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RECORD OF THE SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Austria Center Vienna
on Wednesday, 18 September 1996, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. PADOLINA (Philippines)
Later: Mr. DASQUE (France)
Mr. RYZHOV (Russian Federation)

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[*] GC(40)/22.

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

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Regional Co-operative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America
ASSET	Analysis of Safety Significant Events Team
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
Bangkok Treaty	Treaty on the South East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
CANDU	Canada deuterium-uranium [reactor]
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Early Notification Convention	Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
G-7	Group of Seven
MOX	Mixed oxide
NPP	Nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
R&D	Research and Development
Rarotonga Treaty	South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty
RBMK	High-power channel-type reactor (Soviet Union)
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SAGTAC	Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Co-operation
TACC	Technical Assistance and Co-operation Committee
TC	Technical co-operation
TCDC	Technical co-operation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Vienna Convention	Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (May 1963)
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WWER	Water-cooled and -moderated reactor

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

1. Mr. INDELICATO (Italy), having supported the statement made by Ireland on behalf of the European Union, said that in the first half of 1996 Italy, in its capacity as President of the European Union, had spared no effort to establish a common position of the Fifteen on Programme 93+2 and to contribute thereby in a constructive way to the necessary dialogue with the Agency. The success of the important new measures proposed by the Director General to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the Agency's safeguards depended on the approval of Member States. His delegation strongly supported Programme 93+2 and hoped that the committee responsible for drafting the model protocol would conclude its work promptly. It reiterated the hope that States which had not concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements would accept the Programme 93+2 measures applicable to them in line with their non-proliferation commitments.

2. The year 1996 - the tenth anniversary of the tragic accident at Chernobyl - had seen an intensification of international co-operation in the field of nuclear safety. That continued to be a matter of paramount importance for Italy, which was consequently participating constructively in multilateral efforts aimed at improving the safety of nuclear facilities, particularly of reactors operated in Central and Eastern Europe and in the CIS. The Moscow Summit had contributed greatly to advancing the cause of nuclear safety in the world. In that context, Italy appreciated the decision by President Kuchma, just announced, to shut down unit 1 of the Chernobyl power plant by the end of 1996 as a first step towards the complete shutdown of the plant by the year 2000, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the G-7 in December 1995.

3. Intensive negotiations had been taking place for several years under the Agency's initiative with a view to preparing new international legal instruments on crucial matters related to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Italy attached great importance to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which it would ratify shortly, and wished to underline - on the eve of its entry into force - the relevance of its provisions, particularly as regards the peer review process. He trusted that full

application of the Convention by all the States parties would contribute greatly to improving nuclear safety in the world.

4. His delegation had participated in a constructive spirit and made specific proposals in negotiations conducted under the aegis of the Agency to elaborate a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management, as well as on revision of the Vienna Convention and the establishment of a global supplementary fund. Significant, although not always decisive, progress had been made. Italy hoped that all the countries concerned were prepared to make the concessions necessary for the negotiations to be concluded swiftly and successfully.

5. Although Italy had no nuclear power plant in operation, it was participating actively in international work aimed at substantially improving power plant safety. Studies were being carried out within the framework of international co-operation to find innovative solutions that could be adopted at the beginning of the next century. Thus, the Italian Electricity Agency (ENEL) was participating, together with other European partners, in the definition of European electricity producer specifications for new generation reactors to gradually replace existing reactors early in the 21st century. The Italian Agency for New Technologies, Energy and the Environment (ENEA) was undertaking studies of new generation reactor systems and had recently completed, on behalf of General Electric and Westinghouse, experimental programmes on new components for simplified boiling water reactors and the AP600. Finally, the design of a small multipurpose modular reactor with enhanced passive safety features, named MARS (Multipurpose Advanced Reactor inherently Safe), had been completed by ENEA and the University of Rome. The use of MARS for co-generation of electricity and process heat for desalination appeared very promising. Italy fully supported the plan to produce potable water economically described in document GC(40)/4.

6. Italy was continuing work on the management of nuclear waste from ENEL's phased-out power plants. ENEA was conducting a comprehensive programme on the management of nuclear waste and material stored in nuclear fuel cycle facilities. That programme had recently received special funding from the Italian Government. Italy

was therefore actively participating in research in the nuclear field aimed at preserving and improving knowledge acquired over the years.

7. Mr. DAHMANI (Algeria), having welcomed the approval of Moldova for Agency membership, recalled that on 10 September the United Nations General Assembly had adopted a resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Algeria, which had always supported the non-proliferation regime and had participated actively in efforts made by the international community to attain that objective, was gratified at that achievement in the nuclear disarmament process. The Treaty would strengthen security and peace in the world and contribute to the utilization of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. The international community, which had called for a nuclear test ban, had spent a long time negotiating that agreement which, despite its imperfections and omissions (because, for example, it did not cover laboratory tests), did have the merit of banning nuclear explosions.

8. That breakthrough followed the indefinite extension of the NPT, to which Algeria had acceded. In an international environment subject to both tension and change, those achievements restored hope to countries for which use of the atom for peaceful purposes was an economic development objective. That was the case for Algeria which had completely banned all non-peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Having voluntarily and unilaterally submitted its two research reactors, NUR and ES-SALAM, to Agency safeguards, it had acceded to the NPT on 12 January 1995 and then signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency on 30 March 1996. Co-operation was now accompanied by the utmost confidence and transparency.

9. As a follow-up to those actions, Algeria was preparing to establish a national nuclear energy body which would be responsible for implementing a multiform and multisectorial policy for the development of nuclear energy and nuclear techniques in the country. He recalled that in 1987 Algeria had acceded to the Early Notification and Assistance Conventions and in September 1994 had been one of the first countries to sign the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

10. Algeria welcomed the signature, in Cairo, of the Pelindaba Treaty creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. The African continent was thereby demonstrating its confidence in the peaceful use of nuclear energy for development. However, that sentiment was overshadowed by the fact that in the Middle East, which was very close to Africa, a single country continued to block the establishment of a similar zone in the region.

11. The establishment and strengthening of confidence between States, a precondition for the full development of peaceful uses of the atom, could only come about as a result of a truly global and non-discriminatory non-proliferation approach and a policy of total and universal disarmament. Thus, strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system were not achievable unless universality of the system was taken into account and the developing countries received assurances against the use, or threat of the use, of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States. Furthermore, the system should not be an instrument limiting access to technologies in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy and socio-economic development.

12. Algeria supported the aim of Programme 93+2 and welcomed the establishment of a committee to prepare a protocol on the application of safeguards. It had participated actively in the first session of that committee and had submitted comments in writing. It would continue to co-operate actively in the establishment of a more reliable safeguards system, whilst maintaining that those measures should not hinder legitimate access to nuclear technologies. Such access was being obtained, inter alia, through national development programmes and with the help of technical co-operation between the Agency and Member States. Those activities, vital for the developing countries, unfortunately did not always receive the support they deserved from the Agency. The growing imbalance between safeguards and technical co-operation activities needed to be remedied. In that connection, Algeria welcomed the decision of the Board of Governors to re-establish the Informal Working Group on the Financing of Technical Co-operation, to which it would give its full support.

13. In view of its technological potential, Algeria was directly interested in enlargement of the Board which should take into consideration the views and aspirations of developing countries, particularly those in Africa.

