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President: Mr. PADOLINA (Philippines)

Later: Mr. HOBEICA (Lebanon)

Later: Mr. BENMOUSSA (Morocco)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(40)/INF/13/Rev.2.

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Abbreviations used in this record

Agreed Framework	Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Canberra Commission	Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization
DOE	United States Department of Energy
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
G-7	Group of Seven
MOX	Mixed oxide
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
Nuclear Safety Convention	Convention on Nuclear Safety
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPANAL	Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PHWR	Pressurized heavy water reactor
Rarotonga Treaty	South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
START	Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
TUIWE	Trade Unions International of Workers in Energy
Vienna Convention	Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (May 1963)
WANO	World Association of Nuclear Operators
World Bank	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1995 (GC(40)/8) (continued)

1. Ms. O'LEARY (United States of America) began by reading out the following message from the President of the United States of America to the General Conference:

"During its nearly 40-year history, the IAEA has played a critical role in the international community's efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and to promote the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology. The Agency has tremendous responsibilities in maintaining peace and security throughout the world and its performance has earned it the confidence of IAEA Member States.

"But as the world changes in the wake of the Cold War and our nuclear challenges are transformed, we must ensure that the IAEA remains prepared and ready to meet its new responsibilities. Non-proliferation is a fundamental pillar of the national security and foreign policy of the United States. More than ever before, the international community understands how directly nuclear proliferation threatens worldwide stability. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) represents the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, and we must ensure compliance with the Treaty. That is why we must strengthen the Agency's ability to carry out its mandate and provide it with the necessary authority and resources to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons, including the Agency's capability to detect undeclared nuclear activities.

"The United States firmly supports those measures proposed by the Secretariat in Programme 93+2. The United States stands ready to apply the new safeguards as fully as possible in our country consistent with our obligations under the NPT. I urge all Member States to join the United States in an early consensus on strengthening safeguards as a matter of common importance.

"The indefinite extension of the NPT last year secured the framework of the international non-proliferation effort for all future generations. Now we must provide additional tools to fight the spread of nuclear weapons. One of the most important steps that can be taken this year is the signature of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). This agreement will supplement the NPT as a primary bulwark against nuclear proliferation. I urge all nations to sign the CTBT.

"Diminishing the threat of proliferation will help to facilitate the safe and productive use of nuclear equipment and materials. Efforts to ensure effective technical co-operation among nations have established the IAEA as a partner in concrete economic and social development across the globe. In setting standards for the secure use of nuclear technology in medicine, energy, agriculture, and other areas of human benefit, the IAEA is working to prevent

the use of nuclear technology for war by showing how atomic energy can be used successfully for peace.

"The success of the IAEA depends on close co-operation among its Members. With the fortieth session of the General Conference, I am confident that we will continue to expand global collaboration in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology in the context of a strong non-proliferation regime. On behalf of the people of the United States, I extend to you my best wishes for a productive and successful Conference."

2. When President Clinton had come to office, the international community had been facing the difficult challenge of adjusting to the realities of a world without Cold War. With the assistance of the United States' international partners, he had launched a bold and comprehensive strategy to ensure nuclear peace in the post-Cold War era.

That strategy focused on three main issues: improving nuclear safety, overcoming new nuclear security dangers, and demonstrating the continued value of nuclear energy and technology for human development.

3. The Agency had a key role to play in that strategy by promoting nuclear safety, expanding the international use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, and preventing nuclear proliferation. The unflinching commitment and vision of the Agency, together with its strong leadership, were a key factor in realizing the possibilities of the post-Cold War world. One decisive element was the commitment to strengthen IAEA safeguards and ensure that the IAEA had the ability and authority to verify safeguards obligations under the NPT. The proposals contained in Programme 93+2 should satisfactorily improve the Agency's capabilities in that regard.

4. In 1995, the signatory States of the NPT had accomplished one of the most significant security achievements of the new era: the indefinite extension of the NPT. Coming at a critical time in world history - the fiftieth anniversary of the nuclear age - that event had been a dramatic triumph for world peace and security. At present, the international community faced an equally important challenge in the fight to preserve global peace and security. After two and a half years of negotiations, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty had been concluded. The resolution on the CTBT had been passed by the United Nations with a resounding majority and the Treaty would

be opened for signature on 24 September 1996. She encouraged all nations to sign it.

5. At the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995, the nuclear-weapon States had committed themselves to moving towards irreversible nuclear disarmament. One major step in that direction had been taken during the current year at the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security. At that meeting, nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States had discussed openly how to control and dispose of fissile material which had been produced for weapons and was no longer needed. The chief outcome of the meeting was an agreement to place excess fissile material under international safeguards as soon as was practicable. A dialogue on that issue had started between the United States, Russia and the IAEA and would continue during the week of the General Conference. The parties had also agreed to take action during 1996 on the safe management and permanent disposal of excess weapons-usable nuclear material. Russia and the United States had already diluted over 10 tons of highly enriched uranium produced for weapons, making it no longer suitable for nuclear explosives.

6. Those achievements were cause for celebration, but it was essential to maintain momentum. That meant meeting commitments to reduce nuclear weapons globally, signing the CTBT during the current year, increasing co-operation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and expanding support for effective nuclear safeguards.

7. In order to meet the difficult challenges of the post-Cold War era, use of human resources had to be maximized. The United States remained committed to enhancing the role of women in key managerial and decision-making positions at the IAEA and would continue to do everything within its power to increase the number of applicants for such posts by supporting women working in technical fields. She welcomed the modest progress the Agency had made in that regard during the preceding year. At present, women comprised 18% of the workforce in Professional posts at the Agency. Female representation in technical and scientific posts remained low at only 8.9%, and only 8% of the total number of well-qualified applicants for such positions were women. She urged Member States to put forward suitably qualified female applicants

for vacancies. At the current rate of progress, reaching the goal of 50% representation of women could take till the year 2029. It was important to increase the pace. Over the past two years, the United States had provided two experts to the Agency to advise on and assist with the implementation of an action plan for improving the status and representation of women in the Secretariat. One of the recommendations made was the creation of the Learning Resource Centre which would assist all Agency staff, but in particular women, to assess their career potential and options. Its primary roles were to improve the recruiting and promotion of women. The United States would be making a financial contribution to the Learning Resource Centre to help the IAEA establish that new tool, was committed to expanding its work with the Agency in that important area, and would be keeping track of the progress made.

8. Expanding the peaceful uses of atomic energy was an important means of improving the lives of the world population. Two successful projects illustrated the United States' commitment to the expansion of technical co-operation. Firstly, it had provided assistance with medical physics training in Mexico where there had been a vital need to train, and increase the number of specialized physicists in such areas as radiotherapy, diagnostic radiology and nuclear medicine. The project in question had established a training programme and facilities to meet current and future needs through a curriculum leading to a master's degree in medical physics. In 1996, the first graduate class of 10 medical physicists had received degrees. Medical physicists from other Latin American countries would be trained in Mexico and the project was an excellent model for similar national programmes. Secondly, it had provided support, in concert with the IAEA and other donors, for the eradication of the tsetse fly on Zanzibar island through the financing of experts and equipment. Working closely with the Governments of Tanzania and Zanzibar, the Agency had utilized a unique method of applying radiation to sterilize the insect. While conventional techniques had been tried, none had had the long-lasting success of the sterile insect technique.

9. Another project which the United States was particularly pleased with was being carried out in Tunisia. For a modest amount of money, a network had been established which screened every new-born child for neonatal hypothyroidism via

radioimmunoassay. Children found to be suffering from the condition would be treated immediately and should grow up to be normal and healthy. If hypothyroidism remained undetected, it could lead to varying degrees of mental retardation. One in a thousand new-born children in Tunisia had the condition. That project was a fine example of how the Agency's technical co-operation programmes directly affected people's lives.

10. The increasing importance and effectiveness of the Agency's technical co-operation programmes was due at least in part to the establishment of the Model Project concept which attempted to match technical co-operation activities closely to the social and economic needs of recipient countries. The Department of Technical Co-operation was moving towards a situation where the discipline of model projects would be applied to all technical co-operation activities, and the evaluation mechanisms for such projects would be incorporated from the outset of planning. The additional effort on pre-project planning and improved project management would most certainly prove to be a worthwhile investment. The United States was providing a cost-free expert to the Department of Technical Co-operation to assist with the changes.

11. The most obvious use of nuclear power in everyday life was for the generation of electricity. Nuclear power remained a vital and viable energy resource. To realize its full potential, existing and future nuclear power plants had to be as safe as possible. While the primary responsibility for nuclear safety rested with the operators of power reactors, the Agency had helped demonstrate that nuclear safety was inherently an international issue. Just as the consequences of nuclear accidents transcended borders, so did the ability to prevent them.

12. Safe nuclear power generation had always benefited from international collaboration. Nuclear technology companies from Japan, Germany, France, Russia, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and other countries were collaborating with the United States on the design of new, safer, more efficient, advanced light-water reactors. United States' reactor designs had been adopted by many nations, and Russian technology for reactor vessel annealing was being demonstrated in a

collaborative programme in France and South Africa. In Russia and Ukraine, advanced nuclear training centres used methodologies developed in the United States and elsewhere and, at the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania and the Leningrad nuclear power plant in Russia, probabilistic risk assessments were being conducted by teams of safety experts from several countries. The information gained from such exercises could be used to determine what the safest option was for the reactor's future and to improve safety at other reactors.

