held in Geneva in April and May 2008, thereby reaffirming its commitment to the Treaty. The NPT, which was the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, remained under a lot of pressure. Nuclear agreements were being signed with States that were not party to the Treaty; the existence of military nuclear programmes not subject to Agency monitoring was being ignored, while other countries were being hounded for wishing to exercise their right to access nuclear energy for peaceful purposes; under the pretext of fighting terrorism, a process had been restarted with the objective of developing and producing new and more destructive nuclear weapons. A multipolar world was emerging, marked by the appearance of new

State and non-State actors and the fact that more and more countries were becoming interested in using their right to benefit from the peaceful applications of nuclear technology. Out of a total of seven NPT Review Conferences, only three had succeeded in issuing a final declaration. Expectations for the 2010 NPT Review Conference were not high but, given that the problem was not the Treaty itself, but a lack of political commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament on the part of key stakeholders, Venezuela — a country that did not believe in the usefulness of such weapons as a deterrent — hoped that, in the time remaining before the Conference, some optimistic signs might be seen as regards the future of the NPT, including its universalization.

141. He country supported the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as an effective contribution peace and stability. It was essential that Israel joined most other countries of the world, including all Arab States, and adhere to the NPT, allowing the Agency to apply safeguards to its nuclear facilities. That need had become even more pressing since the Israeli Government's public announcement that it possessed nuclear weapons.

142. Efforts related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation had to be made in a multilateral, simultaneous and non-discriminatory manner. Venezuela rejected the trend to view the nuclear programmes of some countries as not posing any threat to the world while others did. His country thus disagreed with the assumption by the United Nations Security Council of competencies that were assigned exclusively to the Agency in dealing with Iran's nuclear programme. Such interference affected the Agency's authority and credibility, undermining the independence that should characterize the functioning of agencies and bodies of the United Nations system. Venezuela was convinced that the Agency was the appropriate technical forum to seek a peaceful and negotiated solution with the Iranian authorities.

143. There was no justification for discriminatory practices that contravened the principle of the legal equality of States, forcing some countries to comply with obligations under international agreements while others were exempted from the same requirements. Combating unconfirmed threats from some States should not be used as a reason to violate the inalienable right of all countries to have access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, or to justify attacks against other countries, for example Israel's attack on Syria in September 2007. Such actions constituted a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and obstructed the work of the Agency in its verification activities. It was worrying that some countries in the international community had remained silent on those issues but did not hesitate to fabricate any number of documents to make accusations against countries that were party to the NPT and had safeguards agreements with the Agency.

144. He thanked the Director General and the Commission of Eminent Persons for their efforts in preparing the report on the Agency's role up to 2020 and beyond, presented in May 2008. His country had a few preliminary observations to make on that report. Firstly, the organization of nuclear fuel supply mechanisms was being led by a small group of countries. The topic deserved wider and more in-depth analysis, given the various implications — including economic and national security implications — of such a mechanism, where political motives could clearly be brought into play. Secondly, the report stated that transparency going well beyond the measures called for in the additional protocol was needed to provide confidence that a State's nuclear programme was entirely peaceful. That notion had been applied in the case of Iran's nuclear programme. Venezuela had rejected it then and would continue to do so, regardless of which country wished to apply it. Trying to impose rules which went beyond those agreed under legal instruments in force would destabilize the relationship between the Agency and Member States and raise doubts regarding the legal documents themselves. Thirdly, the report stated that the United Nations Security Council should go beyond its resolution 1540 (2004) by legally imposing safeguards obligations going well beyond the additional protocol. Venezuela rejected that resolution as it gave the Security Council inappropriate rights and functions which only served to undermine international treaties that had been negotiated multilaterally

and ratified by each State Party. It also imposed on all countries legal obligations laid down by a limited and privileged group of States, namely those comprising the Security Council. Venezuela would not consider the possibility of giving even more extraordinary functions to the Security Council and asking it to impose safeguards obligations that were not included in an agreement negotiated with the competent body in the nuclear field — namely the Agency — and adopted voluntarily by States, like the additional protocol.