14. With regard to the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, Algeria remained concerned about the obstacle presented by Israel's position. That position should be seen in the light of Israel's blocking of the Middle East peace process and its refusal to accede to the NPT, behaviour which ran counter to the objectives of the Agency and the NPT regime. It was surprising therefore that that country was setting its sights on a seat on the Board of Governors to represent a region in which it was not pursuing the use of nuclear energy for peaceful and development purposes. Algeria therefore wished to reaffirm that it was a matter for the Middle East and South Asia area group to decide which countries it accepted as members. Algeria was also concerned that negotiations on expansion of the Board of Governors, through amendment of Article VI of the Statute were not producing any tangible results.

15. In conclusion, Algeria reiterated its full support for the Agency in promoting the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and facilitating technology transfer in aid of national development.

16. Mr. WALKER (Canada), having welcomed Moldova to membership of the Agency, said that one of the most challenging issues currently facing the international community was the safe and secure disposition of nuclear material no longer required for military purposes. At the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit in April, the G-7 and Russian leaders had agreed that international co-operation was needed. Canada's Prime Minister, noting the possible positive benefits to non-proliferation and reduction of weapons plutonium stockpiles, had announced that Canada had agreed, in principle, to the concept of using plutonium in MOX fuel in Canadian-based CANDU reactors. To that end, studies were being conducted by Canadian establishments in collaboration with the United States and the Russian Federation.

17. During the past three years, Programme 93+2 on strengthening and improving the efficiency of safeguards had evolved towards a system that would help the

international community move from conventional verification of declared nuclear material to strengthened measures that would give the Agency greater capability to detect undeclared nuclear material and activities. In that way trust and transparency would be increased. Canada was pleased with the progress made by the Committee on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Improving the Efficiency of the Safeguards System during its first session in July, and would continue to play an active role until the Committee completed its task and presented a final draft protocol for complementary legal authority to the Board of Governors. Canada called upon all Committee members to demonstrate a spirit of co-operation and to recognize, after three years of deliberations, that strengthened and more efficient safeguards were imperative; tinkering with the current system would do singular disservice to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. His Government would continue to work closely with the Agency on a joint project to develop a remodelled safeguards approach for nuclear material in Canada.

18. Canada strongly supported the new strategic directions adopted by the Agency in pursuing its technical co-operation programme, and thanked the Deputy Director General for Technical Co-operation and his staff for their earnest approach to carrying out reforms. The Canadian Government consistently contributed to the TCF, and the Canadian nuclear industry was increasingly involved in technical co-operation projects and consultations. A particular example was the Agency's nuclear desalination programme. For a number of years, that programme had been strongly supported by Canada, which would continue to work with the Agency and other Member States in advancing such programmes, which offered great potential for resolving some fundamental problems of sustainable development.

19. In the field of nuclear power, Canada believed that the Agency was playing an important role, especially in its efforts to facilitate the exchange of technical information and operational experience with nuclear power programmes. It would actively support the newly established International Working Group on Advanced Technologies for Heavy Water Reactors.

20. Consistent with the expansion of nuclear applications, the strengthening of nuclear safety as one of the pillars of the Agency's mandate was a natural and positive development. Canada looked forward to working with the first Deputy Director General for Nuclear Safety and remained committed to participation in Agency activities in that field. The entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety was a particularly important development. Canada had ratified the Convention, and it urged all signatories to complete ratification procedures as soon as possible. The Convention clearly demonstrated that nuclear safety was an international concern that deserved the highest priority. Canada also supported the early conclusion of a convention on radioactive waste management as a necessary element in the elaboration of global norms in the area of nuclear safety.

21. On budgetary issues, Canada favoured a policy of zero nominal growth in all international organizations. It had agreed to the 1997 budget proposal reluctantly in view of the fact that the overall assessment level had remained unchanged thanks to a more accurate estimate of investment income. Canada expected such budgetary transparency to continue and for further measures recommended by the External Auditor to be incorporated. That should result in an actual reduction in the Agency's budget for 1998.

22. After a long period of restructuring, Canada's nuclear sector remained stable and forward looking. Canada had signed over 20 nuclear co-operation agreements with more than 35 countries, the most recent being with Brazil and Ukraine. Its nuclear industry was active in the formulation and execution of extensive nuclear power programmes, based on the CANDU pressurized heavy water reactor. It was also active in the formulation of radioactive waste and nuclear safety measures, and had co-operative ventures with partners from many countries. The Agency had an important role to play in facilitating such collaborative programmes and the exchange of information resulting from them.

23. Seven CANDU reactors were on the list of the top 25 reactors worldwide on the basis of lifetime performance to the end of December 1995. Canada was especially proud in April 1996 when Cernavoda-1, the first Canadian-designed nuclear facility

in Eastern Europe, achieved criticality. It looked forward to further collaboration with the Government of Romania, and congratulated it on its success. The first CANDU reactor in the Republic of Korea, Wolsong-1, continued to have outstanding performance. The construction of three additional CANDU reactors on the same site was well under way and unit 2 was due to enter service in 1997.

24. Another major highlight of the past year was the progress achieved in nuclear co-operation between Canada and China. The signing in July of a co-operation agreement for the construction of two CANDU reactors was a major advance; Canada looked forward to working with China on its nuclear programme.

25. Over the coming year, Canadian efforts would be devoted to achieving a consensus on the draft protocol for complementary legal authority for Programme 93+2, moving the Agency further in the direction of a zero nominal growth budget and assisting in the task of confidence-building on the nuclear safety front, with full implementation of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and negotiations for a convention on radioactive waste and spent fuel management. Canada would also continue its work in TACC, SAGTAC and other Agency forums in support of the new strategic direction for technical co-operation.

26. Mr. ŠTULLER (Czech Republic), after endorsing the statement delivered by Ireland on behalf of the European Union and associated countries and welcoming the admission of Moldova, said that one of the most notable achievements of the past year in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and ionizing radiation concerned the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The Czech Republic noted with satisfaction that, with Mexico's ratification of the Convention, the number of countries having ratified it was now sufficient for its entry into force. It commended all the Member States party to the Convention on completing the procedures required under their legislation so that the Convention could enter into force. The Czech Republic, one of the first twenty signatories, had deposited its instrument of approval with the Agency a year previously. It urged all Member States of the Agency which had not already done so to sign, accept, approve and/or ratify the Convention as soon as possible.

27. Not all the international communities' efforts had achieved such good results. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva had failed to reach consensus on the final text of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Nevertheless, the Czech Republic still hoped to see the situation resolved and the Treaty enter into force.

28. Another international legal instrument with an important bearing on global security was the NPT, whose 25th anniversary had been celebrated at the same time as the NPT Review and Extension Conference in New York in spring 1995. The States Parties to the Treaty had decided to extend it indefinitely. His delegation was pleased to learn that the review process would continue and that the preparatory committee would meet to begin the task in April 1997. By then Member States would be in a position to focus their efforts on the issues raised at the Review and Extension Conference.

29. In its 40 year existence the Agency had endeavoured, under the terms of its Statute, to support and promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Despite many difficulties, nuclear power had expanded considerably. The Agency's support for the development of nuclear medicine, the elaboration of new methods based on the use of ionizing radiation in agriculture and industry, and the implementation of water resource assessment programmes contributed substantially to the progress made in those areas of human activity and benefited the whole of mankind.

30. The NPT Review and Extension Conference had confirmed that the Treaty remained an indispensable instrument for maintaining world peace and that the role of the Agency in enforcing its principles was unrivalled. The Czech Republic endorsed the Agency's safeguards activities and supported its efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and enhance the efficiency of the system. It welcomed the establishment of the committee responsible for drafting the text of the additional protocol to safeguards agreements and would play an active part in its work.

