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on Thursday, 19 September 1991, at 11.20 a.m.

President: Mr. SANTANA CARVALHO (Brazil)

CONTENTS

<u>Item of the agenda*</u>		<u>Paragraphs</u>
-	Requests for the restoration of voting rights	1 - 9
7	General debate and annual report for 1990 (resumed from meeting 338)	10 - 90
	Statements by the delegates of:	
	Italy	10 - 27
	New Zealand	28 - 45
	Israel	46 - 59
	Bangladesh	60 - 74
	Qatar	75 - 85
	Kuwait	86 - 90
10	Election of Members to the Board of Governors	91 - 106

[*] GC(XXXV)/982.

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(XXXV)/INF/301/Rev.2.

Abbreviations used in this record

ASSET	Analysis of Safety Significant Events Team
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
INES	International Nuclear Event Scale
IPERS	International Peer Review Service
IRS	Incident Reporting System
ITER	International Themonuclear Experimental Reactor
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
RAPAT	Radiation Protection Advisory Team
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
R&D	Research and development
START	Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms

REQUESTS FOR THE RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS (GC(XXXV)/INF/304 and 305)

1. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had received requests from Bolivia and Senegal for the restoration of their voting rights. The General Committee recommended that the General Conference accept the request made by Senegal and reject the request made by Bolivia.

2. Mr. PONCE CABALLERO (Bolivia) said that he was amazed at the General Committee's recommendation. Eighteen countries had fallen behind with the payment of their contributions, but only two of those, Senegal and Bolivia, had requested the restoration of their voting rights. In 1991, Bolivia had repaid US \$240 million of foreign debt, which amounted to about 60% of its total exports, and it currently faced the very difficult problem of deciding which creditor to pay first. It had thus been obliged to delay the settlement of its financial obligation to the Agency, which was only \$50 000, the minimum amount payable being \$16 000. His delegation had therefore requested that those circumstances be taken into account by the General Conference, in accordance with the provisions of Article XIX of the Statute. Bolivia had always worked towards the continual strengthening of United Nations structures to ensure their greater efficiency and enhanced contribution to development. The discrimination directed at his country alone was a deep injustice which would oblige it to consider other courses of action in the future.

3. Mr. BOBADILLA (Chile) said that he had listened to the recommendation concerning Bolivia with deep concern and some dissatisfaction. His delegation supported Bolivia's just desire to be able to vote, particularly in view of the arguments put forward by that country. His delegation therefore opposed the adoption of the recommendation and reserved the right to raise the issue at a special meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. It hoped that the General Committee would have the necessary objectivity and wisdom to appreciate the possible future consequences of such a measure. Bearing in mind the fact that the General Conference usually made its decisions by consensus, it was impossible to attach much value to a consensus which excluded one Member State at the outset. In short, his delegation fully supported the Bolivian statement, opposed acceptance of the

recommendation and intended to present that point of view in the Latin American and Caribbean Group.

4. Mr. CONSTENLA (Costa Rica) said that his country did not accept the General Committee's discriminatory recommendation and joined Chile in urging that the recommendation be rejected.

5. Mr. AL-KITAL (Iraq) fully supported the statements made by the previous speakers. Discrimination of that kind against a Member State did not conform to the Agency's normal practice, particularly as in the present case there were political motives for the decision. He hoped that the General Conference would reject the General Committee's recommendation.

6. The PRESIDENT, noting that there was no opposition, proposed that the General Conference restore voting rights to both Bolivia and Senegal.

7. It was so decided.

8. Mr. BOBADILLA (Chile) welcomed the decision and said that he was confident that it would have positive repercussions on the work of the General Conference.

9. Mr. PONCE CABALLERO (Bolivia) said that he was very touched by the solidarity shown by the three countries which had openly expressed their support for Bolivia and also thanked all countries which had indirectly supported his request.

GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1990 (GC(XXXV)/953) (resumed from meeting 338)

10. Mr. TALIANI (Italy) expressed his full support for the comprehensive statement made by the delegate of the Netherlands on behalf of the member States of the European Community and said that he wished merely to add a few remarks on a number of issues of particular interest to the Italian Government.

11. The fact that a number of important States had recently acceded to the NPT or had announced their intention to do so was a clear sign that the Treaty remained valid and was acquiring a more universal scope, thereby strengthening the mutual confidence of Member States in their respective nuclear programmes.

It was clear that other countries which had not yet decided to accede to the NPT also supported the objectives of the non-proliferation regime. In that connection, his country hoped that the Agency's negotiations with Argentina and Brazil would be completed as soon as possible.

12. On the other hand, Iraq's non-compliance with its obligations under the safeguards agreement concluded with the Agency and the provisions of the NPT was a cause of great concern. Although Italy welcomed the approval by the Board of Governors of the draft safeguards agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it was alarmed at the statements made to the Board by that State, which clearly showed that it was still placing conditions on the entry into force of the agreement. The statement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the General Conference was even more worrying. It should respect its obligations under the NPT and sign, ratify and implement the safeguards agreement immediately.