145. Mr HORVATIC (Croatia) said that his country had recently completed a two-year term as a member of the Board of Governors, which had reinforced its view of the importance and mutual interdependence of all three pillars of the Agency's activities, i.e. safety and security, science and technology, and safeguards and verification, and of the Agency's objectives, i.e. non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

146. The threat of nuclear terrorism and other criminal acts involving nuclear material remained very real. From the beginning, Croatia had recognized the importance of and had actively participated in the adoption of international instruments and United Nations Security Council resolutions related to those issues. In addition to belonging to the international legal framework and re-evaluating and improving its domestic law in the field of nuclear security, Croatia had established a strategy and relevant institutional capacities to combat illicit trafficking. The main aim of the strategy was to prevent terrorists and non-State actors acquiring nuclear weapons. Strong international cooperation, in particular regional cooperation, was needed to achieve those security goals. Croatia participated in numerous non-proliferation initiatives, regional seminars and training courses, and fostered export control and border control management.

147. Security and development were always interdependent, and the Agency's role as a focal point for peaceful nuclear cooperation, in which it served as a development partner, was important. Technical assistance was of the utmost importance for developing countries and Croatia strongly appreciated activities in that area. His country recognized the role and significance of PACT and programmes in other nuclear applications fields, such as food and agriculture, industry, environment, hydrology and biological and physical research, which made an important direct contribution to human well-being.

148. His country believed that further strengthening Agency technical assistance would improve safeguards implementation, allowing some potential sensitive verification issues to be avoided in the future. It viewed a comprehensive safeguards agreement together with an additional protocol as the current Agency verification standard. Croatia had implemented both an agreement and an additional protocol and was one of the States in which the Secretariat had found no indication of diversion of declared nuclear material and no indication of undeclared nuclear material and activities. It had also concluded an exchange of letters with the Agency on an SQP in 2008 and hoped that that instrument would strengthen the safeguards system as a whole.

149. The NPT was the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element for further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. It was the sole multilateral legal instrument intended to bring about a nuclear-weapon-free world and must not be undermined. Croatia hoped that the forthcoming 2010 NPT Review Conference would have a positive outcome. That would require a cooperative approach and mutual trust, which it was part of the Agency's role — as the custodian of the NPT — to ensure.

150. The Scientific Forum on the future role of the Agency and the report of the Commission of Eminent Persons had both indicated that the Agency was at a crossroads. Member States could

succeed in finding the right path for that noble organization only by working together in a good multilateral environment, bearing in mind statutory obligations and objectives.

151. Mr MARFURT (Switzerland), also speaking on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that, since the preceding General Conference, non-proliferation had continued to dominate diplomatic agendas. Like the first, the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference had ended with the adoption of a purely procedural report. The rift remained between States wishing to concentrate exclusively on efforts to prevent proliferation and States wishing to focus on disarmament or those concerned by restrictions on access to nuclear technologies, and there was no sign of a possible change in that situation.

152. Regional issues had also been at the top of the agenda in the preceding year and, with the exception of the Libyan nuclear file, the outlook was not particularly encouraging. The decision of the NSG no longer to require comprehensive safeguards as a condition of nuclear cooperation with India had undoubtedly been a striking development. While the decision had been facilitated by India reaffirming a number of commitments related to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, in particular to continue to respect the moratorium on nuclear explosions, it posed new challenges to the aims of universalization of the NPT and application of comprehensive Agency safeguards, including the additional protocol. The non-proliferation regime had reached a turning point and Member States would have to reflect on how a universal non-proliferation regime could be achieved.

153. The situation regarding the Iranian nuclear programme, described in the Agency's most recent report, also remained unsatisfactory. The Agency had not been able to make headway on the alleged studies and Iran had continued its enrichment-related activities in breach of Security Council and Board resolutions, which was all the more regrettable as progress had been made leading up to the Geneva talks in July 2008. Switzerland believed that the prospect of a diplomatic solution — the only practicable solution — remained real. It therefore encouraged Iran to make constructive and urgent efforts, both in its cooperation with the Agency and with regard to the package proposal of the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany, to allow rapid implementation of the 'freeze-for-freeze' concept.