31. In that context, it was worth mentioning some examples of practical co-operation between the Czech Republic and the Agency aimed at strengthening safeguards. In 1994 and 1995 the Czech Republic had implemented two national

projects closely concerned with strengthening the effectiveness of the safeguards system. As promised, it had reported on the outcome of that activity to the Deputy Director General for Safeguards in June 1996. His delegation was convinced that the results would help the Agency develop new methods for detecting possible clandestine and undeclared nuclear activities. A further example related to the application of safeguards. In accordance with Article III of the NPT the Czech Republic, in co-operation with the Secretariat, had drawn up a new INFCIRC/153-type safeguards agreement. It had been approved by the Board of Governors the previous week and had just been signed.

32. The Czech Republic was one of the countries where nuclear power played a major role. Some 20% of the country's electricity was produced by the Dukovany nuclear power plant, and construction of the Temelin plant was in progress. The entry into service of the latter would double the Czech Republic's installed nuclear capacity. His Government's policy in that area complied strictly with all the basic principles of nuclear safety and radiation protection enshrined in the international agreements to which the country was a party. With those principles in mind, the Czech Republic was introducing radical improvements to the design of the Temelin plant and upgrading the WWER units in operation at Dukovany. In parallel with those efforts to improve nuclear safety a dynamic transformation of his country's nuclear legislation was taking place. A new Act to replace the existing laws was being discussed by Parliament. It was based on internationally adopted principles of nuclear safety and radiation protection and complied with the legislation in force in the Member States of the European Union.

33. Safety, openness and full transparency were the fundamental principles and objectives of Czech policy in the nuclear field, as reflected in the conclusions of the many missions carried out by the Agency and other international organizations. The improvement in the nuclear safety of WWER reactors was an ongoing process being carried out in close co-operation with the Agency and international technical assistance programmes. The Agency's extrabudgetary programme on WWER reactor safety was particularly useful for the regulatory bodies, nuclear power plant operators

and other organizations involved in all countries having such reactors. The programme provided for the preparation, with the active participation of the countries concerned, of lists of the various WWER design deficiencies to be eliminated, as well as for Agency missions to reactor sites in order to evaluate the implementation of corrective measures. That programme had also contributed to the upgrading of Czech nuclear power plants. In that regard, his delegation wished to convey to the Agency and all donor countries the appreciation for the support they had given to the Association of State Nuclear Regulatory Bodies of Countries Operating WWER-type Reactors which had been expressed at the Association's third regular meeting, held in Prague in June 1996 under the chairmanship of the Czech Republic.

34. With regard to technical co-operation, in 1995 the Agency had begun a new two-year programme for the Czech Republic. The programme was concerned with nuclear fuel assessment, safety culture and the management of radioactive waste. For the 1997-98 biennial cycle, the Czech Republic in collaboration with the Secretariat had prepared a Model Project in the area of health care which should have a considerable impact on the whole of the population.

35. The former Czechoslovakia had received hardly any technical assistance from the Agency and neither had the Czech Republic in the two years which followed its creation. However, the Czech Republic had always been aware of the cost of technical assistance programmes and their importance for the recipient countries. Accordingly, it had always paid its contribution to the TCF in full and on time. It was willing to provide expert services and funding for future projects which would enable it to share its experience, and it hoped that that commitment would be taken into account when its requests for technical assistance were being considered.

36. Ms. OK (Turkey), having extended a welcome to Moldova, said that during the past year the Agency had experienced some very positive developments in a number of areas. Following the indefinite extension of the NPT, it had made considerable efforts to improve the safeguards system and verification activities. Document GOV/INF/796 gave a very clear picture of the safeguards commitments undertaken by Member States of the Agency, and Turkey was pleased that the

Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and France had indicated their intention to assume new commitments in line with the measures foreseen in Programme 93+2. It was highly desirable for commitments undertaken under Programme 93+2 to be uniform.

37. Turkey fully supported the measures foreseen in Programme 93+2, including broader access to information, no-notice inspections and physical access to undeclared sites. Those measures, coupled with new methods and technologies such as environmental sampling and the universal reporting scheme, should make the system more effective. She hoped that those measures would be applied to all, including the nuclear-weapon States and States which had concluded item-specific safeguards agreements; they could only be effective if they were universally accepted in a spirit of mutual confidence. She hoped that Programme 93+2 would be finalized at the December session of the Board of Governors and that it would be implemented in 1997.

38. Progress achieved towards disarmament and non-proliferation would hopefully lead to adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; substantial progress had been made on preparing an appropriate text, including measures to prevent nuclear tests and the administrative procedures. The new organization would be situated in Vienna and make use of some of the Agency's services. Her delegation hoped that countries with objections to the principle of gradual disarmament would demonstrate sufficient flexibility to join the large number of those which had enthusiastically embraced that principle and that the new Treaty would operate from the start without any exclusions.

39. In parallel with those events of global significance, adoption of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty marked the beginning of an era of collective use of nuclear science and technology for economic and social development. Adoption of that Treaty also demonstrated the commitment of African States to maintaining peace and security and to supporting universality of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. She hoped that the African continent would serve as a model for the Middle East in that regard.

40. Turkey welcomed the Director General's efforts, through continued consultations with the Middle East countries, to facilitate the early application of full-scope Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities in the region. The preparation of a model agreement was a necessary step towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region, although some divergence of views existed among the countries concerned with regard to the timing of the application of full-scope safeguards and the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. Turkey considered that it was still possible to build confidence and co-operation in the region. The quest for comprehensive peace in the region was all the more important as armed conflicts were frequent and she hoped that the consummation of the peace process in the Middle East would be accompanied by the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

41. Turkey was following closely the Agency's activities concerning Iraq and took note of the assurance given by the Iraqi authorities to the Director General of their intention to facilitate the Agency's monitoring activities. She hoped that Iraq would continue to co-operate both with the Security Council and the Agency so that the sanctions, which were creating difficulties for the Iraqi people and affecting economic activity in the region, would be lifted.

42. The most significant event of the past year concerned nuclear safety. 1996 had been the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident which, at the time, had had serious consequences for Turkey. The conference on Chernobyl in Vienna had highlighted the continuing health and social effects of that accident. Nevertheless, the accident had had a positive consequence since the Agency was now focusing more on nuclear safety issues. The potential risks of the RBMK and WWER reactors and the need to upgrade their safety had been closely examined. In particular, there was now a willingness to co-operate on the safety standards to be applied to the Armenian Medzamor reactor, which left a lot to be desired from the safety point of view and was situated only 30 km from the Turkish border.

43. Another important development was the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Turkey was pleased that a minimum level of responsibility would apply in future and appreciated the Secretariat's efforts to clarify the review process

and define its own role. Turkey, which had been one of the first countries to ratify that Convention, would comply scrupulously with its obligations in the hope that co-operation on nuclear safety would prove fruitful.

44. The draft convention on the safety of radioactive waste management should be ready for signature at the beginning of 1997. Her delegation paid special tribute to Professor Baer and other experts who had played a leading role in drafting rules on the management of radioactive waste and spent fuel and on the transboundary movement of those materials. In addition, the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage had resolved a lot of the outstanding issues and managed to prepare the full texts of a protocol to amend the Vienna Convention and a draft supplementary funding convention. The Standing Committee should be able to complete its work at the following session and she hoped that a diplomatic conference on liability for nuclear damage could be held in 1997 with a view to adopting the protocol to amend the Vienna Convention.