13. Italy had for some time been advocating a complete review of the Agency's safeguards system. Such a revision was even more urgent in the light of the Secretariat's actions in Iraq which had been carried out so competently and under such difficult conditions. In that context, his country fully approved the proposals made by the Netherlands on behalf of the member States of the European Community. No time should be lost and urgent measures should be adopted by the Board at its February meeting, if not before. A complete review of the entire safeguards system as described in documents INFCIRC/153 and INFCIRC/66/Rev.2 should be undertaken as soon as possible. The effectiveness and efficiency of that system should be improved and no effort should be spared to rationalize and to streamline the relevant procedures still further. Such a review would show that certain additional costs could be offset by economies. For example, the increased and more effective use of special inspections might allow a reduction in the number of inspection days required.

14. His Government was convinced that the increased use of special inspections, the development of new control procedures and instruments, and the possibility of using information obtained from other sources, as the Director General had rightly pointed out, would certainly strengthen the

Agency's safeguards system, while achieving some reductions in the overall cost of its implementation.

15. The Agency's activities in the field of nuclear safety were among those to which Italy attached the highest priority. It appreciated the important role played by the Agency during the past few years in promoting "safety culture" and recognized the soundness of the initiatives taken by the Secretariat to provide Member States with a range of services to improve the safety of nuclear power plants. It was time to take a major step forward towards providing the international community with greater assurances about the safety of all operating plants. The Agency would therefore be called upon to play a monitoring role, in addition to promoting the establishment and application of more adequate and uniform safety standards.

16. The effects of nuclear accidents went far beyond national boundaries and their negative consequences were inevitably much more serious than the purely material damage caused. His country was firmly convinced that nuclear safety was a common objective of all mankind, which could only be achieved through the efforts of all States

17. His country welcomed the results of the recently held International Conference on the Safety of Nuclear Power and reiterated its view that work should begin as soon as possible on the establishment of an international safety regime by means of a convention to be concluded within the framework of the Agency. Such a convention, which as many Member States as possible should sign, would include binding safety objectives and provisions for an independent international monitoring mechanism. Furthermore, such an international safety regime should include common waste management regulations. Italy approved the major findings of that Conference contained in chapter III of its proceedings and the recommendations for future action agreed upon by the Board the previous week.

18. In the meantime, the Agency should help to improve the co-ordination of nuclear safety activities in different countries. In order to do so, the regulatory and control procedures in different countries should be reviewed and any shortcomings or areas requiring rationalization should be identified; national procedures should be rationalized, streamlined and harmonized and

shortcomings eliminated, in particular by developing models for national safety regulations; Member States should issue periodic statements confirming their compliance with the internationally agreed standards; a mechanism for continuous quality assessment of national regimes should be established, based essentially on the quality assurance programmes and tailored, if possible, to the needs of individual States or groups of States; the Agency should be empowered to conduct IPERS, OSART, ASSET and RAPAT missions, not only at a country's request, as was the case at present, but also at its own discretion, on a systematic basis and whenever specific safety-significant situations arose; participation in the IRS should be extended to all nuclear operators worldwide, who should provide the Agency with all the relevant information on safety-significant events as soon as possible so that it could carefully assess those events with the assistance of national experts and other competent international organizations and disseminate the results of those evaluations among nuclear operators; all events of public interest should be reported through the INES within 24 hours for immediate communication to all participating countries; and finally, regional and sub-regional safety approaches should be examined.

19. The development of a new generation of reactors with higher safety levels was a vital aspect of nuclear safety. The national energy plan approved by his Government in August 1989 accordingly provided for the launching of a research programme on new, safer reactor designs incorporating extensive passive/inherent safety features. The main safety objective was to limit the environmental impact and off-site radiological consequences of any conceivable accident, in order to avoid the need for a specific evacuation plan and the occurrence of any significant long-term land contamination.

20. The national energy plan specifically recommended the linking of Italian research to R&D programmes of the next generation of reactors in other countries through co-operation on specific projects and topics related to nuclear safety and environmental impact. His Government believed that the Agency should have a co-ordinating role, as envisaged in the executive summary of the Medium-Term Plan examined by the Board the previous week.

21. The disposal of radioactive waste, particularly of high-level, long-lived wastes, was one of the greatest sources of concern among the general public and, increasingly, in political circles. That issue might well become a very serious obstacle to the further development of nuclear energy. Public opposition was not only a potential obstacle to the use of processes currently being studied, but was in fact a serious obstacle to the research required for their approval.

22. In that context, his country attached great importance to the studies currently being conducted in several countries on the improvement of methods of separating actinides and certain long-lived fission products from high-level wastes and subsequently transforming them (through transmutation) into stable or shorter-lived isotopes. That was obviously a long-term strategy which could not yet be considered as an alternative to current strategies, although it did offer the attractive prospect of simplifying the problems associated with disposal in geological formations. Owing to the great complexity and the interdisciplinary nature of the problems involved, a considerable effort in both human and economic terms would be needed in order to carry out an in-depth study and balanced assessment of the new strategy. Extensive international co-operation was therefore essential and the Agency had an important role to play in promoting and co-ordinating such co-operation.