13. As the world's energy requirements grew, so did the opportunities and the need for international co-operation, and nuclear power remained an important option. Of the 34 countries currently operating nuclear power plants, 20 had a total of 98 nuclear units at various stages of construction. Much of the interest in nuclear energy in the intermediate term was in countries with high-growth economies which were concerned over the same problems of energy supply and energy independence which had led the United States to build its current fleet of plants. In Asia alone, 37 new nuclear power plants with a combined capacity of nearly 35 GW(e) were currently under construction. The United States shared with those countries an important interest in maintaining diversity of energy supply. Though conventional energy reserves remained significant, the cost of obtaining and delivering those energy sources was likely to increase over time. In addition, diversity helped to ensure continuity of power when unforeseen problems occurred in one or more fuel sources. Finally, nuclear energy could help mitigate the environmental impact of burning fossil fuels on an industrial scale.

14. The development of advanced reactor designs and safety systems was too expensive for countries to achieve on their own. It was therefore important to enhance international collaboration and research on nuclear technology and safety. The Agency, the World Association of Nuclear Operators, the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD, and nuclear safety centres in various countries provided opportunities for coordinated research and information exchange which would be significantly more costly if done by individual countries. The IAEA and the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD operated the Incident Reporting System which disseminated operating experience.

The Agency's international peer review programme, international regulatory review teams, radiation protection advisory service, and severe accident research provided opportunities for expertise to be applied where it was most needed. Programmes of that type should continue to develop and grow, and all countries which operated nuclear power plants or were interested in nuclear power should be encouraged to take part.

15. Several events during the past year had given additional impetus to international co-operation on nuclear safety. At the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security, the major industrialized nations had reaffirmed their commitment to enhance nuclear safety worldwide. Those nations had also joined with the Government of Ukraine in a Memorandum of Understanding in support of the shutdown of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant by the year 2000. Moreover, 1996 had witnessed the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident and the Agency had brought together leading nuclear safety experts to update the world's understanding of that tragic event.

16. Thanks to the IAEA's efforts, the legal framework for international commitments to safety was also improving. The Nuclear Safety Convention would be entering into force on 24 October 1996. For the first time, countries would have a mechanism for ensuring that they and their neighbours adhered to an internationally recognized set of safety principles. An international liability regime was also being developed. The concept of such a regime had been endorsed at the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security in April, and the draft supplementary funding convention on nuclear liability might be ready for a diplomatic conference before the next session of the General Conference. Work was also continuing on a convention on the safe management of radioactive waste which would set forth the safety requirements which member countries would be obliged to implement in national legislation, and would provide for periodic peer review to determine how well the implementation of those requirements was proceeding. She hoped that that convention would be open for signature at the next General Conference.

17. A similar and equally dramatic change in international collaboration was occurring in the nuclear security arena. The new conditions of the post-Cold War era had made possible the growth of international support for the long-sought ban on nuclear tests and the creation of a consensus on the need to limit the production and use of fissile material. Spearheaded by the indefinite extension of the NPT, great strides had been made in that area in the past year.

18. The world community had been trying to institute a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests for over four decades. Following two and a half years of intensive negotiations, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty would now soon be open for signature. That important milestone could not have been reached without the assistance and guidance of many nations. In an effort to make the CTBT a reality, the United States had taken many ground-breaking steps, including publishing for the first time a compilation of all the nuclear tests the United States had conducted. The Government of Russia had also recently released a compendium of its nuclear weapon tests and peaceful explosions.

19. Another important new arms control and disarmament measure which was under consideration was the fissile material cut-off treaty. That treaty was designed to limit the further unsafeguarded production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices and would permanently freeze the quantitative growth of nuclear stockpiles worldwide. It would constitute a major victory in the international community's campaign to promote nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and would attest to the nuclear-weapon States' serious commitment to the disarmament obligations contained in Article VI of the NPT. However, serious diplomatic challenges lay ahead. Although the United Nations General Assembly had unanimously passed a resolution in 1993 calling for the negotiation of a cut-off treaty, it was not until March 1995 that an agreement on a mandate had been adopted by the Conference on Disarmament. She urged all Member States to join the United States in supporting the prompt initiation of negotiations based on the mandate agreed upon in March 1995.

20. Though it was vital to end the production of fissile material for weapons, IAEA safeguards also had to be strengthened in order to ensure that the Agency had the ability and authority to verify NPT safeguards obligations. She commended the efforts of the Agency and the co-operation of Member States in helping to bring to fruition a programme of enhanced safeguards. The proposals contained in Programme 93+2 should substantially improve the Agency's ability to detect undeclared nuclear activities.

21. The programme of enhanced safeguards would present new and difficult challenges. In particular, the need to strengthen the Agency's capabilities to detect undeclared activities was causing concern. While important progress had been made with the implementation of measures under existing authorities, such as environmental sampling, the job had to be finished. In October 1996, a committee of the Board of Governors would reconvene to negotiate a model protocol which would provide the Agency with the new authority it required. She urged all States to support those efforts and expressed the hope that a consensus text could be presented to the Board in December. The United States was ready to implement the agreed new measures in the United States as soon as possible, to the extent that they were consistent with its obligations under its safeguards agreement with the Agency.

22. The United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to work together to implement the provisions of the Agreed Framework. Over the past year, technical experts from the United States and the DPRK had begun placing the DPRK's spent fuel rods in canisters. Safeguards seals were being placed on those canisters by Agency safeguards personnel. The technical experts from both the United States and the DPRK had developed a good working relationship. They had also worked in concert with the Agency personnel at Nyongbyon to complete the safeguarding arrangements for the fuel. Approximately 35% of the fuel rods had been placed in secure storage at the Nyongbyon spent fuel basin so far. The United States commended the professional job of the IAEA and the co-operation of the DPRK in meeting the agreed provisions. However, important work still remained to be done.

23. Another major challenge of the new nuclear agenda was to ensure that the hundreds of tons of fissile material which had accumulated as a result of the nuclear competition between the superpowers remained as safe and secure as possible. To that end, the United States, in collaboration with its partners in Russia, the Newly Independent States and the Baltic States, had embarked on a comprehensive effort to ensure the highest level of fissile material security. That effort had become one of the most significant success stories of the post-Cold War period. The collaborative efforts had expanded to cover over 40 locations. The most significant growth in collaboration had been in Russia. Over the past year, Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin and Vice-President Gore and Prime Minister Chernomyrdin had committed themselves to making that effort a priority for both Governments. Good momentum had been achieved and improvements in security were being implemented rapidly. Training of safeguards specialists, inspectors and regulatory officials was currently under way. For instance, significant progress had been made with the implementation of the DOE agreement with the Russian Federal Nuclear and Radiation Safety Authority, including co-operation on a far-reaching roster of projects such as training of Russian regulators and inspectors, development of regulatory documents, and collaboration on the development of the Russian national nuclear material accounting and control system. Significant material protection, control and accounting upgrades had been carried out at numerous civil facilities, and the Institute of Physics and Power Engineering at Obninsk had begun the task of consolidating over 80% of their weapons-usable nuclear material in a specially secured area. Nuclear material portal monitoring devices had been installed and operationalized at high-throughput facilities. Co-operation between the United States and Russia had expanded to include security improvements for fresh nuclear fuel owned by the Russian Navy. In addition, agreement had been reached with the Russian Government to co-operate on the provision of nuclear material security upgrades to the fissile material transportation system.

24. Great strides had also been made in the other Newly Independent States. Shortly after the current session of the General Conference, comprehensive nuclear

material protection, control and accounting upgrades would be completed at the Tashkent Institute of Nuclear Physics in Uzbekistan. Soon thereafter, a similar project would be completed at the Minsk Institute of Nuclear Power Engineering in Belarus. Under Project Sapphire, the United States had received approximately 600 kilograms of highly enriched uranium from the Republic of Kazakhstan. The United States had pledged that that material would be placed under Agency safeguards and had now fulfilled that pledge. The Agency had recently conducted its initial inspection of the Sapphire material at a commercial facility in Lynchburg, Virginia. However, it was in the Baltic States that the co-operative programme on safeguards had had its first complete success: in March 1996, an integrated system of material protection, control and accounting had been installed at the Salispals Institute of Physics in Latvia.

25. As collaborative safeguards work expanded, it was important to look constantly for technologically advanced and less expensive ways of accomplishing goals. At the last General Conference, the United States had drawn attention to remote monitoring technology which had been developed in the United States and which could be used to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of nuclear material security. The United States and the Agency had designed, installed and tested a remote monitoring system at the Oak Ridge highly enriched uranium storage vault. System improvements were being made to meet Agency requirements and joint testing of the improved system was scheduled to continue into early 1997. The United States' remote monitoring work had expanded and currently included international partners from 14 Member States and international organizations. The United States and Russia were collaborating on the incorporation of Russian technologies into the system, and were investigating the use of remote monitoring systems for national security and bilateral nuclear weapons disarmament transparency purposes. In addition, the Agency had begun to develop an approach for the use of remote monitoring, and planned to begin using the technology for safeguards in 1997.