45. Progress in nuclear safety, radioactive waste management and nuclear liability had placed new responsibilities on the Agency; Turkey hoped that the Secretariat would equip itself with the means to carry out its new tasks in a realistic and scientifically sound way. It had repeatedly emphasized the importance of the Agency's mission in those areas and was pleased to see that the Secretariat now had the legal authority to carry it out.

46. At the previous session of the General Conference she had dwelt on how particular knowledge and experience acquired by a Member State could be passed on to other Member States in the context of regional co-operation ventures, and indicated her country's willingness to place its facilities at the disposal of other developing countries. Since then, Turkey, with the support of the Agency, had set up a facility for processing radioactive waste from hospitals, industry, research activities and research reactors in Turkey and the region as a whole. The staff of the Turkish Atomic Energy Authority now had the necessary skills to carry out their work in a safe and technically correct way. The Agency had requested Turkey's support for its programme to introduce staff in Member States of the region to the principles of predisposal

radioactive waste management by organizing demonstration courses at the Cekmece Nuclear Research and Training Centre. The first demonstration had been held in May 1996 with the participation of experts from Albania, Greece and Syria. It would be a good thing for similar regional demonstration centres to be established in other regions, using the human resources and equipment available in Member States, and Turkey had submitted a draft resolution on that issue which it hoped would be adopted unanimously. By making full use of the Agency's resources and technical capacity, Turkey had reached a level whereby it could now help the Agency in its important task of transferring nuclear waste management technology and know-how to other Member States.

47. Technical co-operation was among the most useful of the Agency's activities and the implementation of Model Projects was having a beneficial influence on the planning and preparation of TC projects. That activity should be pursued in a dynamic way through continuous evaluation of progress achieved. A generally applicable formulation for specific fields could be established for interested Member States. Upgrading requests from Member States would pay dividends. A "generalized Model Project scheme", taking into account the experience gained by Member States, could be used in preparing requests for similar projects. Thus, information would be pooled at a preliminary stage, when interested countries required preparatory assistance in developing their infrastructure. Furthermore, concerted efforts should be made at the project design stage to ensure the establishment of the necessary infrastructure, either within the framework of CPF missions or through a continuous exchange of information between the Agency and developing Member States, with verifiable objectives being set for the specific problems.

48. Commending the Department of Technical Co-operation on its efforts to strengthen collaboration with other international organizations, she highlighted the project to safeguard the marine environment in the Black Sea region, in which the Secretariat was co-operating with UNESCO, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, UNEP, WMO, UNDP and the World Bank. That project was very important for the Member States of the region, as its aim was to assess pollution in the Black

Sea with a view to ameliorating the region as a whole, and it could well serve as a model for other regions. The strengthening of regional collaboration seemed particularly desirable for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of TC activities. The maximum advantage should be derived from the training facilities available, for example through the exchange of trainees and the organization of regional experts' meetings. In that context, her Government intended to pay in full its contribution to the Technical Co-operation Fund, i.e. US $255 000.

49. Both in meetings of the Board of Governors and at the previous session of the General Conference, a number of countries, including Turkey, had expressed great interest in nuclear applications for improving water resources. The availability of good-quality water in sufficient quantity was one of the most pressing issues for many countries and it would become even more urgent in the future. Turkey had been among the first countries to include the application of isotope techniques for the management of water resources in its national programmes, with the establishment of a national isotope hydrology laboratory in 1960. The first interregional course organized by the Agency on that topic had been held in Ankara in 1964. Since then, the laboratory had been modernized with Agency support and equipped with the most up-to-date equipment, giving it the capacity to support hydrology-related activities in the region as a whole. With the experience and know-how it had acquired, Turkey could play a leading role in promoting isotope hydrology in the region. The best way of encouraging the use of nuclear applications for improving water resources was to undertake regional technical co-operation projects, and the results obtained would be applicable to other areas with similar climatological and geological characteristics. She therefore urged the Agency to initiate regional projects in that field, on which Turkey would be more than willing to collaborate.

50. Turkey was at the crossroads of two major routes for illicit trafficking in nuclear materials, one connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean and the other connecting Europe to Asia and the Middle East. Statistical data on seizures of nuclear material were very indicative in that respect. Turkey firmly supported the Agency's efforts to combat illicit trafficking in radioactive materials and was transmitting all useful

information on illicit trafficking incidents to the Agency's database. Combating trafficking in nuclear materials was to a large extent the responsibility of countries themselves, and the setting up of border controls and national systems of accounting and control of nuclear material would go a long way to resolving the problem. All the same, her delegation considered that, as that important issue was of a transboundary nature, the measures enumerated needed to be backed up by international co-operation. Identification of the international aspects of the problem and their resolution would be possible only through the conclusion of an international agreement. Although her delegation knew that its proposal for such an agreement would not meet with consensus, it still maintained that illicit trafficking in nuclear materials could not be overcome without having an international legal instrument committing parties to monitor and protect their radiation sources and to report any loss or theft of those sources to the Agency or other international organizations. She hoped that that proposal would gain the support of other countries in the near future so that work based on it could start.

51. Having served as Chairperson of the Open-ended Consultative Group on Article VI of the Statute, she was disappointed that no consensus had yet been reached on that matter. She was confident that an acceptable and viable solution could be found for a reasonable expansion of the Board of Governors, considering the fact that the Executive Council of the future Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization would be established in Vienna and would have 51 members.

52. Finally, she welcomed the measures taken to increase the number of female staff members of the Secretariat, which in the past year had risen from 17.2 to 18%, and from 3.2 to 7.8% at the P-5 level and above. That was an appreciable result and she hoped that the Secretariat would take fresh measures aimed at achieving, the United Nations target of 35% within a reasonable time span. A more representative Secretariat and Board of Governors was bound to encourage genuine co-operation between States.

53. Mr. KAZLAUSKAS (Lithuania), having welcomed the Republic of Moldova, commended the Agency on its work in elaborating and enforcing international legal

instruments regulating States' obligations in the field of nuclear energy. Lithuania, aware of the huge international challenges involved in nuclear energy, had become a Member of the Agency in 1993, shortly after its independence. More recently, in June 1996, it had ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety, realizing that as soon as that instrument entered into force, in October 1996, it would have a responsibility towards the international community. Lithuania would almost certainly need international assistance to help it meet its commitments.

54. The tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident had called to mind that everything possible needed to be done to avoid similar catastrophes in the future. Lithuania had signed the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and was participating in the work of revising that instrument under the auspices of the Agency. While it recognized that the liability for damage under the Convention was inadequate, Lithuania, in the present state of its economy, could not take on the level of liability proposed in the new draft. It supported the proposals which had been made regarding the transition period and considered that with the Agency's assistance it could manage to solve the insurance issues associated with the RBMK-type reactors.

55. Lithuania was developing a legislative framework for the energy sector. The Energy Law had been in force since 1994, the Ignalina NPP Physical Protection Regulations had been approved, a nuclear energy bill had been submitted to Parliament, and radiation protection legislation was being drafted.

56. Lithuania supported all steps taken by the Agency to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system; in that connection, it had aligned itself with the position of the European Union and had already accepted the simplified inspector designation procedure proposed by the Agency, giving inspectors free access to its territory. Illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources and attempts to transport those materials through its territory were a cause of serious concern for Lithuania, which was making every effort to put an end to such practices.