154. After some positive developments, such as the DPRK's submission of a list of its nuclear facilities and programmes in June 2008, the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula seemed again to have reached deadlock. The discussion process had stalled over the verification mechanism issue and Pyongyang had demanded that the Agency remove seals and surveillance instruments at the Yongbyon reprocessing facility with a view to resuming its activities. Those developments ran counter to the commitment made by the DPRK to dismantle all its nuclear facilities. Consequently, Switzerland reiterated its call to the DPRK to rejoin the NPT so that the Agency could resume activities in the country to the full extent of its mandate.

155. In the light of the oral report by the Director General on the Syrian nuclear programme during the recent meeting of the Board of Governors, his country commended Syria on its cooperation which had allowed the Agency to inspect the Al Kibar site in July 2008. It called on States holding specific information to share it with the Agency, thus confirming its role as the sole competent verification authority. As announced during the meetings of the Board the preceding week, Switzerland awaited the Agency's conclusions on analyses currently under way and encouraged Syria to pursue its cooperation with the Agency.

156. His country was satisfied with the accounts for 2007 and thanked the External Auditor for his recommendations. In recent years, Switzerland had repeatedly called for efforts to include all expenditure in the Regular Budget and, after various exceptions, it had expected that future increases for both the Regular Budget and technical cooperation could be limited to adjustments for inflation.

However, the budget proposal for 2009, which had been accepted by consensus at the most recent meetings of the Board, regrettably did not show any improvement in that area. The commitment of all Member States to activities jointly approved and funded was under threat. His country reiterated its call for the inclusion, after rigorous planning, of all planned investments in the Regular Budget for reasons of transparency and budget predictability. It also sympathized with those countries that had expressed concern regarding the protection of the technical cooperation activities against fluctuations in exchange rates.

157. Switzerland attached great importance to technical cooperation activities and to maintaining a balance between technical cooperation and verification activities. It welcomed the fact that the contribution payment target had largely been achieved, that the programme implementation rate had been very good and that the due account mechanism was having a positive impact on project implementation. It was equally pleased that the Agency was pursuing its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals.

158. His country was pleased with the annual Safeguards Implementation Report, in particular the conclusions drawn for States party to the NPT with comprehensive safeguards agreements in force. It was also pleased to note that inspection goals had been met very satisfactorily and that declared nuclear material had remained in peaceful use. With regard to integrated safeguards, his country supported the External Auditor's call for a more detailed analysis of the reduction in costs that regime would bring. It was concerned to note that the cost of applying safeguards had increased by more than 15%, though the number of States where integrated safeguards were fully or partially applied was on the rise.

159. With regard to the disposal of high-level long-lived waste, in the preceding year consultations had been initiated in Switzerland on a roadmap for the creation of depositories in deep geological strata. The aim was to commission one such depository by 2050. Affected Swiss and foreign parties had given an opportunity to express their views, those views had been evaluated and the concept adapted accordingly, and the Government had recently been able to adopt the roadmap.

160. Switzerland had five reactors in operation and believed that those power plants, which had been designed in the 1960s, would be replaced after 50 years of use. One of the companies owning one of the two large units had recently submitted a plan for a new power plant and a second company was expected to announce a second plan in the coming months. Public consultations on the construction of a new nuclear power plant would mostly likely take place in 2012.

161. Mr NSEMUKILA (Zambia) informed the Conference of the death of the late President of Zambia, Dr Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, who had died on 19 August 2008 after suffering a stroke while attending an African Union summit in Egypt. Dr Mwanawasa had been instrumental in achieving recognition of the developmental role of science and technology in Zambia's development agenda and, under his guidance, significant progress had been made in developing capacity in those fields in the country. He had strongly supported the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and its regulation. Under his leadership, Zambian radiation protection laws had been strengthened. He was credited with having turned around the Zambian economy in the preceding seven years and he had also been a recognized champion of justice for all, both within Zambia and beyond its borders.