23. Italy was also grateful to the Agency for its sponsorship of thermo-nuclear fusion studies. It fully supported the ITER project developed under the auspices of the Agency by the United States, the USSR, Japan and EURATOM, and it welcomed the results of the conceptual design phase which had been completed the previous year. It hoped that the current negotiations on the next phase (engineering design) would soon be completed.

24. The study undertaken by Italy on the peaceful use of military nuclear material should be considered carefully by all States, as the future of nuclear warheads was a matter of general concern. That study, called the "Edoardo Amaldi Project", had been presented for the first time in the form of a working document, by the Italian delegation to the Fourth NPT Review Conference. Since then, its technological and industrial implications had been analysed by a group of qualified experts from three leading Italian

corporations: Ansaldo, ENEA and ENEL. The sponsors of the Amaldi Project intended to submit that study in the near future to an international technical meeting for examination and evaluation. An information document on the subject had been distributed to the General Conference by his delegation.

25. The problem of the disposal of nuclear warheads and of their use for peaceful purposes had acquired new relevance after the signature of the START Treaty and the dramatic acceleration of the nuclear disarmament process. A recent study published by the United States National Academy of Sciences called for further drastic reductions of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons and for the total elimination of strategic nuclear forces. The Academy had also requested that any future agreement should include procedures for the disposal of nuclear warheads. The issue of the conversion of nuclear weapons for peaceful purposes might therefore soon appear on the international community's agenda.

26. His delegation wished to reiterate its dissatisfaction that no progress had been made on the revision of Article VI of the Statute. Unless a solution was found to that problem, which was of interest to so many Member States, tensions would inevitably arise which could adversely affect the effectiveness of the Agency as a whole.

27. Finally, his delegation warmly welcomed the four new Member States of the Agency, particularly the three Baltic States, and looked forward to constructive co-operation with them.

28. Mr. BROOKS (New Zealand) said that he doubted whether any of the participants at the first General Conference in 1957 could have imagined the complex set of tasks which were now facing the Agency. Significant new developments concerning the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons had taken place over the past year, yet the pace of the Agency's other activities had been maintained. Discussions about nuclear trade had continued on the fringes of the Agency. A major nuclear safety conference had been held to examine ways of improving standards of safety, radiation protection and waste management. The Agency had continued its technical co-operation activities, which included a wide range of non-power applications. The membership of the Agency had increased, and his country welcomed the new Member States.

29. The Agency's activities had nevertheless been overshadowed by the threat of nuclear proliferation. For the first time in its history, the Board of Governors had found that a Member State party to the NPT had not complied with the safeguards agreement which it had concluded with the Agency. That non-compliance on the part of Iraq raised fundamental questions for the Agency and the non-proliferation regime as a whole, which needed to be tackled head on. Effective mechanisms were required to prevent a repetition of such non-compliance. Safeguards agreements served a vital purpose in verifying the commitment of Member States to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

30. Fortunately, 1990 had also witnessed positive trends which were helping to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and to promote nuclear trade for peaceful purposes. His country welcomed the decision of France and China to accede to the NPT, which meant that soon all five declared nuclear powers would be party to that Treaty. The Treaty would thus have a degree of support which it had never previously enjoyed.

31. It was to be hoped that all nuclear-weapon States and the other main nuclear suppliers would in future impose the adoption of an internationally binding commitment to non-proliferation and the acceptance of full-scope safeguards by the recipient as a prerequisite for nuclear supply.

32. The non-proliferation regime had also been strengthened by South Africa's accession to the NPT in July 1991 and by its prompt signature of a safeguards agreement with the Agency. His country welcomed those developments and the accession to the NPT of Mozambique and then Tanzania and Zambia. The growing support in southern Africa for the idea of making that region a nuclear-weapon-free zone had been mentioned on several occasions in Agency meetings.

33. His country hoped that other States with significant nuclear industries which had not yet signed the NPT would reconsider their position and show their firm support for international mechanisms to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons. It had also followed with interest the progress made by Argentina and Brazil in their nuclear co-operation with the Agency, particularly in the area of safeguards.

34. Although at least one NPT safeguards agreement had recently been concluded in a short period of time, it was discouraging to note that other countries were taking much longer to do so. His country welcomed the recent conclusion of an agreement between the Agency and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which had been approved by the Board of Governors the previous week. It shared the concern of its neighbours at suggestions that that State might be operating unsafeguarded nuclear facilities. It looked forward to the early signature of the safeguards agreement and to its entry into force as soon as possible in order to alleviate those concerns.

35. His country was pleased to note that several small countries in the south-west Pacific without significant nuclear activities (Tuvalu, Kiribati and Solomon Islands) had concluded safeguards agreements and had chosen the simplified option of bringing them into force immediately upon signature. Some countries in other regions which did not have significant nuclear activities had not yet concluded safeguards agreements within the framework of the NPT. It might be useful for the Agency to draw their attention to the simplified procedures which were applicable in such cases.

36. Those encouraging developments and the strengthening of the Agency's vital role in defence of the non-proliferation regime were in stark contrast to the conduct of Iraq. In resolution 687, the Security Council had entrusted the Agency with the vital mission of investigating Iraq's nuclear activities. Since then, a significant amount of information on that country's nuclear programmes had come to light. The Agency had worked in conditions which were sometimes difficult, but after almost 1000 inspection days, some progress had been achieved in determining the thrust and scope of Iraq's nuclear activities.