57. Without underestimating other nuclear applications, he wished to highlight the paramount importance of electricity production. The amount of overall electricity production accounted for by nuclear energy was increasing throughout the world, and in a country like Lithuania, it even predominated, representing 85% of the national output. Ignalina nuclear power plant, with its two RBMK-type reactors, had a total capacity of 2500 MW, and, as Lithuania's primary energy sources were negligible, nuclear power was its main energy source.

58. Experts considered RBMK reactors to be among the most hazardous. Lithuania's energy strategy consequently focused on improving safety at Ignalina NPP. An extensive safety improvement programme was under way with the assistance of several countries, of which Sweden deserved special mention. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development had provided a grant of ECU 33 million for that purpose. When the programme was completed, safety at Ignalina NPP would be much improved, and Lithuania wished to express its thanks to the countries which had provided assistance. At the present time a safety analysis and evaluation exercise was being carried out at the power plant and an international expert group would shortly be producing a safety analysis report on the basis of which Lithuania's safety inspectorate would decide whether or not to grant Ignalina NPP an operating licence. The Agency's ASSET and OSART missions had been considered to be particularly useful.

59. Thanks to the Agency's intensive efforts to analyse the safety of RBMK reactors, experts now had an in-depth knowledge of the characteristics of those reactors, their safety systems and their operation. Lithuania's nuclear specialists had benefited from Agency financial support to acquire operational experience of nuclear power plants, further their knowledge through international workshops and participate in conferences or symposia. That co-operation was helping Lithuanian experts to evaluate their own problems, and better mutual understanding facilitated co-operation with foreign companies and organizations in solving practical nuclear safety issues. It should be mentioned in that context that Ignalina had third-generation RBMK reactors, which had a much higher safety level than the Soviet designed reactors.

60. The radioactive waste management issue was becoming increasingly acute in Lithuania, particularly in respect of spent fuel. An overall radioactive waste management plan had been developed with the assistance of the Swedish company SKB and the Agency. Spent fuel would be put in interim storage in containers produced by the German company GNB, while the question of final disposal was considered. That problem needed to be tackled by countries working together in a co-ordinated manner, as it was neither desirable nor economical for countries to seek individual solutions. Lithuania would endeavour to acquire new technologies whilst pursuing geological investigations and co-operating with countries whose environment and problems were similar. The Agency had taken a welcome initiative in regard to the management of radioactive waste from medical, industrial and agricultural applications, and similar programmes could usefully be developed for spent fuel management.

61. In conclusion, he noted that Ignalina NPP, which had been a completely closed facility, was now more easily accessible. Objective information on the plant could be obtained by anyone and an information centre had recently been opened at the site itself. He thanked the Secretariat for the mission sent to Lithuania in July 1996, which had been greatly appreciated. Lastly, he pointed out that, despite the provisions of the Statute requiring staff recruitment to be on as wide a geographical basis as possible, Lithuania was still not represented on the Agency's staff.

62. Ms. MÄKELÄINEN (Finland), welcoming the Republic of Moldova to membership of the Agency and associating herself with the statement made by the delegate of Ireland on behalf of the European Union, said that Finland looked forward to the imminent entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The preparation of the convention on the safety of radioactive waste management was progressing well, thanks particularly to the efforts of the Chairman of the group of experts drafting the text. For its part, Finland felt that the convention should be broad in scope. From the safety point of view, it saw no difference between spent fuel considered as waste and spent fuel not considered as such, and indeed the convention should cover all radioactive waste irrespective of its origin.

63. The work on revision of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage had reached a stage which allowed some optimism as to its completion in the not too distant future. It was to be noted with satisfaction that the Russian Federation was in the process of becoming a party to that Convention.

64. The finalization of the protocol for implementation of Part 2 of Programme 93+2 was an important task. It involved a series of indispensable measures, the cost of which would have to be borne if the nuclear option was to remain viable. Finland failed to see what fundamentally new obligations that second set of measures would entail for States. After all, it seemed only natural that a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the NPT should adhere to its non-proliferation commitments and take all the necessary measures to provide assurance that it was not engaged in any undeclared nuclear activities.

65. For the first time for years the budget proposed for 1997 represented real growth. Finland had never blindly supported the zero-real-growth principle for the Agency's budget, believing that each programme should be examined on its own merits and adequately funded after a thorough analysis, taking into account national budget constraints. The Secretariat had taken some welcome measures for reviewing the Agency's programme, for example having the programme of the new Department of Nuclear Safety examined by an advisory group. The same should be done for the nuclear power programme as well as all other programmes, in order to identify the programme components which had run their course or which no longer fell within the Agency's mandate. Gradual phasing-out of such activities would make room for new priority activities without increasing the overall budget. That exercise should be undertaken on the new biennial programme for 1999-2000, preparation of which would commence in 1997.

66. The Agency should seek to collaborate more with other international organizations, in particular those concerned with nuclear safety, such as the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD and the European Union. Each international organization had its own mandate in serving countries with specific common interests. By collaborating more together, those organizations could assist each other in their tasks.

In any case they would all be drawing on the same limited expert resources in Member States. In conclusion, she congratulated the Director General and the Secretariat on the work accomplished in not always easy circumstances and assured them of her country's continued support in their task.

67. Mr. BULA CAMACHO (Colombia), having welcomed Moldova to the Agency, said that the fortieth session of the Agency's General Conference was taking place at a crucial time in international politics, marked by the departure from the old two-bloc system. The General Conference was especially important to Colombia for two reasons, firstly on account of the country's tremendous energy potential and, secondly on account of its outstanding biodiversity. Pointing to the correlation between international peace and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, he highlighted the role played by the Agency, particularly with regard to safeguards. With respect to present moves to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system, he hoped that the work of the committee established in that connection would result in an increase in the Agency's authority.

68. In Colombia nuclear energy had always been used for peaceful purposes, in such fields as medicine and scientific research. Colombia had always complied faithfully with its treaty obligations and with the Agency's recommendations, as exemplified by the fact that it had just returned some highly enriched fuel to its country of origin, thereby becoming the second Latin American country to successfully complete such an operation.

69. Colombia appreciated the support given by the Agency to the Colombian Institute of Nuclear Affairs in the handling of radioactive waste and the design of radiation protection systems. With regard to radioactive waste storage, his delegation considered that the Agency needed to plan well ahead with a view to providing Member States with concrete recommendations.

70. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be directed to promoting equality of States, rather than serving to further widen the gap separating North and South. There was a collective responsibility to ensure that they did not become a new

element in world domination. In that connection, he made special mention of the Agency's support for ARCAL, which served to strengthen and co-ordinate the peaceful uses of atomic energy in Latin America. Similarly, Colombia commended the Agency's activities to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources and stressed the fundamental role of training in that regard.

71. Colombia welcomed the imminent entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and strongly supported the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the more especially as its constitution made it illegal to manufacture, import, possess or use chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, or to bring nuclear waste into Colombia, and as it was a party to the Tlatelolco Treaty. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should, of course, have been adopted long ago even though it could not prevent countries with very advanced technologies from continuing testing by means of simulation. What mankind really needed was a commitment to complete nuclear disarmament.

72. From the conclusions of the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage it seemed that agreement was close on that matter, which was of such importance to all Member States of the Agency. The same applied to the negotiations concerning radioactive waste management. On a different topic, he emphasized the importance of projects aimed at producing potable water economically and the use of isotope hydrology for water resources management.