26. One of the most far-reaching and vital elements of the new nuclear security agenda was the need to ensure the transparency and irreversibility of the nuclear disarmament process. In the past year, the United States had taken a major step

towards meeting its commitment to reduce the nuclear threat by ratifying the START II agreement. The START I and II agreements would reduce United States' and Russian strategic warhead stockpiles by about 70% from their Cold War peaks. However, it was important to ensure that excess nuclear material removed from dismantled weapons remained unavailable for military use. The negotiations between the United States and Russia on the transparency and irreversibility of the nuclear weapons reduction process provided an essential forum for experts from both countries to discuss bilateral limitations on the reuse of nuclear material from dismantled nuclear weapons, confidence-building arrangements, and ways of promoting transparency and information sharing. Nuclear disarmament had also been given a boost by the signing of the Protocols for the South Pacific and African nuclear-weapon-free zones. The United States was proud to be a signatory to both of those milestone treaties.

27. One key element in the measures to ensure transparency and irreversibility was the down-blending of 500 metric tons of Russian highly enriched uranium and its sale to the United States as reactor fuel for peaceful purposes. In 1995, 10 shipments of uranium had arrived in the United States from the Russian down-blending facilities, the highly enriched uranium equivalent of approximately 240 nuclear weapons. In 1996, the United States Enrichment Corporation anticipated receiving the low-enriched uranium produced from at least 12 more metric tons of highly enriched uranium, approximately the amount of material required for 480 bombs. The United States and Russia had also agreed to implement a series of transparency measures at uranium processing facilities in both countries in order to bolster confidence that the terms of the agreement and common non-proliferation goals were being met.

28. At last year's General Conference, the Director General had pointed out that the replacement of high-enriched uranium fuel by low-enriched fuel in research reactors could reduce the risk of proliferation. Over the past year, the United States had undertaken a number of bold steps to achieve that goal. For instance, it had decided to accept spent foreign research reactor fuel containing enriched uranium of United States origin. Over the coming 13 years, the United States would be accepting up to 20 tons of spent research reactor fuel from 41 countries. It was taking that step in

order to reduce the danger of nuclear proliferation and promote international efforts to convert research reactors around the globe from the use of highly enriched uranium fuel to the use of low-enriched uranium. Apart from the benefits for non-proliferation, that programme should also help reduce the physical security burdens associated with the use of research reactors employing highly enriched uranium, without sacrificing the benefits of nuclear research and isotope production. The United States had also resumed the development of advanced, high-density, low-enriched uranium fuels, and had concluded a collaboration agreement with Russia on the conversion of its research reactors. It also hoped to integrate that programme into its co-operative efforts with other nations operating research reactors using highly enriched uranium fuel.

29. The growing stockpiles of plutonium, both civil and military, also posed a potential threat to global security. Although the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty would take time, important steps could be taken now in support of that treaty's objectives. The United States and Russia were engaged in discussions with a view to converting Russia's three remaining production reactors so that the output of weapons-grade plutonium in that country could be ended. Although certain difficult issues remained, it should be possible to solve them without sacrificing Russia's commitment to provide heat and electricity to the citizens of Tomsk and Krasnoyarsk, nor its commitment to end the production of weapons-grade plutonium by the end of the decade. The plutonium-using nations of the world had been meeting in Vienna to develop guidelines for the international management of plutonium. Despite the disparate interests of the nine nations involved, final agreement on a set of guidelines covering storage, transportation and protection was within view. Those modest first steps would lay the groundwork not only for increased international openness on the subject of plutonium management, but also for bolder actions in the future. In addition, the forthcoming IAEA Symposium on "Nuclear Fuel Cycle and Reactor Strategies: Adjusting to New Realities" would provide a forum to discuss strategies for the development of nuclear power worldwide in ways that minimized the risk of nuclear proliferation.

30. As part of a unilateral initiative, the United States had completed a comprehensive plan for the international inspection of fissile material which had been declared excess to its national defence needs. Under that plan, the United States would submit 26 metric tons of excess fissile material to IAEA inspection during the forthcoming three years, in addition to the 12 metric tons of excess highly enriched uranium and plutonium which had already been placed under Agency safeguards at DOE facilities. That decision aimed at demonstrating the United States' commitment to irreversible disarmament and openness in its nuclear programmes, and at promoting international controls on fissile material and the strengthening of Agency safeguards. The United States, Russia and the Agency had also committed themselves to holding an unprecedented trilateral discussion on the application of international safeguards to excess fissile material. That discussion, which was to be held later on the same day, should create a sound foundation for further progress.

31. Despite the progress which had been made, certain financial, technical and classification issues still needed to be addressed. Much of the United States' excess material was in classified forms and one key question was how to ensure that sensitive weapons information was not disclosed as a result of IAEA inspections. There was also the problem of ensuring that excess material had been irreversibly removed from national security uses and, of course, the difficulty of resource constraints. Nevertheless, working together with Russia and the IAEA, the United States would continue to make good its commitment to submit fissile materials no longer needed for defence purposes to IAEA inspection as soon as was practicable.

32. However, safeguarding excess material from military programmes was just the first step in the important process of irreversible disarmament. The material also had to be permanently disposed of. At the Moscow Summit, a number significant commitments had been made in that area and the next steps would be discussed at the conference to be held in Paris in October 1996. The United States had decided to blend down surplus highly enriched uranium to low-enriched uranium for peaceful use as commercial reactor fuel. Any material which could not be used economically for this purpose would be blended down and disposed of as low-level waste. In addition, the

United States had narrowed its range of options for the disposal of excess plutonium down to three: use in reactors, immobilization, and geological disposal. It expected to take a decision as to which technologies would be implemented before the end of the year. Joint technical studies and plans for small-scale tests and demonstrations of disposal technologies had recently been completed by the United States and Russia. That work was vital to building trust and co-operation between those two countries, fulfilling the intent of the NPT, and reducing the global nuclear threat from excess stockpiles of weapons-usable fissile material.

33. Summing up the progress of the past year, she noted that, in the field of nuclear and technical co-operation, the agreement between the United States and Russia on the peaceful uses of atomic energy and a similar agreement with EURATOM had been renewed; an agreement with Bulgaria had entered into force and three additional agreements had been signed with Argentina, South Africa and Brazil; funding had been provided for 20 technical co-operation projects around the world ranging in subject matter from the improvement of nuclear medicine services to evaluation of water resources monitoring, nuclear techniques for environmental control and tsetse fly eradication; and the sister laboratory programme had been expanded to Argentina, Kenya, Costa Rica, Thailand and Ghana in addition to the arrangements already in place with Mexico, Peru, Malaysia, Morocco and Egypt. In the field of nuclear safety, the emergency operating procedures at the Novovoronezh nuclear power plant in Russia had been formally adopted; the International Chernobyl Centre for Nuclear Safety, Radioactive Waste Management and Radioecology had been established; reactor vessel annealing had been demonstrated at Marble Hill in the United States with international participation; and five additional training courses for nuclear power plant operators had been completed in Russia and Ukraine. In the field of nuclear security, the START II Treaty had been ratified in the United States; the Protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty had been signed; fissile material safeguards had been improved in co-operation with Russia, the Newly Independent States and the Baltic States; the Agreed Framework between the United States and the DPRK had been implemented and the

security of spent fuel in the DPRK improved; the quantities of United States excess fissile material under IAEA safeguards had been increased; discussions of excess fissile material safeguards had been initiated with Russia and the IAEA; excess fissile material had been disposed of in the United States; international safeguards had been applied to the Sapphire highly enriched uranium blend-down; and 1100 United States nuclear weapons had been dismantled.

34. In conclusion, she hoped to be able to report on further collective progress at the next session of the General Conference.

35. Mr. OVTCHAROV (Bulgaria) welcomed the Republic of Moldova as a new Member of the Agency and associated himself with the statement which had been made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union and associated countries.

36. A year had passed since the NPT Review and Extension Conference had extended the Treaty indefinitely and expressly recognized the Agency as the international authority responsible for verifying and ensuring compliance with safeguards agreements. He commended the Agency on its implementation of safeguards pursuant to the NPT, and noted with satisfaction the progress which had been made with the development of new safeguards measures under Programme 93+2. The Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreements would remain a key element in encouraging international co-operation on the peaceful use of atomic energy within a stable security framework.

37. Turning to the Annual Report for 1995, he was pleased to note that the Agency had not found any indication of diversion of nuclear material or misuse of safeguarded facilities, equipment or non-nuclear material. The overall increase in technical co-operation programme delivery was commendable and had resulted in a high implementation rate of 75.7%. The rise in the number of Model Projects, fellowships, scientific visits and training course participants was also most welcome.

38. Bulgaria was grateful to the Agency for its help with improving the safety of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant and the strengthening of the Bulgarian Nuclear Safety

Authority in the context of its work to assess the safety of plants in Eastern Europe and the former USSR. His country was strongly committed to the international efforts to enhance the nuclear safety culture worldwide, and was convinced that the safe operation of nuclear facilities should be a top priority for individual States and the international community as a whole. The Convention on Nuclear Safety, which would be entering into force on 24 October, should contribute significantly to the achievement of that objective.