162. His country welcomed the measures aimed at strengthening technical cooperation activities with Member States. The Agency's programme on nutrition and management of HIV/AIDS and Zambia's national projects on that subject had proved to be of great benefit. In the area of medical diagnosis and treatment, the installation of a new SPECT gamma camera had revolutionized the work of Zambia's University Teaching Hospital.

163. Zambia had taken steps to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear material and radioactive sources by strengthening its legal framework and ensuring the safety of material. Regulations on uranium mining, milling and processing, which had been developed in consultation with the Agency, would be adopted in the near future. An independent radiation protection authority was being set up and the capacity of the national Mines Safety Department was being strengthened. The Zambian Government would require the support of the Agency and other partners to ensure that the country had state-of-the-art technology to ensure that its population was safe from the harmful effects of uranium mining, as well as technology for the safe management of uranium.

164. His country was happy with the focus of the Agency's programme and budget for 2009 and the support given to the technical cooperation programme. Zambia's CPF was being revised and should be ready before 2009. The country continued to build on the benefits it had gained from that programme. Developments since the preceding General Conference included the hosting of a regional training course on ICT-based training and the establishment of a nutrition monitoring laboratory.

165. Zambia continued to support AFRA, which should be congratulated for continuing to mobilize specialized teams of experts that addressed problems of AFRA member States using expertise and capacity within the region. Since the preceding General Conference, his country had received AFRA missions in various fields. Zambian scientific and technical staff had participated in training courses and seminars, as well as coordination meetings and programmes. He appealed to partners to continue to support AFRA financially in order to ensure that the various projects planned could be carried out.

166. His country fully supported the Agency's safeguards work throughout the world. Safeguards measures should continue to be comprehensive, non-selective and global. It therefore was essential that all Member States facilitated and supported the Agency's work.

167. Finally, Zambia pledged its full share of the TCF target for 2009.

168. Mr BAZOBERRY (Bolivia) commended the Director General on his initiative in establishing the Commission of Eminent Persons to reflect on the nature and scope of the Agency's programme up to 2020 and beyond.

169. Tackling disarmament and non-proliferation was essential to maintain world peace and security in a multilateral context.

170. Rising population figures and the need for progress on the Millennium Development Goals made it necessary to confront critical issues such as energy, food security, availability of potable water, conservation of resources and protection of the environment. Water shortages and rising fossil fuel prices led to lower food and slowed industrial development, which could cause a global crisis affecting, above all, developing countries. He drew attention to Agency activities related to the application of nuclear and isotopic techniques in the management of water resources and groundwater, in connection with the impact of climate change on water resources, and to the support the Agency provided through programmes on nuclear power, nuclear applications and technical cooperation.

171. The Annual Report for 2007 highlighted significant progress in the Agency's activities related to the application of peaceful nuclear technology, global safety and security of nuclear and radiological material and facilities, and verification of non-proliferation commitments. Such activities remained vital to maximizing the benefits of the use of nuclear energy for the economic and social development of Member States, and to preventing misuse for non-peaceful purposes.

172. Bolivia commended the Agency's efforts to strengthen further the technical cooperation programme, allowing three new projects to be included in the 2007–2008 cycle two of which were for the regional programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean. His country attached importance to early implementation of the Regional Strategic Profile for Latin America and the Caribbean which,

along with the work of SAGTAC, should help promote the existing strategic alliance between ARCAL and the Agency through an ongoing consultation process that optimized cooperation activities.

173. The Agency should continue its efforts to establish partnerships with other regional agencies to strengthen technical cooperation programmes. Planned partnerships with PAHO, the Ibero-American Programme of Science and Technology for Development (CYTED) and the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE) should help expand the scope of technical cooperation significantly.