73. In conclusion, he said that the Agency had an important role to play in the establishment of an international environmental policy. States and nations would need to work together to appreciate the ethical and ecological dimensions of the problem. Ethical values were based on respect for nature and an ecological vision was important for meeting the challenges of international politics.

74. Mr. VOSKANIAN (Armenia) noted that since his country had joined the Agency in 1993, fruitful co-operation had developed between it and the Agency. Through its reliability, dynamism and effective management the Agency had gained a very positive reputation in Armenia. Co-operation with the Agency, an important

source of science and technology, ensured that nuclear science was used purely for peaceful purposes and as a catalyst for scientific and technological development in general.

75. Armenia supported the Agency's activities aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the safeguards system, and also the work of the committee responsible for preparing an additional protocol to safeguards agreements concluded between Member States and the Agency in connection with the NPT. Member States should strongly support the important projects initiated by the Agency. Stronger global and national measures were needed to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and to guarantee their safe storage and disposal. The Agency's safeguards were an integral part of the international non-proliferation regime and the Agency continued to play a vital role in the implementation of the NPT.

76. His Government reiterated its gratitude to the Agency for the considerable assistance it had provided both before and after the restart of the Medzamor nuclear power plant. It also appreciated the enormous effort by specialists from many countries who had visited the plant and provided valuable advice.

77. The Armenian Government was committed to nuclear safety and in particular to applying the highest standards of safety to the Medzamor plant using all the resources at its disposal. It had allocated the necessary funds for implementing the most important and urgent safety measures. To ensure strict observance of safety standards and upgrading, the President of the Republic of Armenia had appointed an independent international advisory body, the Nuclear Safety Council, composed of experts of world repute, to advise him directly on safety measures and regulations at Medzamor. The urgent problem of safety at the plant required that the Government take steps to improve the capabilities of the national nuclear regulatory body. To ensure the effectiveness of that body, the Government had increased the number of its staff to 22 in 1996 and provided it with every assistance to carry out its activities. The Agency had lent valuable assistance to the Armenian nuclear regulatory body in the following spheres: safety assessment of the plant, seismic safety evaluation, reactor vessel stability, safety evaluation of other technical features of the plant,

management of the nuclear sector in Armenia, fire safety and site security, emergency planning, radiation monitoring system, seismic monitoring system, and organization of training courses, scientific visits and seminars.

78. The Agency was continuing to provide support to Armenia on maintenance, infrastructure development and training. The assistance programme to strengthen radiation protection and radioactive waste safety was also under way. The success of the Agency's technical assistance and co-operation programme meant that Armenia was gradually approaching international standards. As an aid to transparency, Armenia's Permanent Mission had submitted to the Agency a detailed report on the recommissioning of unit 2 of the Medzamor plant. The main conclusion of that report was that over the whole operating period there had been no problems or incidents that could affect the radiation situation in or around the plant.

79. Despite Armenia's energy difficulties and the fact that unit 2 of the Medzamor plant had been restarted under extreme conditions, the Armenian Government did not intend to keep the unit operating in the long term. Medzamor would remain in service until other energy sources had been put in place, which would probably be around the year 2004.

80. In conclusion, he reiterated his Government's commitment to continue developing the power sector by means of conventional sources in conjunction with energy conservation.

81. Mr. AL-BOUANIN (Qatar), welcoming the admission of Moldova to the Agency, said that his country, convinced of the importance of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and of the need for all States to accede to the NPT, in particular all countries of the Middle East region without exception, urged Member States of the Agency to further assist the Director General in pursuing consultations with the countries of the Middle East with a view to achieving full application of the safeguards system and submitting all the nuclear facilities of the region to Agency safeguards. The conclusion of an agreement establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East would serve to create a climate of

mutual confidence and promote the peace process, thus paving the way for the establishment of general, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

82. Nuclear safety, reactor operating safety and radioactive waste management safety were undoubtedly among the most important tasks facing the Agency. In that respect Qatar welcomed the imminent entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. All the same, the Agency's role should not be limited to those aspects. The Agency had been set up to serve developing countries and assist them with technology transfer to enable them to benefit from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in such fields as agriculture, health, environmental protection and food preservation. In that connection, Qatar attached great importance to projects for supplying the people of arid zones with water and hoped that the Agency would play an effective role in the use of nuclear techniques for exploiting underground water resources. It was important that the technical and economic evaluation studies being conducted by the Agency with a view to the implementation of projects to construct ecologically compatible and economically competitive nuclear desalination facilities should ultimately produce tangible results.

83. As regards technical assistance, close examination of the sums allocated to the Middle East region showed that the share of the countries of that region was very modest. The Agency should give more attention to technical co-operation projects with the countries of the region and strengthen and co-ordinate them to match national development plans. The Agency should also provide training opportunities and fellowships to enable those countries to acquire the necessary capacities in the field of peaceful application of nuclear energy. To that end, Qatar urged all Member States, in particular the industrialized countries, to fulfil the commitments they had undertaken with regard to the financing of Agency technical assistance activities and technology transfer.

84. Mr. HASHIM (Malaysia), having welcomed Moldova to membership of the Agency, said that his delegation had listened with appreciation to the Director General's comprehensive and informative statement; it was gratifying to note that, despite resource limitations, the Agency's activities had expanded. He was confident

that the Agency would in future play a still greater role in meeting the needs of its Member States.

85. Malaysia had just adopted its seventh five-year plan, which covered the period 1996-2000 and provided - inter alia - for an improvement of the country's science and technology base, including increased investment in the training of high-level scientific and technical personnel. The plan contained proposals for achieving sustainable development through private-sector participation in the development of science and technology, the nurturing of domestic innovations and inventions, and closer co-operation among research agencies, industrial establishments and universities at the national and the international level. Local research and development (R&D) was to be directed in particular towards increasing the value added to local raw materials, and there was to be a shift in the emphasis on research and development towards achieving increases in productivity.

86. In the country's 1996 budget, the IRPA (Intensification of Research in Priority Areas) programmes for R&D funding had been restructured in order to keep pace with the growing needs of the national economy, and about 10% of the funds in question had been allocated to R&D relating to nuclear and associated technologies. To encourage R&D that was oriented towards the end-user and to strengthen the links between public-sector institutions and industry, a contract research system and R&D syndication would be introduced.

87. The seventh five-year plan would in particular focus on ensuring adequate, secure and economic energy supplies through the efficient utilization of energy resources while preserving the environment. The security of supplies would continue to be pursued through the diversification of energy sources, with recourse to natural gas, petroleum, hydropower and coal. Although nuclear power generation was still only an option, there was a growing recognition of the role of non-power nuclear science and technology in development.

88. Malaysia would continue to participate actively in international co-operation and would intensify its efforts at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. Areas such

as science and technology, technical education and information technology would play a greater role in the improvement of productivity and competitiveness. Also, the plan provided for an expansion of Malaysia's technical co-operation programme through the inclusion of activities with emphasis on human resources development. Co-operation with developed countries would be strengthened, but efforts would also be made to promote self-reliance among countries of the South.

89. The activities being conducted within the framework of RCA had led to the establishment of strong regional institutional networks which constituted a proven mechanism for co-ordinated technology transfer and absorption at the regional level. It was therefore not surprising that in 1995 the Joint Inspection Unit had rated the RCA/UNDP industrial programme the most successful regional programme in the region of Asia and the Pacific. Also, it was encouraging to note that that programme had received the best rating ever awarded by the Joint Inspection Unit.