39. At the same time, it was essential to establish a generally acceptable and effective liability regime for nuclear damage which would attract broad participation. In that regard, he was pleased to note that the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage had reached agreement on many issues relating to the revision of the Vienna Convention. However, the amounts of liability which had been discussed in the Standing Committee had been considerable and Bulgaria, owing to its current financial difficulties, supported a "phasing-in" approach whereby a country's liability would be increased gradually over a longer period. Only in that way could broad participation of Member States in the new regime be ensured. Moreover, the revision process should not be separated from the work on the elaboration of a supplementary funding system.

40. Turning to the Agency's programme and budget, he approved the proposed programme for 1997-98 and the budget proposal for 1997. With regard to the financing of technical assistance, Bulgaria would be paying a contribution in national currency equivalent to US \$10 000 into the TCF for 1997. It greatly appreciated the Agency's efforts to improve further the management and effectiveness of the technical co-operation programme, and supported the measures which had been proposed by the Secretariat in that regard. He also endorsed the Secretariat's proposed measures for dealing with illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radioactive sources.

41. Nuclear power played a significant role in meeting Bulgaria's electricity requirements. In 1995, it had accounted for 46.4% of the total amount of electricity generated. The Bulgarian authorities had introduced a programme of reconstruction, safety upgrading and retrofitting at Units 1-4 of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant in

order to ensure their continued safe operation. Work was being carried out in collaboration with specialists from other countries to ascertain whether Units 1 and 2 of the Kozloduy plant were capable of remaining operational until the end of their design lifetimes in 2004 and 2005 respectively. Furthermore, in the past year a safety upgrading programme funded by the EBRD's nuclear safety account had been completed at Unit 3, and similar work at Unit 4 was still under way. Parliamentary approval had also been given to a strategy for energy development covering the period 1995-2010 and beyond. According to that strategy, Bulgaria would have no option but to bring into operation the Belene nuclear power plant - construction of which had been frozen in 1990 - by the year 2010.

42. In parallel with the development of nuclear power and nuclear science, the Bulgarian authorities intended to develop a programme for the application of nuclear methods and techniques in medicine, agriculture and industry.

43. Bulgaria was grateful to the Agency, and in particular the Department of Technical Co-operation, for the assistance it had provided during the past year under national and regional technical co-operation projects, and for the opportunities afforded its specialists in the form of fellowships, scientific visits and interregional training courses. It looked forward to further fruitful co-operation of that kind.

44. Bulgaria's energy strategy was based on a complex approach, the objective being to maintain a balance between the various established energy sources. To achieve that, construction of the Belene nuclear power plant would have to be restarted sufficiently early for it to replace the oldest units in the country. The reconstruction of Belene would also provide a good opportunity for the Agency to develop technical co-operation activities which could be used elsewhere in reactivating frozen nuclear projects and which took account of the technical and economic problems involved and the need to find specific solutions to the problems posed by the radioactive waste generated and spent fuel.

45. Over the past year, Bulgaria had hosted a workshop on environmental restoration and a seminar on safety culture, and had received a number of specialists

from developing countries for training at its institutes. Among the projects it had put forward for the 1997-1998 technical co-operation programme, it attached particular importance to the one on the use of electron beam technology for the purification of flue gases.

46. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his country's support for the Agency's activities aimed at promoting international co-operation on the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and wished the Director General and his staff further success in their work.

47. Mr. CHIDAMBARAM (India) said that he was happy to convey his country's pledge to pay in full its contribution to the TCF for 1997.

48. The Agency was entering its fortieth year which, in his country, was regarded as a year of maturity and, therefore, as a time for reflection and fresh resolve. Since the establishment of the Agency in 1957, many programmes and activities had been implemented, some more successfully than others. Over the years, the Agency had evolved and grown into perhaps the most scientific organization in the United Nations system.

49. Some of the more important milestones had been the Model Project initiative, the Partners in Development concept, the expansion of several nuclear applications programmes, the establishment of SAGTAC, and the streamlining and enhancement of a number of ongoing programmes and activities. However, the Agency still had a long way to go before it could claim that it had been able to serve the cause of sustainable development to an appreciable degree, especially in developing countries.

50. The path ahead would not be easy. Many still remained to be convinced that nuclear technology was the inevitable option to satisfy the future energy needs of developing countries; that it was worthwhile to support nuclear technology-based programmes and activities in the fields of fresh water, food, health, and the environment; and that, for the Agency to contribute to the creation of a better world, it would need to pay the same attention to promotional activities as to non-promotional activities.

51. India had always taken a great interest in the promotional activities of the Agency, partly because India had been committed from the start to harnessing nuclear power for peace, progress and development at national level. India's nuclear energy programme had been initiated over 50 years ago under the umbrella of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, barely two years after the world's first artificially created chain reaction had been achieved by Enrico Fermi and his team. The initial corpus of scientific talent at the Indian Atomic Energy Establishment had come from that institute.

52. In August 1996, India had celebrated four decades of operation of Apsara - the first nuclear research reactor designed and built in Asia outside Russia - which was still being used for isotope production and some applications such as neutron radiography. On that occasion, the Indian Prime Minister had stressed the importance of India's nuclear programme for its long-term energy security. India hoped to have a nuclear power capacity of 20 000 MW(e) by the year 2000. The Department of Atomic Energy ran an impressive number of industrial units and research establishments which provided the infrastructure not only for the nuclear programme, but also for the promotion of both basic and applied areas of science and technology. The Government had engaged to provide whatever support was necessary for the further development of the sector.

53. The Indian nuclear programme continued to be based on a three-stage programme of closed and combined fuel cycles utilizing natural uranium, plutonium and thorium. Currently, India had eight 220 MW(e) PHWRs and four others were under construction. Two 500 MW(e) and two more 220 MW(e) PHWR projects were to be launched shortly. As a first step towards the second stage of the programme, a fast breeder test reactor had been set up in which an advanced fuel - uranium-plutonium monocarbide - had been used successfully for the first time in the world. On the basis of that experience, an economically viable design for a 500 MW(e) prototype fast breeder reactor had been completed. Breeder reactors extracted several tens of times as much energy from uranium as thermal reactors. In addition, the "cold" commissioning of a third reprocessing plant at Kalpakkam had been carried out in

March 1996 and the plant systems were being progressively tested before "hot" operations commenced. That was yet another milestone in the self-reliant development strategy followed by India.

54. The Nuclear Power Corporation of India, with its vast reservoir of professionally qualified, trained and experienced technocrats equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, resources and analytical capabilities, had successfully diversified its activities to include the provision of consultancy services to industries in India, and was ready to offer such services to industries outside the country as well. Diversification of research and development into areas related to nuclear science and technology had been one of the hallmarks of the Indian programme. Close ties with industry enabled various processes and prototypes to be developed for commercial application. The spin-off benefits of Indian research had been applied in the railways, the oil industry, engineering analysis and medicine.

55. In the field of agriculture, India had been developing new varieties of groundnut, mustard and various pulses and legumes via mutation breeding. It also had a strong interest in food irradiation for the purposes of preservation and minimization of losses due to sprouting and spoilage. Education and public awareness campaigns were under way to promote public acceptance of that valuable technology.

56. As one of the largest isotope producers in the world, India was deeply committed to the practice of nuclear medicine. Most of the radioisotopes produced by India were used within the country for medical diagnosis and therapy, either as radiopharmaceuticals or radiation sources. In 1995, apart from exports to several countries, nearly 75 000 consignments of various products had been dispatched to over 800 user institutions in India. Several radioimmunoassay centres had been set up in order to extend nuclear medicine to areas not covered at present and catalyse the growth of nuclear facilities in various regions of the country. A technical collaboration agreement had also been concluded with a private organization on the provision of radiodiagnostic products for domestic use and export.

57. In recent years, the Agency had devoted a great amount of time and energy to the strengthening of safeguards via Programme 93+2. India had taken a keen interest in that issue and had expressed its concern that the financial implications of the programme might turn out to be excessive, that an overemphasis on the policing role of the Agency was creating an imbalance in the attention and resources it devoted to its promotional and non-promotional activities, and that the IAEA might end up by overreaching itself. Before setting itself new goals, the Agency should consolidate its current position, implement fully the measures contained in Part 1 of the Programme, digest the lessons learned, make a clearer assessment of the likely costs, and only then go forward. However, India would not oppose a consensus on the issue.

58. India had also followed closely the Agency's nuclear safety activities. The Indian nuclear programme had accorded a prime position to safety in all its activities. Safety was also an important focus of research and development in the various institutions of the Department of Atomic Energy and dedicated groups had, since the inception of the Indian programme, been continuously monitoring and upgrading systems in line with national and international experience. Over the years, the regulatory system had progressively evolved and the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board had been constituted in 1983. The Regulatory Board applied the current international regulatory standards and had successfully executed its function as a watchdog over the nuclear programme and other facilities employing radiation. Nearly 50 safety committees operated at various levels under its aegis. India had also signed the Convention on Nuclear Safety when it had opened for signature and was currently preparing to ratify it, and it would continue to support all safety-related Agency activities.