174. The Agency was making a noticeable contribution to meeting the Millennium Development Goals through projects aimed at the use and promotion of nuclear technology for sustainable development. Bolivia welcomed the fact that the Agency was elaborating modalities for integrating environmental considerations into technical cooperation activities. It noted the recommendations made by the Focus Group on the Environment, which had set out three main objectives for the Agency's regular and technical cooperation programmes: protection of humans and the ecosystem from ionizing radiation; optimization of the benefits for the environment of nuclear technology; and facilitation of the sustainable use and management of natural resources.

175. The Bolivian Government was aware of the negative consequences of accelerated degradation of the environment. For that reason, it had put together the National Development Plan 2006–2010 aimed at rational and sustainable exploitation of forest resources and biodiversity, both with respect to primary production and industrialization, with a view to improving the living conditions of the population and, above all, indigenous communities. That policy was based on the principle of restoring a balance between the need to conserve nature and socio-economic sustainable development needs.

176. The importance of the work done by PACT should be recognized. That programme allowed cancer patients to have access to preventive care and radiotherapy treatment in many developing countries. The Agency was also providing valuable assistance in building national capacity. He thanked those countries and institutions that supported PACT and urged them to continue their support. Bolivia occupied third place globally in terms of the incidence of cervical cancer, with a rate of 55 per 100 000 persons. It had benefited from human resources training, and the Agency's technical cooperation programme for the 2007–2008 biennium contained three projects: one on upgrading the cancer treatment programme in Bolivia, a second on upgrading radiotherapy services, and a third on strengthening nuclear medicine in Bolivia.

177. Bolivia was utilizing the advantages offered to it with a view to the democratization of nuclear energy and was striving to reduce poverty, because poverty had a highly negative and dangerous effect on development. Poverty and energy, and energy and sustainable development were linked. Slowed development led to greater poverty, which affected peace and security.

178. The NPT was the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and it underpinned global security and stability. Non-proliferation and disarmament were inseparable in his country's view and the rational conduct of States in the use of nuclear energy should therefore become the new watchword for the twenty-first century. Bolivia was confident that the Agency, as the sole competent authority in the nuclear field, would continue to play a key role in verification and compliance with obligations under safeguards agreements.

179. It was crucial to maintain and strengthen the universality, authority and relevancy of the NPT. Therefore, Bolivia called on States possessing nuclear weapons to join the NPT as soon as possible. Had not the bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki provided an adequate example of the destructive consequences of weapons of mass destruction? The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Brussels Expo 58 was, for his country, a milestone in the search for consensus on the rights and obligations of all States under the Charter of the United Nations.

180. Mr DÍAZ (Mexico) said that the Annual Report for 2007 made timely reference to challenges related to energy supplies, human health, food security and conservation and protection of natural resources, and gave a comprehensive account of the activities undertaken by the Agency in those areas. In the context of the 50th anniversary of the Agency, the report should be read as an introspective review of what the Agency had been and had done. In addition, Member States should also reflect on the Agency's place in the world nuclear regime and the world nuclear order in the coming decades. No less important was to consider how the Agency should be positioned to face emerging international challenges. Mexico supported the consolidation of a world nuclear order based on multilaterally agreed rules.

181. It was important that the Agency's efforts continue, maintaining a balanced and equitable approach to cooperation, safety and verification activities, and thus ensuring genuine peaceful use of nuclear energy. Mexico welcomed the contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals made over the preceding year by technical cooperation projects on such sensitive issues as eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, reduction of infant mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability. His country wished to emphasize the benefits to be derived from the peaceful use of nuclear energy through application of relevant technologies in key areas for economic and social development, such as agriculture and stockbreeding, food, human health, sustainable water resources management, combating insect pests, industry and research; and it called on the Agency to increase its efforts to disseminate information on such benefits in order to improve support for the use of nuclear energy and thus attract increased financial contributions for that purpose.