37. The information which had emerged so far concerning Iraq's non-compliance with its NPT safeguards agreement was a cause for grave concern. New Zealand, as a party to the NPT and a founding Member of the Agency, shared the view expressed by the Board of Governors. In its resolution adopted on 18 July 1991 (GOV/2532), the Board had condemned the Iraqi Government's non-compliance with that safeguards agreement and had called upon it to remedy that non-compliance forthwith. Since then, the Agency had reported a further instance of Iraq's non-compliance with that agreement.

38. Security Council resolution 707, which condemned Iraq, set out the international community's position. For its part, the General Conference should reinforce that message. Iraq's nuclear activities had had unfortunate repercussions on the international safeguards system. A direct blow had been dealt to the NPT and to Agency safeguards, which were vital to the non-proliferation regime and consequently to international security. Those repercussions should be faced with determination, skill, speed and foresight.

39. The Director General had identified three means of strengthening the existing regime. Firstly, Member States would have to provide information to the Agency on undeclared facilities. Secondly, the Agency should be able to inspect those facilities and, thirdly, the support of the Security Council was required.

40. A number of other proposals had been made for strengthening the safeguards system. New Zealand had co-sponsored a draft resolution initiated by Australia which requested the Board of Governors and the Director General to take appropriate steps as soon as possible. Some of those measures seemed to be plain common sense, particularly suggestions made concerning the early provision of design information for new facilities to facilitate satisfactory planning of safeguards activities. Proposals to improve the reporting of data concerning transfers of nuclear material and equipment also merited further attention. Other proposals would clearly require further technical study as soon as possible.

41. The proposals which had emerged from the Fourth NPT Review Conference in 1990 should also be borne in mind. He congratulated the Director General on the establishment of a special working group to consider some of those proposals. A good deal of work had been carried out on special inspections, which his country regarded as a way of improving the effectiveness of the current safeguards system. The provisions for the use of that mechanism already existed implicitly in safeguards agreements. His country hoped that agreement would be reached swiftly on the procedures for and use of special inspections.

42. The safeguards system had also been put to the test in other ways. Indeed, the constraints imposed by zero real growth continued to affect the

safeguards budget. The present system of financing was not well designed to respond to the increasing demands made on it. Informal consultations on some of those fundamental issues had not led to the progress for which his country had hoped.

43. A curious situation had arisen: New Zealand, for example, had no significant nuclear activities and yet its contribution was equivalent to that of six "shielded" States operating a total of nearly 30 nuclear power plants. As the safeguards system played a crucial role in international security, it was all the more necessary to ensure that the financing of safeguards was based on an equitable system which could be sustained well into the twenty-first century.

44. Strategies for the future had been the underlying theme of the International Conference on the Safety of Nuclear Power which had been held in Vienna two weeks previously. The Conference had acknowledged the Agency's constructive contribution to nuclear safety, radiation protection and waste management, which were areas of interest to all regions of the world. The proposal for a framework convention on nuclear safety and radioactive waste disposal was interesting and his country looked forward to assessing the views of other Member States on the matter.

45. The Agency had entered a whole new era, dominated by the historic agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons. Decisive changes had taken place in Europe. However, the fact that one Member State had attacked another and had blatantly violated its safeguards agreement, with all the underlying implications for its nuclear activities, was disturbing. The system which had been established to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons had been attacked and it was clear that it was impossible to do without that system.

46. Mr. ETTINGER (Israel) said that, in view of the formidable challenges confronting the nuclear community and the vast potential of nuclear applications in many areas of science and technology, it was most desirable that the participants at the General Conference should concentrate their deliberations on matters arising from the Agency's mission and functions and directly related to its mandate. He had himself originally intended to focus

on issues connected with the beneficial applications of nuclear energy, ionizing radiation and radioactive materials aimed at improving the quality of life on Earth. However, in view of the fact that certain political issues had been forced upon the General Conference, he would have to deviate from a constructive discussion on technical and scientific matters and devote part of his statement to them.

47. Addressing briefly some important aspects of nuclear energy, he emphasized that, according to its Statute, a primary objective of the Agency was to "accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world". The question was now how to proceed in order to achieve that most commendable objective under the current circumstances and constraints. He was therefore pleased to note that precisely that question was being addressed by the Secretariat and the Board of Governors in the formulations of the 1993-98 Medium-Term Plan.

48. World public opinion was still extremely wary of any substantial growth in nuclear applications. Even the educated public and the media seemed to be more strongly concerned by the hazards associated with radioactivity than by the danger of disease caused by pathogens in food, not to mention the more severe, but still little known and rather theoretical, greenhouse effect.

49. For that reason, although nuclear power was the only technologically and economically sound alternative for electricity production which would not add to the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, only a modest, if any, increase in the number of nuclear power installations was forecast for the next decade.