59. Aware as it was of the importance of an internationally endorsed approach to the safe management of radioactive waste, India had been participating actively in the development and drafting of a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management since the middle of 1995. While there was a high level of agreement among most of the Member States involved on many of the issues to be addressed by the convention, he felt the need to reiterate India's position on a number of issues.

Countries like India, whose nuclear power programme was based on a closed fuel cycle, viewed spent fuel as a resource rather than as waste and therefore outside the scope of the convention. Moreover, most of the environmental damage and other negative effects to date had been caused by radioactive waste from military activities. A convention on the safety of radioactive waste management could ill afford to be silent about such waste.

60. India had been the first country to call - as early as 1954 - not only for a cessation of nuclear testing but also for a convention to ban the use of nuclear weapons and a comprehensive action plan to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. India had joined every genuine effort to ban weapons of mass destruction and had also accepted every obligation in that regard. India's commitment to the goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons in the world remained steadfast and undiminished. Nuclear disarmament was a global issue. India had recently supported a proposal containing a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons within a definite time-frame which had been presented to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament by the overwhelming majority of non-aligned and neutral member countries of that organization. India would continue to strive with other like-minded nations to achieve the long-cherished goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

61. The Regional Co-operative Agreement (RCA) had developed from a tripartite agreement between India, the Philippines and the Agency which had centred around the utilization of existing research reactors in the region. The time had come to include the development of nuclear power programmes within the scope of that Agreement. India had always supported, and would continue to support RCA activities in view of the latter's useful role in promoting regional co-operation on the application of nuclear techniques in medicine, agriculture and the basic sciences.

62. Finally, in the preceding year his delegation had pointed out the need for co-ordinated research programmes, training programmes and technical meetings addressing more advanced areas of nuclear technology in order to benefit the increasing number of developing countries which were attempting to enhance the level of sophistication and capabilities of their respective national nuclear programmes.

India would continue to support actively the Agency's efforts to promote and expand the peaceful uses of atomic energy for the benefit of people all over the globe.

63. Mr. BENMOUSSA (Morocco) said that the current session of the General Conference coincided with the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) reflecting the universal desire to strengthen the foundations of international peace and security. The Agency had an important role to play in that context by promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the service of progress and prosperity. Nuclear disarmament, the strengthening of the safeguards system, and the wider use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes constituted an integrated whole consistent with the Agency's "Atoms for Peace" policy.

64. In the context of the ongoing efforts to strengthen the safeguards system through Programme 93+2, the provisions of paragraphs 4 and 5 of document INFCIRC/153 should be strictly applied, in particular the injunction to avoid hampering the economic and technological development of States and co-operation in peaceful nuclear activities, including exchanges of nuclear material for sustainable development; and the provision regarding the protection of commercial and industrial secrets. In view of the importance of full implementation of the safeguards system, his country was of the opinion that the draft additional protocol to safeguards agreements which was being developed should be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly for adoption on the widest possible scale.

65. Morocco had approved the extension of the NPT from the outset and it urged the Agency to use every means at its disposal to promote the underlying goals of the Treaty, namely comprehensive nuclear disarmament, appropriate safeguards for non-nuclear-weapon States, and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. His country welcomed the conclusion of an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty as an important step towards the establishment of similar zones in other regions, in particular the Middle East. In that connection, the African Group had reaffirmed its support for the Agency's efforts to strengthen the safeguards system in order to guard against the existence of undeclared nuclear activities or materials.

66. In supporting the plans to free the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction, Morocco had insisted on a number of basic principles: firstly, equal disarmament obligations for all States in the Middle East; secondly, accession to the NPT by all States in the region without exception; thirdly, the placing of all nuclear facilities under the Agency's safeguards system; and fourthly, geographical demarcation of the Middle East region and neighbouring States in order to prevent political considerations from undermining the initiative. Fulfilment of those conditions would restore trust among the States in the region and lay the basis for peaceful nuclear co-operation in such priority areas as water and agriculture.

67. Morocco had signed the CTBT and hoped that it would enter into effect within the next three years. It also welcomed the decision to locate the CTBTO in Vienna and trusted that close co-operation would develop between the Agency and the Organization, especially in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

68. His country was grateful to the Agency for the assistance it had provided with a wide variety of national projects, chiefly in agriculture, health, scientific research and water resources. It also supported the Agency's new approach to technical co-operation, in particular the preparation of national medium-term plans for the use of nuclear technology for development, and the Model Project strategy. A National Radiation Protection Centre had recently been inaugurated in Morocco which it was hoped would be involved in the implementation of many of the Agency's technical assistance projects in countries in the Arab and African regions, thereby strengthening South-South regional co-operation. The National Centre for Nuclear Energy, Sciences and Technology (CNESTEN) was about to sign an agreement with France and the United States for the establishment of a nuclear studies centre which would play a pioneering role in research and the application of nuclear technology in the social and economic sectors. Morocco had also established its first food irradiation facility which would be engaging in research and development in such vital areas as medicine and agriculture.

69. The fact that the world's water supplies were diminishing as demand increased called for urgent action to prevent social and political conflicts over water from

escalating into war. The water issue was a key factor in the Middle East peace process. The Agency could help solve the problem by including sea water desalination and the treatment of waste water among its priorities for technical co-operation, and by co-ordinating its activities with other organizations such as the FAO and the World Bank. Morocco welcomed the plan to hold an international symposium on nuclear desalination of seawater in the Republic of Korea in 1997. It urged the Director General to establish a standing advisory committee on the matter, and hoped that the Agency would play an active part in the conference on water to be convened by the World Bank in 1997. Morocco was about to conclude an agreement relating to the construction of a pilot seawater desalination plant in co-operation with China and with Agency assistance.

70. In the context of African regional co-operation, Morocco welcomed the Agency's new policies which were designed to focus on the region's most pressing economic and social needs, in particular nuclear sea water desalination and waste water treatment, rehabilitation of arid and semi-arid zones, insect and pest control, food irradiation and strengthening of nuclear safety.

71. The expansion of the Board of Governors through the amendment of Article VI of the Statute was a step which had to be taken during the current session of the General Conference. Urgency was prompted by three factors: firstly, the requirement in resolution GC(39)/RES/21 that the current session approve the report and recommendations on the matter submitted by the Board; secondly, the fact that 20 years had passed since the need for change had first been recognized in resolution GC(XXI)/RES/353, a period during which the international community had made enormous progress in the codification of international relations - culminating recently in the extension of the NPT and the adoption of the CTBT - whereas the Agency's General Conference had shown itself incapable of amending a single Article of its Statute; and thirdly, the fact that the ratification procedures laid down in Article XVIII of the Statute were of such complexity that even an immediate decision to amend Article VI would take several years to enter into effect. Those currently deprived of a say in the Agency's affairs would therefore have to await the twenty-first century to

see the birth of a more democratic, representative, and hence more effective Board of Governors.

72. Morocco was fully aware that the task of amending Article VI was complicated by international rivalries, but such obstacles should not be allowed to inhibit the exercise of sound judgement or the ability to take collective action. His country had therefore decided to place its experience, disinterestedness and determination at the service of the international community by submitting a formal proposal for an amendment of Article VI. Its proposal was the only one that fulfilled all the legal requirements for a decision by the General Conference. In addition, it met all the criteria established by the regional groups, took account of global technological and geopolitical developments, emphasized the Agency's universality by providing for a balance between elected and permanent seats, reflected the provisions of resolution GC(XXV)/RES/389 and subsequent resolutions concerning representation of the areas of Africa and the Middle East and South Asia, respected the established rights of States and regional groups, promoted permanent representation of least developed countries on the Board, and dispelled the confusion generated by floating seats. Morocco was proposing that the Board be expanded by ten seats (five elected and five designated). Given the increase in Member States, an expansion of the Board from 35 to 45 Governors would not increase the ratio to more than one third of Member States and would therefore correspond to zero growth in real terms. Indeed, the percentage would gradually decline since a ten-year truce in respect of the amendment of Article VI would form part of the political compromise.

73. At a time when the Board was acting as a global administrator of nuclear non-proliferation through strengthened safeguards applied primarily in the developing world, it was particularly unfair to deprive the countries concerned of a say in decisions that affected their sovereignty and shared responsibility.

74. He trusted that the Conference would reach an acceptable consensus. However, if all else failed it might prove necessary to call for a vote. Article XVIII.C of the Statute provided that amendments would come into force when approved by the General Conference by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. He urged all Member

States who supported the Moroccan proposal to cast their vote should such an opportunity arise and, at all events, to sponsor the proposed amendment. Morocco's action was motivated by a firm determination to reach a consensus without further delay, in a spirit of mutual respect and shared responsibility, so that the Agency could face the future as a democratic and efficient institution whose credibility and universality were inextricably linked in the quest for peace and prosperity for mankind as a whole.

75. Mr. KOSTENKO (Ukraine) welcomed Moldova as a new member of the Agency.

76. The past year had been rich in important events for Ukraine. On August 24, Ukraine had celebrated the fifth anniversary of its independence. The path to freedom and democracy, when beset with immense social and economic problems, was not an easy one.