182. In the 50 years for which it had been a member of the Agency, Mexico had recognized the importance of exchange of nuclear knowledge and transfer of nuclear technology to maintain and improve its scientific and technological capacities. Technical cooperation with the Agency had been an important factor in introducing nuclear technology in the country, including nuclear power. There had also been significant progress in nuclear medicine, control of pests using the SIT, irradiation of food and surgical materials, and use of isotopes in water resources management and in industry and research.

183. His country collaborated extensively with other Latin American and Caribbean countries through ARCAL, a mechanism which was currently being strengthened so that it could play a more active role in the region.

184. Mexico shared concerns over the lack of human resources training, which was needed for continued development of expanding activities in the nuclear sector and to replace some staff close to retirement. It was important to bolster opportunities for training new staff and the Agency was well positioned to expand the capacities of higher education institutions and research centres.

185. The negative impact of exchange rate fluctuations on the purchasing power of the TCF was cause for concern and possible solutions, and a more flexible mechanism for national participation costs, needed to be discussed and analysed.

186. He commended the Agency's activities aimed at improving the safety of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, specifically its work on the safety and security of nuclear material and facilities and the related international legal infrastructure. At the invitation of the Agency, Mexico had offered to host the ConvEx3 large-scale international emergency response exercise in 2008 in which 75 Member States, 9 international organizations and 8 observer countries had participated, as well as relevant national bodies. The exercise had helped to identify areas for improvement in the nuclear emergency response system at national, international and international organization level. Mexico's response capabilities had been registered under the Response Assistance Network and he called on the

international community to integrate their capabilities into the network, which would facilitate the Agency's efforts in handling radiological emergencies.

187. In June 2007, Mexico had organized a meeting of the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies. The Forum's efforts to reinforce nuclear and radiological regulation had proved highly successful, of immediate use and complementary to Agency efforts.

188. His country had supported the Convention on Nuclear Safety from the outset and had acted as vice-chair of the fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties. It submitted its periodic reports on the nuclear safety of the country's reactors on time.

189. Mexico supported the Agency's efforts related to the safety and security of radioactive sources and had participated in the meetings organized by the Agency in 2007 and 2008 to exchange information on application of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. The Mexican regulatory authority was exchanging information on the import and/or export of radioactive sources and was negotiating with the Government of Canada on a possible cooperation agreement in that area.

190. At the request of the Government of Mexico, the Agency had sent an International Nuclear Security Advisory Service mission to assess the detection mechanisms and response capability of several of Mexico's strategic facilities in order to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear and/or radioactive material and acts of nuclear terrorism.

191. Mexico reiterated its support for the Agency's efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, in particular those aimed at the full implementation of the safeguards obligations of all Member States. In that connection, he thanked the Agency for the role it had played, particularly during recent months, in negotiations on the application of safeguard agreements.

192. His country welcomed the progress in the execution of the work plan between Iran and the Agency and encouraged the Government of Iran to intensify its cooperation and to collaborate actively with the Agency to clarify outstanding issues and provide clear assurances that its programme was strictly for peaceful purposes. Mexico also called on the DPRK to continue to cooperate with the Agency and to renew its commitment to the NPT.

193. Mexico congratulated the Government of India on its decision to conclude a safeguards agreement with the Agency in August 2008 and encouraged the Indian authorities to join the NPT and the CTBT as an additional sign of the country's commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation.

194. With regard to the report of the Commission of Eminent Persons, Mexico supported the report's approach and the call to strengthen the activities of the international community related to non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It noted the main areas of opportunity and the challenges identified by the Commission, as well as the need for solid partnerships to address them. Mexico would bear those recommendations in mind in discussions within the Agency's policy-making organs and, where appropriate, in other world nuclear bodies.

195. Expansion of the use of nuclear energy would increase safety needs and the Agency's responsibilities, with implications for both fuel supplies and the financial costs faced by Member States. Mexico was analysing the proposals put forward by the Director General and Member States relating to multilateralization of the nuclear fuel cycle in order to strengthen control and prevent diversion to illicit activities, and it was prepared to discuss them.