50. The Agency should be commended for its tireless efforts to dispel public misconceptions and prejudices. The excellent specialized conferences on nuclear reactor safety and accident prevention and management, together with the growing list of titles in the authoritative Safety Series and other publications, could serve as an appropriate basis for the current campaign to increase public acceptance (or public awareness) of the merits of nuclear power. More efforts were needed to communicate the often complex technical concepts and data in a form that could be understood by the general public.

51. He also commended the Agency for its organizational and technical skill in planning and implementing the International Chernobyl Project and for the

clear and careful presentation of the results to the world community. The report convincingly dispelled many of the myths about exaggerated effects, without trying to minimize the overall severity of the disaster and its consequences. Nevertheless, the scepticism with which at least part of the public and media regarded the report's conclusions was a good example of the difficulty confronting the international community. As far as radiation was concerned, people would rather cling to their myths and prejudices than be confused by facts.

52. In his statement the previous year he had drawn attention to the role nuclear energy could play in helping solve the grave problem of water shortage in arid areas of the world, such as the Middle East. He reiterated his view that small power units of about 100 to 150 MW(e), considered very attractive in terms of their nuclear safety, were eminently suitable energy sources for desalination plants with a capacity of about 500 000 m³ per day. He also repeated his offer to make available to the Agency the know-how and expertise accumulated by Israel in advanced water desalination technologies. It should be remembered that the provision of adequate water supplies was a necessary condition for preserving peace and ensuring reasonable living standards in many parts of the world.

53. He believed that another important task should be entrusted to the Agency. The environmental and ecological effects of natural and man-made catastrophes often transcended the borders of their countries of origin, with examples ranging from large volcanic eruptions to the deliberate burning of oil wells in Kuwait. To mitigate the consequences of such events there was a need for an international network of experts in the atmospheric dispersal of pollutants, which could be easily mobilized and which had adequate means of communication and precalibrated computer programs to perform risk analysis and to evaluate the results. Of all the international organizations, the Agency seemed the most suitable to set up and maintain such a network. He therefore proposed that steps be taken towards the implementation of a co-ordinated programme along those lines.

54. Cutting short his general comments in order to address some of the issues on the agenda, he recalled that in his statement at the previous General Conference he had referred to the alarming information that Iraq was

pursuing activities aimed at acquiring a nuclear weapon capability, in breach of its obligations under the NPT. The delegate of Iraq had replied that he did not wish to dwell on the wholly senseless and groundless statement made by the delegate of Israel about the Iraqi nuclear programme, which was devoted to peaceful purposes and under Agency safeguards (document GC(XXXIV)/OR.327 of 26 April 1991).

55. After the Gulf War it had become clear that the Iraqi Government had taken steps to develop its nuclear weapon potential and that it had been a mistake to disregard Israel's warnings. The Iraqi case demonstrated the grave consequences which resulted when a government decided to spurn its international obligations. In June 1991, the Board of Governors had declared that Iraq had violated its safeguards agreement with the Agency by not submitting nuclear material and nuclear installations to Agency inspection. In July 1991, the Board had condemned it for concealing its nuclear programme and had expressed great concern about the evident deception and obstruction of Agency inspectors in their efforts to carry out their tasks. In September 1991, it had concluded that there was evidence of further non-compliance by Iraq with its obligations.

56. The Iraqi case posed a new and unprecedented challenge to the Agency. He believed that all the delegates to the General Conference shared his appreciation of the manner in which the Agency, under the leadership of the Director General, had risen to meet that challenge and had stayed true to its mission under difficult and unusual circumstances.

57. It was now widely established that as far as threats were concerned, the real and immediate threat was Iraq. The Iraqi case, particularly Iraq's non-compliance with its Agency safeguards agreement, had once again vindicated Israel's long-held view that in the volatile region of the Middle East, mere acceptance of full-scope safeguards was not a sufficient barrier to non-proliferation if a country decided to renege on its commitments. The concept of a nuclear-weapon-free zone as proposed by Israel for the past decade was based on the primacy of regional initiatives, direct negotiations among the States and verification by mutual inspections. Had Israel's concept

of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and its modalities been implemented at the right time, the Iraqi nuclear threat could probably have been prevented and a Middle East war averted.

58. Intense negotiations were now under way to strengthen peace in the Middle East. The General Conference should refrain from upsetting the delicate fabric of agreements which were being negotiated by initiating or adopting resolutions which might jeopardize the peace process. The events of the preceding year should make Member States reflect on the extent to which the confidence which the Agency was supposed to confer not only in the Middle East, but everywhere, had been impaired.

59. It was, therefore, more important than ever to make additional efforts to maintain the Agency's legality, integrity and credibility. The future of the Agency as a technical organization entrusted with a special mission in the nuclear field was at stake. Involving the Agency in extraneous political debate would not help to solve the problems it was facing. The Israeli delegation therefore asked other delegations to bear those thoughts in mind. The formidable challenges facing the Agency demanded that the international community exercise foresight and responsibility.

60. Mr. MANNAN (Bangladesh), after welcoming Yemen, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which had recently become Members of the Agency, noted with satisfaction that France had decided to accede to the NPT and that China had announced its intention to do so. On the other hand, he was dismayed at the fact that one of the signatories of the NPT had violated its obligations under that Treaty and under the corresponding safeguards agreement. There was therefore an urgent need to strengthen safeguards to prevent a recurrence of such a situation.