77. Ukraine was gradually moving towards non-nuclear status and full compliance with its obligations under the NPT, and had completed the withdrawal from its territory of all the nuclear weapons it had inherited from the former Soviet Union. That development provided a unique opportunity to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe which would reduce the danger of confrontation on the continent and should help circumvent concern in the context of NATO's planned expansion towards the East.

78. The conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, in line with the recommendations of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, would be an important milestone in the consolidation of the international non-proliferation regime. He welcomed the recent decision by the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States in New York to open the Treaty for signature during the 51st session of the General Assembly.

79. Ukraine greatly appreciated the role played by the Agency in maintaining the international non-proliferation regime via its safeguards system. On 21 September 1995, Ukraine had signed its safeguards agreement with the Agency pursuant to the

NPT. That agreement was soon to be ratified by the Parliament of Ukraine, and the currently valid agreement between Ukraine and the IAEA on the application of safeguards to all nuclear material in peaceful nuclear activities was being implemented successfully. The Government of Ukraine fully supported the Agency's activities and would continue to make every effort to support its work.

80. Turning to nuclear safety issues, he noted that one important step towards improving the international nuclear safety regime would be the entry into force of the Nuclear Safety Convention. The Agency's role in providing a regime for the safe development of nuclear energy would grow enormously during the coming years. Improving the safety of nuclear plants was a slow process which would require changes in legislation, economic arrangements and management, as well as in the nuclear regulatory regime. It was essential to achieve a high level of safety culture at governmental level.

81. The International Conference on "One Decade after Chernobyl: Summing up the Consequences of the Accident" had been held in Vienna in April 1996. Ukraine appreciated the attention the international community had given to that event. It had become clear that the Chernobyl accident was an international issue which could not be resolved without the assistance and financial support of the whole world.

82. The President and the Government of Ukraine had taken a decision to decommission the Chernobyl nuclear power plant by the year 2000 if the necessary financial and technical support was available. In December 1995, a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed by the Government of Ukraine, the G-7 and the European Commission concerning the decommissioning of Chernobyl in which the parties had committed themselves to mobilizing funds for that complex task. Preparations were under way with a view to obtaining grants and credits from Western financial institutions to carry out the necessary work. Any delay in the granting of financial support would defeat the ultimate goal of decommissioning all the plant units by the year 2000, and would significantly discredit the political agreements reached.

83. Since the decommissioning of the plant where the accident had occurred had no parallels in world experience, it might be a good idea to establish an international research centre on the clean-up of radiation accidents where skilled experts from all over the world could work together to reduce the scientific, technical, social, environmental and medical issues involved. The centre could study the experience gained from cleaning up large-scale environmental disasters with the Chernobyl zone serving as an example. It would promote co-operation between Ukrainian scientists and engineers and research centres and laboratories throughout the world. Ukraine was grateful to the United States and other countries for the support they had given to that proposal and hoped that they would actively pursue its realization.

84. His country supported the Agency's efforts to establish a comprehensive civil liability regime for nuclear damage. As a party to the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, Ukraine had demonstrated its adherence to the main principles of that regime.

85. Considerable and welcome progress had been achieved with regard to the safe management of radioactive waste, which was traditionally a rather complex issue in terms of public perception. International consensus was therefore particularly important. He hoped that the group of international experts who were working on the development of a convention on radioactive waste management would come up with fruitful results. Ukraine fully supported that initiative.

86. His delegation was satisfied with the expansion of technical co-operation between the Agency and Ukraine. At present, nine projects of major practical significance were being implemented in the field of nuclear power.

87. Ukraine supported the proposed budget for 1997. Owing to its economic problems, his country was not up to date with all of its Regular Budget contributions. However, it was doing its best to fulfil its financial obligations, especially in view of the difficult financial situation of the Agency. In 1996, Ukraine had paid nearly five million dollars into the Regular Budget to cover its contributions for 1993, 1994 and part of

1995. The principle of zero real growth should continue to be applied, and the Agency's main activities should be financed from the Regular Budget.

88. In conclusion, he approved the Annual Report for 1995. Ukraine valued the Agency's work highly and would continue to support it.

89. Mr. MEADWAY (United Kingdom) associated himself fully with the statement which had been made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

90. The past year had been a landmark year for nuclear affairs in the United Kingdom, culminating in the successful privatization of the bulk of the nuclear industry. The nuclear review which had been concluded in May 1995 had confirmed his Government's continuing commitment to nuclear power, providing that it remained competitive and that rigorous standards of safety and environmental protection were maintained. The key outcome of the review had been the decision to restructure the nuclear power industry and to privatize the newer advanced gas-cooled reactors and the pressurized water reactors at Sizewell in 1996. The restructuring had been completed on 1 April 1996 with the creation of British Energy, the holding company owning Nuclear Electric which operated in England and Wales and Scottish Nuclear which operated in Scotland. The older Magnox stations and their associated liabilities had been transferred at the same time to Magnox Electric which remained in the public sector and would merge with British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. in due course. British Energy had been privatized successfully in July 1996.

91. Nuclear power continued to hold its share of the United Kingdom's diverse energy market, contributing over 24% of the country's electricity needs in 1995. Privatization would mean a more competitive nuclear power sector with incentives and opportunities for further improvements in its operational and financial performance.

92. On the international scene, progress following the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference had been encouraging. The United Kingdom continued to believe that the NPT together with the Agency's safeguards system constituted the primary assurance against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The preliminary

reports on the successful implementation of the Part 1 measures of Programme 93+2 had been encouraging. His country had taken an active part in the wide-ranging discussions of the Secretariat's proposed Part 2 measures and it looked forward to further constructive work on that issue. A positive outcome to those discussions should result in a significant strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system. The United Kingdom intended to contribute to the implementation of the Programme 93+2, in particular by applying those measures which would promote the effectiveness of the Programme worldwide, and by accepting those measures which would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the safeguards applied by the Agency within the framework of his country's existing safeguards agreement. The high priority the United Kingdom attached to safeguards in general and to the Programme 93+2 measures in particular had been a major factor in determining its support for the Secretariat's budget proposals.

93. The NPT Review and Extension Conference had also endorsed the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones and there had been considerable activity in that field. The United Kingdom, for its part, had signed the protocols to the Tlatelolco, Pelindaba and Rarotonga Treaties.

94. The Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security in April 1996 had led to a number of significant achievements in safety, liability, waste management and nuclear material security, and important commitments had been made to various international conventions. The Summit had also given its explicit backing to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The United Kingdom, one of the early ratifiers of the Convention, welcomed its imminent entry into force. It had been encouraged by the large number of signatories to the Convention, and hoped that many more States would now ratify it so that they could play a full part in the implementation process.

95. Radioactive waste management also remained an important issue. In the United Kingdom, work had begun on the development of a repository for high-level waste. On the international scene, his country welcomed the progress which had been made towards an international convention on the safety of radioactive waste management and hoped there would be early agreement on that issue. He also reconfirmed his

country's support for the completion of the RADWASS documents within the framework of internationally agreed procedures.

96. To sum up, 1996 had been another important year for nuclear non-proliferation, building on the success and momentum created by the NPT Review and Extension Conference. The Agency had made considerable progress in addressing the new challenges facing it. The United Kingdom would continue to work constructively with the Agency and its other Member States to ensure that that momentum was maintained. Finally, he paid tribute to the leadership of the Director General who had contributed greatly to the Agency's excellent reputation. He looked forward to another successful year under his direction.

97. Mr. MOHSIN AL-AKWA (Yemen) welcomed the Republic of Moldova as a new Member of the Agency.

98. Since the last session of the General Conference, major political changes in many parts of the world had posed a tangible threat to world peace. The use of force had prevailed over the rule of law and new areas of conflict had emerged. During the same period, the United Nations General Assembly had approved the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Against that background, the current session of the General Conference had to take serious steps to ensure the effective and impartial application of the comprehensive safeguards regime to all States, guarantee the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, and promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to meet the current and future needs of mankind.

99. The double standards which were being applied in dealing with some States were a source of tension, hatred and extremism, and hence a threat to peace and security. Missiles had been fired at Iraq on the pretext that it had violated Security Council resolutions when it had merely been defending its sovereignty. Unfortunately, such pretexts had not been invoked when Israel had bombarded southern Lebanon in an act of flagrant aggression against a sovereign nation, and the same reticence was discernible with respect to Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. When Eritrea had occupied a number of islands in the Red Sea

belonging to the Republic of Yemen, his country had sought a peaceful resolution of the conflict because of its commitment to international peace and security and the importance of the Red Sea as an international waterway.

100. Nuclear energy, which had been developed initially for the purposes of destruction, was currently being used for the benefit of humanity in such areas as health, industry, sea water desalination and electricity generation with the result that many countries, including his own, were investigating the potential of nuclear technology as a development tool and a source of energy. He urged the Agency to pursue policies which responded to the aspirations of the developing countries for technical assistance. It was also essential to expand the Board of Governors in order to ensure equitable representation of all Member States, and to achieve a proper balance in the Agency's activities through action to increase the funds available for technical assistance while maintaining the Agency's supervisory role and promoting more effective application of safeguards.

101. His country supported the Agency's work on small- and medium-capacity power reactors which would enable developing countries to use nuclear energy for electricity generation. It also commended the ongoing technical and economic feasibility study on the use of such technology for sea water desalination. Lastly, his country supported the Agency's efforts to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear material.