196. In the preceding decade, the financial contributions of some developing countries and economies in transition had risen considerably and changes in assessment rates and increases in international organizations' budgets were of great concern to many countries. Mexico had drawn

attention to that situation in the relevant bodies of the United Nations system and had pointed to the causes and possible solutions. His country promoted the effective and efficient use of financial resources by adopting properly justified budgets. It looked for savings, additional funding mechanisms and efficient budgeting.

197. Mexico reaffirmed its commitment to continue to work with the Agency and Member States to disseminate and improve the use of nuclear technology for development and the welfare of populations. In view of the emerging challenges, serious reflection on reinforcement of the world nuclear order was needed.

198. Mr OLIVEIRA (ABACC) said that, during its 17 years of existence, ABACC had successfully applied the Common System of Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (SCCC) created under the Agreement for the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy which entered into force in 1991. The Quadripartite Agreement had been signed and applied as of 1994 with a view to avoiding unnecessary duplication of activities. ABACC's role was fully recognized and accepted in international forums. Its credibility was founded upon the skills and dedication of many officials, technicians, assistants and inspectors. Constant guidance and supervision had also been provided by members of the ABACC Commission. ABACC applied the SCCC to all existing nuclear material in approximately 70 nuclear facilities in Argentina and Brazil and performed around 110 inspections per year, confirming that both countries were carrying out their nuclear activities in full compliance with their nuclear safeguards and non-proliferation commitments at both bi-national and international level. In fulfilling its mission, ABACC faced constant challenges. It had always had the full support of both countries, which provided the necessary human and financial resources, making available the existing technical infrastructure in their own nuclear organizations.

199. The world was experiencing a renaissance of nuclear energy. Various international forums were unanimous in affirming that the importance of nuclear energy in the future global energy mix was closely linked to the capacity to respond satisfactorily to concerns over safety, nuclear waste and proliferation risks. Such concerns demonstrated the importance of international non-proliferation treaties and the mechanisms and organizations responsible for the application of safeguards and physical protection. The governments of Argentina and Brazil had both decided to resume their respective nuclear programmes for peaceful purposes. In February 2008, the Presidents of both countries had reiterated their commitment to nuclear cooperation, laying the foundations for joint work in such areas as nuclear reactors and uranium enrichment. The political decision to reactivate nuclear programmes and to embark on joint ventures not only raised the growth prospects for the entire nuclear production chain of both countries, but also opened up opportunities for ABACC and extended its responsibilities. In that connection, its experience in constructing a common safeguards system could be very useful in the implementation of the new joint ventures, bearing in mind that ABACC was the first fully operational bi-national organization created by the two countries. Any joint venture involved many interactions, each one entailing problems, and ABACC had accumulated a great deal of experience in that regard since its creation. In keeping with the times, ABACC's Secretariat, in line with the guidance of the Commission, had endeavoured to keep abreast of new challenges, seeking to improve its administrative and technical activities.

200. The Agency needed to collaborate with national and regional systems, taking into account their technical capabilities, in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of safeguards, as had been recognized in Programme 93+2.

201. In December 2007, the Agency's Director General had visited ABACC headquarters. That had strengthened mutual understanding and promoted cooperation between the two bodies.

202. The procedures for short notice random inspections at fuel fabrication plants and conversion plants had been approved. They were the result of coordinated work by the authorities of Argentina and Brazil, operators in both countries and the Agency. Both countries also used the mailbox system for sending nuclear information electronically between the various organizations, national authorities and operators involved.

203. As regards inspection coordination activities, ABACC and the Agency had set up video conferencing that would be used to hold pre-inspection meetings, thus optimizing the availability of inspectors during safeguards missions and providing a faster means of exchanging ideas on inspection activities. The system would also be used for other types of meetings between the two institutions, and for contact between ABACC and other organizations.

204. With regard to procedures for the common use of equipment, both institutions were trying to make the new requirements and criteria compatible with existing internal ones, in such a way as not to impair the agreed common use of equipment. The climate of mutual trust which had always facilitated the achievement of excellent results in ABACC's relationship with the Agency should also allow that issue to be resolved successfully.