61. The preceding year, which had marked Bangladesh's transition to democracy, had been a very significant one in the history of that country, now in the process of restructuring in all development sectors, which would lead to more prominence for the private sector in the years to come. Scientific and technical objectives would be revised according to the needs of different sectors of the national economy. Bangladesh was firmly committed to the use of nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes. The new democratic

Government reaffirmed that policy and hoped sincerely that the nuclear threat would be eliminated.

62. For economic and other reasons, it was rather difficult for developing countries to use science and technology effectively in their development efforts. Developing countries had to continue to import technology and that was a handicap for them. In spite of all those difficulties, Bangladesh had, over the years, been able to achieve considerable success in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and his country was extremely grateful to the Agency for the valuable support and assistance which it had provided in that area.

63. Applied and basic research in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were an important part of Bangladesh's overall programme. Programmes in various disciplines had been drawn up taking account of national priorities and economic constraints. The priority areas of the R&D programmes involving nuclear techniques included agricultural production, food preservation, sterilization of medical supplies and equipment, medical care and health services, quality control and quality assurance, instrumentation and control systems, electronics, radiation protection and environmental monitoring. In all those areas it had been possible, with varying degrees of success, to put the results of research in practice.

64. The Atomic Energy Commission, in conjunction with a local private enterprise and with the Agency's technical and financial assistance, was constructing a gamma irradiator for the preservation of food and the sterilization of medical products. The irradiator would be operational by the end of 1991 and would provide irradiation services on a semi-commercial scale. The experience gained on that project would enable the private sector to consider the construction of other similar commercial plants in the future. Bangladesh was also using nuclear techniques to develop high-yielding, early-maturing and disease-resistant crop varieties.

65. The application of nuclear and other modern techniques in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases, together with other related research in Bangladesh, had given encouraging results. Ten nuclear medical centres in Bangladesh were already providing such services and more centres were planned in order to serve a wider cross-section of the population.

66. Nuclear methods were being used successfully in conducting various types of non-destructive testing. Related services were also being provided to different industries and to other production-related sectors. There were plans to use the research reactor to provide neutron radiography services in the future. In addition, technical personnel from the private sector were being trained in the safe use of such techniques.

67. Nuclear and other techniques were being used in environmental pollution studies for elemental analysis to determine the presence of unacceptable pollutants. Imported foodstuffs and consumables were also being tested to determine their acceptability for consumption from the radiation point of view. A number of radioisotopes for medical and other uses were being produced at the Savar research reactor. Production was expected to increase after the completion of the isotope production laboratory and installation of the $^{99}\text{Tc}^{\text{m}}$ generator line, which would substantially reduce dependence on imported isotopes.

68. Other research and development programmes were concerned with computational work, including the implementation of various codes in a mainframe computer, activation analysis, various experiments with neutrons, radiation-induced vulcanization of natural rubber latex, pest control, tissue grafting and certain fields of biotechnology. A secondary standard dosimetry laboratory had been established with the Agency's assistance to facilitate calibration of radiation detectors.

69. Bangladesh's development programmes should focus on the ecosystem and the necessary capability and expertise to understand that ecosystem should be acquired so as to benefit from it and mitigate the human suffering caused by the natural calamities which befell the country almost every year. It was also important to study the effects of global environmental phenomena on the local environment. It was feared that the unprecedented flooding which had hit Bangladesh at the beginning of 1991 might have been caused by global warming due to the greenhouse effect. He hoped that a way of dealing with such calamities could be found through international co-operation and he called upon the Agency to take the lead in that area, especially since nuclear power was identified as an effective way of reducing greenhouse gases in the environment.

70. Deltaic formations featured prominently in the topography of Bangladesh and rivers played an essential role in the country's economy. As such, relevant aspects of deltaic formations should be studied properly. Bangladesh hoped to use nuclear techniques in the future for such research, which would include studies of the movement and quantification of surface and ground waters and the siltation of harbours and other navigational routes. Bangladesh hoped to receive international co-operation for that research.

71. Bangladesh's primary energy resources were not adequate to meet the increasing demand for energy, especially for electricity. Nuclear power was regarded as an option that would bridge the ever-increasing gap between electricity demand and supply. The need for nuclear power had become more acute in view of the environmental degradation caused by fossil fuel power plants. However, Bangladesh had not been able to solve the problem of how to finance nuclear power plants and there had been no change in the international situation in that respect. His delegation appealed again to the Agency to exercise its good offices in finding a solution to that problem in order to arrange adequate funding for small and medium power reactors in developing countries. At the same time, he hoped that it would be possible to standardize the design of future reactors in order to make them safer, more reliable and more economically competitive.

72. Bangladesh benefited immensely from the Agency's technical assistance programme, without which it would not have been possible to build up its technical manpower or to establish various experimental facilities for its research and development programmes on the peaceful use of atomic energy. The RCA had played an important role in that context, as it offered an opportunity to tackle problems common to countries in Asia and the Pacific region and to exchange experience among research workers of those countries. He sincerely hoped that the different activities carried out under the RCA would be strengthened further in the future.