102. Yemen aspired to increase its co-operation with the Agency at all levels and warmly welcomed the international activities organized in its territory. Moreover, despite the difficult circumstances prevailing in the country, the Government of Yemen would continue to discharge all its material, moral and legal obligations to the Agency.

103. Mr. CHU HAO (Viet Nam), having welcomed the Republic of Moldova as a new Member of the Agency, noted the significant progress which had been made since the last session of the General Conference in the field of international co-operation to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapon. The Convention on Nuclear Safety was to enter into force in October 1996, and the NPT had been extended indefinitely.

104. Viet Nam shared the deep concerns of many other countries in South East Asia and the world with regard to nuclear testing and wished to reaffirm its support for complete nuclear disarmament. That objective should be clearly laid down in the text of the CTBT. He urged all States, and particularly those with nuclear weapons programmes, to contribute actively to the early conclusion of the CTBT. Moreover, Viet Nam strongly supported every initiative aimed at establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, in particular the Treaty on the South East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone which had been signed in 1995. He appealed to other countries to support that Treaty. He also commended the efforts to establish an Asia-Pacific organization for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

105. In recent years, his country had made great strides forward towards a market economy. The average annual growth rate in the gross domestic product had been 8.2% for 1991-1995. The country's energy requirements were therefore increasing rapidly and nuclear power seemed a feasible option. A comprehensive study on the introduction of nuclear power was under way and it was hoped that assistance from the Agency and other Member States would be forthcoming.

106. As a developing Member State, Viet Nam attached great importance to the Agency's technical co-operation activities. It was satisfied with the implementation of RCA activities and looked forward to their expansion in the future. He commended the improved management of the technical co-operation programme which had resulted in a record high delivery rate and welcomed the introduction of the Model Projects. That new approach should contribute to increasing further the scientific and technical capacities of developing countries. In connection with the implementation of a Model Project on radiation and waste safety infrastructure upgrading, Viet Nam had recently promulgated an ordinance on radiation monitoring. However, the financing of technical assistance should be given priority and a better funding balance should be maintained between the technical co-operation programme and the safeguards programme while Programme 93+2 was being implemented.

107. In conclusion, he said that his country was very grateful for the assistance provided by the Agency, and in particular by the Department of Technical Co-

operation, which was contributing to its socio-economic development and prosperity. Nuclear applications were becoming increasingly important in a number of economic sectors in Viet Nam.

108. Mr. KASEMSARN (Thailand) said that, since the last General Conference, major developments had taken place in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and prevention of nuclear proliferation. He commended the Agency on the constructive role it had played in that regard.

109. His country attached high priority to the Agency's technical co-operation programme. The application of nuclear technology was undergoing rapid expansion in Thailand in a number of fields such as medicine, food and agriculture, industry and the environment. Irradiated food had gained wide acceptance in his country and, as a food-exporting country, it appreciated the Agency's work on irradiation technology for food and agricultural commodities. Nuclear technology would certainly have an important contribution to make to the daily lives of the Thai people in the future, and the Agency had an important disseminatory role to play.

110. The unsatisfactory developments which had been apparent since the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference regarding the financing of technical co-operation by comparison with safeguards were cause for concern. Thailand shared the views which had been expressed by other developing countries regarding the need to secure adequate resources for the TCF. The technical co-operation programme should be given the same weight and priority as safeguards.

111. Thailand supported the Agency's efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the safeguards system through Programme 93+2 and welcomed the implementation of the Part 1 measures of that Programme. It was important that the Part 2 measures, for which the Agency had no legal authority under the current safeguards agreements, were cost-efficient and that they respected the sovereignty of Member States. If applied equitably to all Member States, Programme 93+2 would be a most effective means of enhancing the nuclear non-proliferation regime. He welcomed the establishment earlier in the year of the Committee on Strengthening the

Effectiveness and Improving the Efficiency of the Safeguards System which had been entrusted with the task of finalizing a draft protocol which, when it had been approved by Member States, would be an international legal instrument supplementing the existing safeguards agreements. His delegation would co-operate fully with other Member States in that work.

112. He commended the Agency's efforts to modernize its fiscal management and stressed the need to keep to the traditional zero-real-growth budget. Any increase in the next Regular Budget, particularly if such an increase were not equitably distributed, would be viewed with concern by his delegation. In addition, he urged all Member States to make full and timely payment of their assessed contributions to the Regular Budget.

113. Encouraging progress had been made with regard to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones through the signing of the Rarotonga, Tlatelolco and the Pelindaba Treaties. Closer to home, the Treaty on the South East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone had been signed in Bangkok in December 1995 by the ten South East Asian countries, including Thailand. ASEAN foreign ministers had stressed the importance of expediting the ratification of the Treaty by signatory States. For the Treaty to achieve maximum effectiveness, the nuclear-weapon States would have to accede to the Protocol. Thailand had had preliminary discussions with the Agency concerning its role as the depository State.

114. Thailand had co-sponsored and supported the resolution on the CTBT which had been given overwhelming support by the General Assembly in September 1996. Prior to the vote, the Thai Permanent Representative to the United Nations had stated the following:

"The Treaty, in its current state, is long overdue and far from perfect. However, in spite of its imperfections, the Treaty promises for us all a brighter future ... my delegation would like to emphasize that Thailand's co-sponsorship of and support for the draft resolution that we have before us does not in any way negate the high importance that Thailand attaches to the competence and work of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), as the principal forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations. ... The international community has been dreaming

of a nuclear-free world for far too long. Now that we are about to move a step closer to our dream through the adoption of the CTBT, let us try our utmost to ensure that this Treaty will be come truly effective both in law and in spirit."

He endorsed the choice of Vienna as the site for the Preparatory Committee of the CTBTO. The verification process under the CTBT and the Agency's safeguards regime were related and the Agency was well-equipped to provide technical and human resources for verification tasks under the Treaty.

115. In conclusion, he congratulated the Agency on its fortieth anniversary and looked forward to continued progress in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and preventing nuclear proliferation for the benefit of mankind, building on its past achievements.

116. Ms. CLAEYS (Belgium) said that her country fully supported the views which had been expressed on various agenda items by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

117. As a member of the Board of Governors, Belgium fully appreciated the work of that body but it did believe that its functioning could be improved. In particular, the time had come to find a solution to the recurrent problem of the amendment of Article VI. The consultations which had been conducted by Ambassador Bøjer of Denmark on that issue seemed to provide the basis for a compromise. Her country firmly supported a limited expansion of the Board which would maintain its efficiency while ensuring full participation of Member States with a sizeable nuclear programme.

118. Belgium had been participating actively in the expert group which was working on the designation criteria for Board members. Agreement had already been reached on five criteria, namely nuclear reactors, ore production and the nuclear fuel cycle, radiation protection and nuclear safety, research and development, and nuclear applications. Clearly, not all the criteria were of the same importance, but the possession of a nuclear power programme seemed to be a fundamental factor.

119. Control measures such as safeguards were intrusive in the sense that they involved the installation of special measuring and monitoring equipment and the

physical presence of international inspectors. Belgian industry, far from deploring such additional constraints, welcomed and supported them and had contributed considerably to improving the accuracy and relevance of such controls through its involvement in the national safeguards support programme.

120. The safeguards system was one of the Agency's most important activities and an essential element in the struggle to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Any improvement in the system was welcome, in particular through the use of more effective techniques and new methods such as environmental sampling and remote containment and surveillance. It was also important to define the different categories of plutonium in terms of their associated proliferation risk, to assign to them appropriate safeguards measures and to identify inspection costs. In that context, the report of the Canberra Commission on the wider issue of nuclear disarmament and verification mechanisms could serve as a useful guideline.

121. Belgium had subscribed unreservedly in June 1995 to the Part 1 measures of Programme 93+2. Nevertheless, several important questions remained to be settled, such as the processing and analysis of information and the modalities for no-notice inspections. The Part 2 measures would certainly enhance the Agency's capacity to detect undeclared nuclear activities, but a legally precise and universally applicable text had to be developed which defined clearly the rights and obligations of the Agency and Member States. She hoped that the Board Committee which had been established for that purpose would be able to find compromise solutions which were acceptable to all parties. Moreover, the Part 2 measures should not be regarded as routine. In particular, expanded access should not be employed except to provide answers to specific questions relating to nuclear activities carried out by a particular State. In other words, Part 2 should be seen as an addition to rather than a replacement of the existing safeguards regime.

122. Her country continued to contribute financially to the Model Project on the eradication of the tsetse fly in Zanzibar and was gratified to note the considerable progress which had been achieved since the last session of the General Conference. The effectiveness of the sterile insect technique had been clearly demonstrated in

practice, and she hoped that it could be used with similar success in other African countries.

123. In the field of agriculture, Belgium would be funding an Agency co-ordinated research programme over the next five years on the development of new banana genotypes using cellular biology and biotechnology techniques including mutation. The programme combined research, training and technology transfer and would benefit several developing countries where the banana crop was of vital importance. The aim was to develop new species of banana which were more resistant to various viruses and diseases.