90. On the subject of nuclear-weapon-free zones, he said that his delegation applauded the signing, on 11 April 1996, of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. The Treaty on the South East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which had been signed on 15 December 1995, required its parties to conclude with the Agency agreements for the application of NPT-type safeguards. Also, it contained provisions relating to important issues ranging from nuclear safety to nuclear supply conditions. In particular, it required that the peaceful nuclear activities conducted within the zone covered by it be the subject of safety assessments conforming to Agency guidelines and standards. As part of the control system, provision had been made for fact-finding missions to be carried out by Agency inspectors. Malaysia was hopeful that the nuclear-weapon States would accede to the Protocol to the Treaty in order to further promote the development of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and ensure peace and security within the South East Asia region and in the world at large.

91. As regards the adoption, on 9 and 10 September 1996, of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by the United Nations General Assembly, Malaysia believed that, despite its shortcomings, the CTBT would, by at least banning nuclear tests, encourage the international community to engage in more serious efforts directed

towards nuclear disarmament. Nevertheless, some legitimate concerns had not been adequately covered in the CTBT. For example, it did not contain a clear commitment of States to the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timeframe; also, it left the door open for forms of testing such as laboratory simulations.

92. His delegation welcomed the conclusion of a safeguards agreement between Chile and the Agency pursuant to the NPT and the Tlatelolco Treaty. It also welcomed the conclusion of an NPT safeguards agreement with the Czech Republic.

93. As in the past, Malaysia had been paying its Regular Budget contributions in full and in a timely manner. Its contributions to the Technical Co-operation Fund (TCF) were in line with the amounts calculated on the basis of the TCF targets. Malaysia would continue to pay its contributions and would like to see all other Member States fulfilling their obligations promptly.

94. Malaysia endorsed the Annual Report and the Agency's accounts for 1995. The improved format and content of the Annual Report were most welcome. As to the Agency's accounts for 1995, his delegation noted that the performance of the Department of Technical Co-operation had been particularly remarkable, new records being set for financial implementation and technical assistance delivery. However, the efforts to reduce the amount of unobligated resources should not be allowed to lead to less prudent budget management. As regards expenditures on equipment and experts, his delegation would like the Secretariat to pay due attention to the recommendation - resulting from the audit of the 1995 accounts - that it broaden the Agency's procurement and recruitment activities and have greater recourse to suppliers and experts in developing countries; such suppliers and experts might well prove more cost-effective, especially if used within their regions.

95. As regards strengthening the Agency's technical co-operation activities, his delegation continued to support the "Partnership in Development" idea. Also, Malaysia appreciated the work being done by SAGTAC, particularly in elaborating - for the Department of Technical Co-operation - an overall strategy for the effective and efficient transfer of nuclear and associated techniques. Malaysia supported the

initiative of the Department of Technical Co-operation directed towards encouraging and promoting technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC) at the regional and the interregional level. Malaysia was playing only a modest role in the field of nuclear science and technology as regards both achievements and resources, but the expertise acquired by it in some non-power nuclear sectors could be used in establishing a link between more advanced countries and countries whose infrastructures for applications of isotopes and radiation were less developed.

96. In 1996 Malaysia had for the first time hosted a meeting of an Agency expert advisory group and also the Second International Symposium on the Radiation Vulcanization of Natural Rubber Latex. The two events had proved very successful, and Malaysia was grateful to the Agency for having given it the opportunity to organize them and looked forward to hosting further such events.

97. Lastly, Malaysia had taken note of the recommendation regarding the adoption of the revised Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material and also the fact that the Convention on Nuclear Safety would shortly be entering into force which would help to enhance safety in the utilization of nuclear energy.

98. Mr. de OURO-PRETO (Brazil) said that, as part of its confidence-building efforts, the Brazilian Government had adopted various important measures in a number of areas, particularly the nuclear field. For example, the quadripartite agreement with Argentina, ABACC and the IAEA had entered into force and Brazil had ratified the Tlatelolco Treaty. In addition, it had become a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group at a plenary meeting held in Buenos Aires in April 1995.

99. Although Brazil considered international treaties and conventions to be the most appropriate basis for its non-proliferation policy, it believed that some informal export control schemes could also be useful for preventing proliferation, thanks to the speedier means of communication and simpler co-ordinating mechanisms involved. However, informal mechanisms such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group needed to become more transparent and predictable in their actions so as to make them better able to attract new members and contribute to a safer world.

100. Still in the field of non-proliferation, in particular the strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system, his delegation was pleased that the Brazilian proposal for a working group to be set up to study the implementation of Programme 93+2 had finally taken shape in the form of a committee to negotiate the necessary protocol. The committee was a good way to encourage wide participation by Agency Member States in the discussion of vital measures involving a change in the strategy of the safeguards system, whereby it would no longer focus on nuclear material but on equipment and facilities, whether nuclear material was present or not. Nevertheless, his delegation was concerned that the measures proposed in Programme 93+2 could lead to increased discrimination between countries with comprehensive safeguards agreements - which offered the most complete and effective guarantees of non-proliferation - and the nuclear-weapon States and States with INFCIRC/66-type agreements, which would be largely unaffected by the proposed measures. The possibility of obtaining more information on nuclear exports by nuclear-weapon States would hardly alleviate such discrimination, and as for countries which were subject only to partial safeguards, no specific measure had yet been put forward to cater for their participation in Programme 93+2.

101. Still on discrimination in the implementation of safeguards, Brazil felt that the measures finally approved under Programme 93+2 should only enter into force after a large number of countries had adopted them. That would avoid a situation in which some countries had more obligations than others, not to mention the additional financial and administrative burdens that the measures would impose on the governments which adopted them.

102. Another vital point, still unresolved, was the need to protect the legitimate commercial and technological interests of Member States in the face of expanded access to information and extended access to sites and locations. The same applied as far as the constitutional rights of the countries with comprehensive safeguards agreements were concerned. In that regard, the Brazilian Government believed that the staff of the Secretariat should be made subject to a more rigorous system of responsibility in implementing the new safeguards measures. Such a system would

counterbalance the increased powers and greater access to information that the Agency's staff would certainly enjoy if Programme 93+2 was approved. Brazil hoped that significant progress could be achieved on all the outstanding issues concerning the strengthening of safeguards during the next session of the committee.

103. Noting that ABACC was improving its technical capacity and gradually acquiring greater credibility, not only at the regional but also at the international level, he said he was convinced that ABACC could further enhance confidence in the international safeguards system, in which the Agency played a central role. Improved co-ordination between the Agency and ABACC would also strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards in Brazil and Argentina.

104. Brazil welcomed the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty which, although not perfect, could contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and help the disarmament cause. He reiterated his delegation's support for the adoption of a cut-off treaty to halt the production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium for the manufacture of explosive devices.

105. Turning to nuclear safety and the establishment of an international safety culture, he recalled that his delegation had played an active role in the negotiation of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and had signed the document on the day it was opened for signature at the Agency. Brazil was therefore pleased that the required conditions had been met for the Convention to enter into force on 24 October 1996. In that regard, he reported that the Convention had been approved by the Lower Chamber of the Brazilian Congress on 4 July 1996 and that it should shortly be passed by the Senate.

106. Clearly, much remained to be done in order to apply that important Convention, including negotiating the Rules of Procedure and the Financial Rules, an exercise to which Brazil hoped to contribute. The most important thing was to establish a sound set of rules in strict conformity with the spirit and the letter of the Convention. It was to be hoped that the consensus document containing clarifications on that subject which was annexed to the Final Act of the diplomatic conference which had adopted

the Convention would be duly taken into consideration when the Rules were negotiated.