73. In some areas of nuclear energy application, Bangladesh had attained a respectable level of technical competence and was willing to share its experience with others. It had recently started receiving trainees through the Agency or through bilateral arrangements with other countries. It was

also participating in regional co-operation programmes and had taken the initiative of organizing international and regional workshops and training programmes. It was hoped that those activities would increase in the future.

74. In conclusion, he thanked the Agency for its continued assistance to Bangladesh and urged that it increase the resources allocated to technical co-operation activities in order to enhance the transfer of peaceful nuclear technology to developing countries.

75. Mr. JAMAL (Qatar) congratulated Yemen, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on becoming Members of the Agency. He hoped that they would contribute effectively to realizing the peaceful aims for which the organization had been set up and take part in promoting the adoption of fair measures to ensure international peace and security. Furthermore, he congratulated the Director General on the Annual Report for 1990 and commended the efforts which had been made to improve the Agency's efficiency and to carry out its extensive tasks related, on the one hand, to its mission of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and, on the other hand, to its mission of verifying the application of safeguards pursuant to the NPT.

76. During the previous year, the Middle East had been the scene of grave events which had alerted the international community to the vital importance of that part of the world and the need to ensure peace and stability there; they had also highlighted the major role which the Agency played in monitoring the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in inspecting nuclear facilities placed under safeguards. The Agency had played, and continued to play, an important role in the Middle East, where it supervised the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and offered countries in the region technical assistance and expert services in various fields. During and after the events in the Gulf region, the Agency had also been playing an important role in the implementation of Security Council resolution 687.

77. Noting that the latter resolution stressed the need to work towards the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, he pointed out that that objective could only be achieved by implementing all the resolutions of the United Nations and other international bodies which condemned the nuclear arms race in the region and called upon all

countries in the region, without exception, to place their nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards.

78. Qatar was gravely concerned at the permanent threat caused by Israel's growing military capabilities. The Israeli Government, which was responsible for starting the arms race in the region, was still developing its arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and obstructing the search for a global, just settlement, despite the international community's sincere attempts to hold an international Middle East peace conference. It was thereby jeopardizing all the peace efforts.

79. Israel's persistent refusal to implement the resolutions of international organizations calling on it to accede to the NPT and submit its nuclear facilities to Agency safeguards and inspections was extremely dangerous and constituted an open challenge to the international community, which was trying to find a peaceful and fair solution to the problems in the region.

80. His delegation was pleased that the five permanent members of the Security Council had reached an agreement concerning the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and the establishment of a zone free from such weapons in the region. It also welcomed enthusiastically the call by the major powers for all the nuclear activities of countries in the region to be placed under Agency safeguards. That call applied principally to Israel. Indeed, any form of disarmament in the region which did not include Israel would be incomplete and would only perpetuate the threat of war and aggression.

81. Furthermore, he welcomed the statement which had been made at the end of the summit meeting of the seven major industrialized countries. That statement had called for a reinforcement of the role which the United Nations and related organizations played in the maintenance of international peace, control of arms exports, and the prohibition of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

82. Qatar was convinced of the importance of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and thought that States, particularly those in the Middle East, should accede to the NPT. He therefore urged Member States of the Agency to give

their full support to the Director General so that he could take all the necessary measures to intensify consultations with countries in the region, especially those with nuclear activities, with a view to achieving global application of the safeguards system, without waiting for a political solution to the problems of those countries. Indeed, comprehensive application of the safeguards system should help to instil confidence in the parties to the conflict and pave the way towards a peaceful, lasting and fair solution.

83. The Agency's Annual Report for 1990 showed that particular emphasis had been given to radioactive waste management activities, which were important to the industrialized countries. His delegation felt that the Agency should allocate more budgetary resources to the financing of programmes on nuclear applications, which contributed to the development and improvement of the standard of living of countries in the Third World. The implementation of plans to produce potable water economically, in particular through the desalination of sea water using nuclear techniques, would be extremely beneficial not only to arid regions where there was a lack of potable water, but also in all other parts of the world affected by pollution and climatic changes.

84. He welcomed the efforts which had been made by the Department of Technical Co-operation and noted with satisfaction that the programme implementation rate had increased by comparison with the previous year. He hoped that that trend would be maintained and stressed the need to improve performance where appropriate, to reduce administrative expenses, to improve the Agency's efficiency and to make the best possible use of resources and capabilities in the field of technical co-operation in order to respond to the needs and aspirations of Member States, particularly those of the developing countries.

85. For the Agency to be able to accomplish the noble mission for which it had been set up, all Member States had to co-operate on good terms and have confidence in the advent of a world of peace and justice. For its part, Qatar would continue to support the Agency's activities and wished the General Conference every success in its work.

86. Mr. AL-AWADHI (Kuwait) congratulated Yemen, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia on becoming Members of the Agency and wished them every success. One year previously, his delegation had informed the world from the same rostrum of the seriousness and scale of the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. Kuwait, which was now liberated from the yoke of occupation, thanked the fraternal and friendly countries which had stood by it in time of adversity. His country set great store by the Agency's activities and was committed to co-operating more closely with it in order to expand the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Indeed, it was common knowledge that Kuwait made major financial contributions to technical projects which were being implemented with the Agency's collaboration in friendly and fraternal countries and that it co-operated with the Agency in the field of nuclear medicine. Thus, before the Iraqi occupation, the nuclear medicine centre of Kuwait had welcomed several Agency fellowship holders.