205. With regard to new safeguards methodologies and equipment, ABACC was proud to state that the testing of the UF₆ sampling method (the ABACC-Cristallini method) performed at various laboratories around the world continued to show that that method would eventually replace the current sampling technique, as it was less costly and produced less waste.

206. ABACC, in collaboration with the Agency, had also performed tests with a new line of surveillance cameras being used by the Agency which would be used in various safeguards activities in the near future, principally at facilities where portable cameras were needed.

207. Many technical and coordination meetings had also been held between the two agencies. Apart from items covered by the Quadripartite Agreement, other issues to be discussed included application of the 'state of health', joint inspection activities, procedures for common use of equipment, the design information verification plan and new safeguards approaches.

208. The next meeting of the Liaison Committee established by the Quadripartite Agreement would be held in December 2008 in Rio de Janeiro. At that meeting, representatives would analyse the results obtained and establish guidelines for future actions under the Agreement.

209. In order to ensure high-quality work, ABACC, in cooperation with the Agency, promoted the holding of courses in its various fields of activity with the participation of inspectors from both agencies. In its bid for excellence, the ABACC Secretariat had kept abreast of developments taking place internationally, paying particular attention to new surveillance technologies, including new types of cameras and a laser system for use in safeguards. Significant support had been provided for those activities through cooperation agreements with the Agency, the United States Department of Energy and Euratom.

210. With regard to technical cooperation between ABACC and the Republic of Korea, represented by the Korea Institute of Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Control, the agenda had been set for the meeting that was to be held soon in Korea and the topics for exchange of information had been determined, including short notice random inspections and the new systems and equipment used at CANDU reactors.

211. Mr LIEDERMANN (Sovereign Order of Malta) said that the Sovereign Order of Malta, as the oldest humanitarian entity founded 900 years ago, was concerned at the changes that had occurred in recent decades. The number of extremely vulnerable people in the world was growing, and there was

therefore a need for a strong civil society with effective voluntary organizations able to mobilize public good will and meet current challenges.

212. The Order maintained full diplomatic relations with 100 countries, had permanent missions to the United Nations in New York, Vienna and Geneva and carried out hospital and charitable missions throughout the world through its national associations and diplomatic channels. It was involved in medical assistance, combating leprosy, aiding the handicapped and children in difficulties, medical research, the collection and distribution of medicine, education, assisting the aged, and aiding war victims and refugees. It administered hospitals, dispensaries, cure and rehabilitation centres, welcome centres, crèches, mobile schools and camps. To respond to emergencies, the Order had formed voluntary agencies and first aid corps in many countries. Of particular note were the Order's activities in developing countries and countries menaced by civil war.

213. The Order's international relief organization, Malteser International, ran medical emergency operations and long-term reconstruction and development programmes worldwide. Twenty associations belonged to Malteser International, which ran missions in 30 countries.

214. The changes over the preceding years had shown how current and pressing the need was for a commitment to support non-proliferation, encourage the use of peaceful and safe nuclear technology, respect the environment and be mindful of the most disadvantaged people. Many positive benefits could be derived from nuclear technology in vital fields such as food security and medicine. The work of the Agency through the nuclear applications programme and PACT received ample support from the Order.

215. As some of the achievements of the 'Atoms for Peace' ideal, he highlighted the eradication of the tsetse fly from Zanzibar using the SIT, assistance to help countries improve their radiotherapy and nuclear medicine programmes, the effort to aid Bangladesh in dealing with arsenic-poisoned groundwater, and the development of various types of enhanced wheat across North Africa and barley in the Andes in Peru.

216. Over the preceding half-century, the Agency had played an important technical role in support of peace, security and development. Such efforts required serious multilateralism based on collective security, capable of building a real climate of peace and trust for everyone, and — in the tradition of the Order — an attitude of caring for the sick and poor, for those in need and for the most marginalized members of society.

The meeting rose at 7:40 p.m.