124. Turning to nuclear safety, she noted that Belgium had made extrabudgetary contributions to the Agency's programme on the safety of WWER and RBMK reactors in Eastern Europe. It had also been actively involved in international co-operation with the Russian Federation on radioactive waste management.

125. Nuclear power continued to be one of the mainstays of Belgium's energy policies. In 1995, its seven nuclear power plants with a total net capacity of over 5600 MW(e) had generated more than 55% of the country's total electricity output. The total net capacity would increase by almost 13% when units B1 and B2 at the Chooz nuclear power plant were commissioned in which Belgium had a 25% share.

126. The firm Belgonucléaire had fabricated 30 tonnes of MOX fuel for nuclear power plants in Belgium and Germany. In addition, FBFC International had assembled 40 tonnes of MOX fuel and 327 tonnes of UO₂ fuel, making a total of 758 assemblies which were to be shipped to France, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland. In addition, the first MOX fuel assemblies had been successfully loaded into two of Belgium's reactors.

127. Belgium had subscribed to the recommendations of the European Summit in Essen in December 1994 which had urged interested States to place fissile material from dismantled nuclear weapons under safeguards. Recycling of plutonium in MOX fuel was an effective way of achieving that objective. In that context, she looked forward to the experts' meeting which was to be held in Paris in October to discuss the

utilization of fissile material from dismantled nuclear weapons, and the symposium on the fuel cycle which the Agency was organizing in June 1997.

128. With regard to radioactive waste management, an interim storage site had been opened at Doel and an underwater interim storage site was being constructed at Tihange. At the same time the Belgian nuclear fuel company (Synatom) was working on the development of a spent fuel conditioning facility. In the light of the latest parliamentary debates on the management of spent fuel, the relative merits of reprocessing and disposal were currently being re-evaluated and, to that end, the programme on geological disposal of radioactive waste which had been developed by the National Organization for Radioactive Waste and Fissile Material (ONDRAF) had been extended to include spent fuel. It was hoped that a summary report on that work would be ready by the end of 1997. Pursuant to the government declaration on low-level waste, ONDRAF was preparing a report - which should be ready by mid-1997 - comparing different long-term management scenarios for that type of waste. Moreover, the Nuclear Research Centre's underground laboratory in Boom clay formation was to be extended to accommodate new experiments.

129. The Nuclear Research Centre was continuing its research into safety, waste management, radiation protection and safeguards. The BR-2 research reactor had been refurbished and was due to restart at the beginning of 1997. It would be used for scientific experiments, isotope production and silicon doping. The need to safeguard the existence of that type of reactor had been demonstrated at a conference on the role of research facilities in the future of nuclear energy which had been organized in Brussels by the European Nuclear Society. A feasibility study had been completed in collaboration with Ion Beam Applications on isotope production in a sub-critical assembly fed by a spallation source. In addition, the Radioisotope Institute was still working on the development of automatic networks for remote monitoring of environmental radioactivity and on emergency planning. It had also embarked upon a new research project aimed at improving the production and extraction of fission radioisotopes used in nuclear medicine.

130. Despite its small size and its population of less than 10 million, Belgium had a considerable industrial potential in the field of nuclear energy. The development of the nuclear sector would not have been possible without a strict safeguards system incorporated in the broader framework of a multilateral non-proliferation regime. For that reason, and in the interests of global peace and prosperity, her country strongly supported the objectives and functions of the Agency as defined in Articles II and III of its Statute and would stand resolutely behind any new initiative by the Agency aimed at promoting universal recognition of the principles, rules and obligations inherent in the non-proliferation regime, and the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy.

131. Mr. ROMÁN-MOREY (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean - OPANAL) acknowledged the achievements of four decades of fruitful and often difficult work by the Agency. Only 50 years had passed since the bombing of Hiroshima, the most unequivocal demonstration of the destructive power of nuclear energy. However, when it was used for peaceful ends, nuclear energy offered immense possibilities. The Agency, with its successful track record of international co-operation in nuclear affairs and in the application of safeguards, had been the driving force behind the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy for the good of mankind.

132. OPANAL was the first organization of its kind in the world and, apart from promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, its main goal was to prohibit nuclear weapons within the area of application of the Tlatelolco Treaty. That Treaty was perhaps one of the first examples of a confidence-building measure. Developed against the background of the Cold War and as a consequence of the 1962 missile crisis, its goal was complete disarmament and, in particular, nuclear disarmament. The 30 years which had passed since it had been opened for signature had been a period of intense negotiations, hard work and great hope. In 1995, the Tlatelolco Treaty had become truly universal when the last of the 33 States in the Latin American and Caribbean region had signed it, thereby creating the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world.

133. The example of the Tlatelolco Treaty had been followed by others: the Rarotonga Treaty in the South Pacific, the South East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and, most recently, the Pelindaba Treaty in Africa. The conclusion of the Pelindaba Treaty was particularly important. First of all, it pertained to a continent comprising more than 50 States and, secondly, one of the States party to it was a former nuclear-weapon State which had voluntarily decided to relinquish its weapons. It was no coincidence that the Treaty bore the name of Pelindaba - the site where South Africa had developed its nuclear weaponry. The Tlatelolco Treaty had, in OPANAL's view, provided the foundation for what had been achieved on the African continent through the Pelindaba Treaty. He hoped it would serve to encourage other regions to tread the same path. Including the Antarctic Treaty with the four aforementioned Treaties, the southern hemisphere could declare with pride that it was the first to become free of nuclear weapons.

134. The international instruments underpinning the nuclear non-proliferation regime were the NPT which had been extended in 1995, the CTBT which had recently been approved by the General Assembly and, of course, all the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. Taking into account the planned "cut-off" treaty which would ban the production of fissile material, and the treaties for the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological weapons, it was clear that the world was gradually progressing towards a situation where the threat of a war which could put an end to mankind might be removed.

135. The long-awaited CTBT had been a test of the world community's political will. All 32 of the full Parties to the Tlatelolco Treaty had supported the CTBT, thus demonstrating the region's unity on the issue of nuclear disarmament. Having gained the support of all but a few countries, the CTBT constituted a milestone on the road towards a global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Furthermore, it had confirmed the universal opposition to the rise of any new nuclear power. OPANAL sincerely hoped that the CTBT would enter into force before long, and that those countries which had not supported it would - out of ethical considerations - sign the Treaty for the benefit of the world as a whole. Only then would the international community have sufficient

moral authority to demand a significant acceleration in the nuclear disarmament process.

136. OPANAL's new approach now that it had achieved regional universality had been reflected in a number of activities over the past year. In December 1995, its General Conference had decided to establish an ad hoc working group for the strengthening of OPANAL. That group had concluded that the Organization should be strengthened in two ways: firstly, through action within the framework of the Tlatelolco Treaty which did not require any amendment to it; and secondly, through action requiring amendments to the Treaty.

137. He thanked the Agency not only for co-sponsoring the regional seminar on "IAEA Safeguards: Verifying Compliance with Non-Proliferation Commitments" which had been held in Kingston, Jamaica, in April 1996, but also for its constant support of OPANAL.

138. In conclusion, he announced that OPANAL would be celebrating the 30th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in February 1997 in conjunction with the 15th regular session of its General Conference in Mexico City. He invited all the Parties to the Tlatelolco Treaty and those with observer status to attend, together with any others wishing to attend in an observer capacity. The organization would welcome the participation of any State which firmly believed in nuclear disarmament and, above all, in the future of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

139. Mr. MIELNICKI (Trade Unions International of Workers in Energy - TUIWE) said that TUIWE naturally took a great interest in the peaceful utilization of nuclear technology and in safety and working conditions at nuclear power plants. He also commended the Agency on the role it had played in the fight against the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

140. Nuclear power remained a cause of concern to the international community. There was still the possibility that another accident like Chernobyl might occur. Nuclear power plants in Central and Eastern Europe, in particular in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Ukraine, were at risk. For example, the Kozloduy reactor in Bulgaria had been

commissioned without appropriate testing. At the seminar held by TUIWE in Moscow to mark the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident, the TUIWE representative from Ukraine had stated categorically that the Chernobyl nuclear power plant should have been shut down ten years ago since its continued operation endangered the lives of the plant's staff and those living in that part of Europe. He therefore welcomed the agreement which had been reached at the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security that the plant would be shut down by the year 2000.

141. The transport and safe disposal of radioactive waste was an issue of international importance which had yet to be resolved. Indeed, the disposal of radioactive waste and equipment from nuclear power plants remained the greatest challenge for the nuclear power industry and future generations. It was impossible to say exactly how much cooling of radioactive waste was costing and would cost in the future. Thus, estimates of the cost of nuclear power remained questionable. Radioactive waste was a time bomb and an international agreement should be concluded on the establishment of disposal sites which also guaranteed their safety. Furthermore, the monitoring of those sites should be given the same priority as the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

142. TUIWE greatly valued its co-operation with the Agency and it followed closely any developments in international safety standards and energy policy. Every year, it organized seminars on a variety of topics. It had also collaborated with WANO on the drawing up of international regulations for the staff of nuclear power plants.

143. In conclusion, he noted that TUIWE and the Agency shared a common goal. It would therefore welcome the Agency's participation at its seminars and meetings, and would be grateful for any financial support the Agency could offer.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.