87. Iraq's non-compliance with its safeguards obligations and the persistent efforts of the Baghdad régime to acquire nuclear weapons constituted a serious threat to international peace and security. Iraq's repeated attempts to conceal information from the international inspection teams were overwhelming proof that the Iraqi régime was not complying fully with the Security Council resolutions which called upon it to declare immediately and in full all its nuclear activities and to place its activities under Agency safeguards. Member States might be amazed at the devious behaviour of one of their number, but Kuwait had been the victim of Iraqi aggression and was well acquainted with the circuitous patterns of the Baghdad Government, whose catalogue of ruses and stratagems was constantly on the increase. Not content with infringing international law, Iraq was compounding its frontier violations and refusing to liberate Kuwaiti prisoners. The Kuwaiti delegation therefore urged the Agency to oppose firmly and determinedly any violation of which Iraq or another Member State might be guilty and to ensure that they complied with international law in the interests of building a civilized world founded on respect and trust.

88. The Kuwaiti delegation was also deeply concerned at Israel's refusal to submit its nuclear facilities to full-scope Agency safeguards, thereby posing a serious threat to the Middle East. Since the strengthening of peace and

security in the Middle East would contribute greatly to international peace and security, his delegation lent its full support to the initiatives aimed at making that region a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

89. Pollution caused by increases in gas emissions was a serious problem throughout the world. As everyone was aware, the barbarous destruction by Iraq of Kuwaiti oil wells had inflicted considerable losses on Kuwait. Those acts of destruction constituted an ecological catastrophe for the country and also posed an extremely serious threat to the whole planet. The Kuwaiti delegation therefore fully supported all initiatives aimed at protecting the environment and urged that the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy be accompanied by all the necessary safety measures, since releases of radioactivity constituted a threat not only to countries which had nuclear activities.

90. The Kuwaiti delegation attached great importance to the amendment of Article VI.A.2 of the Agency's Statute, since it felt that the "Africa" and "Middle East and South Asia" regions were not fairly represented on the Board of Governors. It was time to remedy that lack of balance and Member States should therefore focus their attention on that issue which had been under discussion for 14 years.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS (GC(XXXV)/985)

91. The PRESIDENT recalled that, in 1989, the General Conference had approved a procedure whereby, when there was agreement regarding the candidate or candidates from a particular area, no secret ballot would be held; balloting would only take place for regions where no candidate had been agreed upon. As the previous year had shown, when the elections were conducted without a vote, much time was saved. Rule 79 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, which provided that elections to the Board should be by secret ballot, would be suspended for regions for which no secret ballot was to be held.

92. Under Rule 83 of the Rules of Procedure, the presiding officer had to indicate to the General Conference those elective places on the Board which

had to be filled. He drew delegates' attention to document GC(XXXV)/985 in that connection. Paragraph 2 of that document indicated for each geographical area the number of Member States which had to be elected so as to ensure that the Board would be constituted in accordance with Article VI.A of the Statute. Paragraph 3 listed the 24 Member States which had been designated by the Board of Governors in June for membership of the Board in accordance with Article VI.A.1 of the Statute or which had been elected by the General Conference in 1990 in accordance with Article VI.A.2 of the Statute and which would therefore be serving on the Board during 1991-92. In order to facilitate the election, delegates had been provided with an informal note showing the results of the consultations among the eight geographical area groups regarding their candidates for the vacant seats. Delegates would see that agreement had been reached among the members of the following regions: Latin America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Middle East and South Asia, and Far East. No agreement had been reached on the two seats for Africa and the so-called "floating" seat and secret ballots would have to be held.

93. Inviting the General Conference to proceed with the elections along the lines which he had indicated, he said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the General Conference wished to elect Ecuador and Mexico to the two seats for Latin America.

94. Ecuador and Mexico were duly elected.

95. The PRESIDENT said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the General Conference wished to elect Greece and Norway to the two seats for Western Europe.

96. Greece and Norway were duly elected.

97. The PRESIDENT said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the General Conference wished to elect Bulgaria and Romania to the two seats for Eastern Europe.

98. Bulgaria and Romania were duly elected.

99. The PRESIDENT said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the General Conference wished to elect Pakistan to the seat for the Middle East and South Asia.

100. Pakistan was duly elected.

101. The PRESIDENT said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the General Conference wished to elect the Republic of Korea to the seat for the Far East.

102. The Republic of Korea was duly elected.

103. The PRESIDENT invited the General Conference to proceed with a vote by secret ballot for the two seats to be filled by Africa and the so-called "floating" seat, which was to be filled on the present occasion by the Far East.

104. A secret ballot was held to fill the two seats for Africa and the "floating" seat.

105. At the suggestion of the President, a member of the Australian delegation and a member of the Brazilian delegation were appointed as tellers.

106. The PRESIDENT, noting that the counting of the votes would take some time, suggested that the meeting be adjourned.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