107. Turning to the question of the international liability regime and the work of the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage, the Brazilian Government noted with satisfaction that substantial progress had been achieved on revising the Vienna Convention, although some worrying trends were apparent, such as a certain resistance to the updating of parts of the text, and the attempts being made by certain countries (most of which were not parties to the Convention) to increase excessively the amounts of compensation. Such increases could have a serious impact on the final cost of nuclear power which might prevent developing countries from acceding to the revised Convention.

108. The Brazilian delegation was also concerned at the pace of the negotiations on a supplementary funding convention. It had to be recognized that progress hitherto had been insufficient, and that no consensus had yet been reached on certain basic questions. If that situation persisted after the following session of the Standing Committee in October, his delegation proposed that a conference devoted solely to revision of the Vienna Convention be held without delay. It was important not to hamper progress on the vital and urgent issue of liability for nuclear damage, and the Standing Committee's mandate actually authorized such a solution. The question of supplementary funding could then be discussed at another diplomatic conference, if necessary. His delegation continued to prefer a regional solution which took into account the characteristics of the countries of each region. Such a solution, compatible with other systems having the same purpose, would be fairer and more efficient, and would enable a greater number of Member States to support the idea of supplementary funding.

109. A further vital element in the global nuclear safety strategy was the convention on the safety of radioactive waste management, currently being negotiated. Brazil would like the text to be adopted promptly and to retain its incentive character, as in the case of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The mandate for the negotiation of the Convention should be adhered to, in that its scope should remain limited to the

management of nuclear waste and not be extended to include other materials not originally foreseen. Following the convention on radioactive waste, it was desirable to negotiate other conventions dealing with other aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle. A series of conventions on nuclear safety would help ensure a better safety culture worldwide.

110. Since it attached great importance to the Agency's technical co-operation activities, his Government was concerned at the suggestion that allocations of technical co-operation resources be geared to Member States' contributions to the TCF. Brazil was opposed to the idea, not only because the TCF was a voluntary fund, which made the proposal in question illogical, but also because it had never been approved by the General Conference. Also with regard to technical co-operation, Brazil reaffirmed its support for maintaining a balance between safeguards and non-safeguards activities, a concept enshrined in a General Conference resolution.

111. In the context of its own technical co-operation activities, Brazil had increased its already significant co-operation with Argentina in the nuclear field. On the basis of a joint declaration by the Brazilian and Argentine Presidents, the two countries had signed an agreement on improving co-operation in areas such as social applications of nuclear energy, nuclear safety and the nuclear fuel cycle.

112. Lastly, with regard to the revision of Article VI of the Statute, his delegation could support an enlargement of the Board of Governors to take account of the legitimate demands of Member States wishing to participate more in its decisions. However, any proposals to that effect had to respect certain principles, such as that of geographical balance. It was also essential that Latin America's position relative to the other regions did not suffer.

113. Mr. MAYRHOFER-GRÜNBÜHEL (Austria), having expressed support for the statement made by the delegate of Ireland on behalf of the European Union and welcomed the Republic of Moldova as a new member of the Agency, said that the START I and II treaties and the START III treaty to be negotiated in the near future, the indefinite extension of the NPT, the measures agreed at the Moscow Nuclear Safety

and Security Summit, the imminent entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the negotiations on a waste management convention, the prospective cut-off convention on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, negotiations on the strengthening of the safeguards system under Programme 93+2 and the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty demonstrated the increased convergence of international concerns.

114. The NPT Review and Extension Conference showed that the international community's desire to guard against the possible risks associated with peaceful nuclear activities prevailed over other considerations. States should therefore be able to co-operate and co-ordinate their activities in accordance with the existing non-proliferation regime. That co-ordination effort should not in any way hamper or restrict technical co-operation for peaceful purposes, rather it should help to achieve the common objective of a world rid once and for all of the threat of nuclear confrontation. In that regard, the Austrian Government welcomed the substantial progress made by the Canberra Commission, which would undoubtedly make a lasting contribution to the discussion of nuclear disarmament questions.

115. Recalling with satisfaction that the CTBTO was to have its headquarters in Vienna, he stressed the importance of the CTBT for nuclear arms control and said that only a truly worldwide application of the Treaty involving all the major actors would enable the international community to move a further step along the road towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The conclusion of a cut-off convention on weapons-grade fissile material production would be another important step in strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

116. Austria, like other countries had experienced a number of attempts at illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. Efficient national systems were essential for the effective control of transboundary movements of nuclear materials, but it was also vital to establish international co-operation between the competent national authorities.

117. The work to strengthen the safeguards system was extremely important and very timely. Welcoming the Safeguards Statement in the Safeguards Implementation

Report for 1995 and commending the effectiveness with which the Agency had carried out its task, he pledged his country's full support for Programme 93+2 and expressed the hope that the outstanding issues such as universality and confidentiality would be satisfactorily resolved, so that the work could be swiftly concluded.

118. The Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage had achieved a breakthrough at its fifteenth session. Not only had progress been made in finding a comprehensive solution to certain basic and institutional questions related to the liability regime, but the negotiations on the conclusion of a supplementary funding convention also looked promising. The complex issue of the payments that States parties to the new convention would have to make in a case of liability had been examined in detail. There were expectations that the negotiations could be concluded at the Committee's next session.

119. In view of the proximity of nuclear activities to its borders, Austria supported the strengthening of the safety of nuclear reactors in general, but maintained that improvements in safety standards should not lead to an extension of the scheduled lifetime of reactors. Recognizing the importance of the Agency's extrabudgetary programme on the safety of WWER nuclear power plants, Austria had made financial and in-kind contributions thereto and was willing to do so in future. In view of the programme's importance, Austria believed that it should be incorporated in the Regular Budget. The Agency should also look at reactors of older design, particularly since of the 430 nuclear power plants currently operating in the world, some 70 of them would have completed 30 years of operation by the year 2000 and therefore reached the end of their service life. Austria would welcome any proposals by the Agency on the systematic decommissioning of nuclear power plants which had reached the end of their service life. Austria attached great importance to the Agency's activities related to the preparation of legally binding international instruments to ensure a high level of nuclear safety worldwide. It would participate actively in peer reviews of safety. The Convention on Nuclear Safety was an important model for the preparation of other conventions, the aim of which should be to ensure that all activities of the nuclear fuel cycle were subject to appropriate international safety regulations. Austria welcomed

the progress on negotiations on a draft convention on radioactive waste management and hoped that the diplomatic conference for its adoption would be held in 1997.

120. With respect to international co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the technical co-operation activities co-ordinated by the Agency constituted one of the most important elements without being a goal in itself. The activities carried out in areas such as medicine, agriculture and water resources should be evaluated in terms of their overall impact on mankind and the environment and should also be seen in the context of Agenda 21. The new approach based on thematic planning was a welcome initiative which should enable the Agency to assess the overall impact of all the relevant activities.

121. Mr. COOK (New Zealand), after welcoming Moldova's admission to the Agency, said that no effort should be spared to bring to a positive conclusion the work of the Committee on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Improving the Efficiency of the Safeguards System so that the draft protocol could be adopted in December 1996. New Zealand considered that the current version of the draft was a sound and effective package of measures, and that no changes should be made which might have the effect of weakening them. In that regard, his delegation congratulated the Secretariat on having prepared balanced and mature proposals. The Agency's capacity to detect any undeclared nuclear activities was essential to its credibility and indeed a precondition for a reliable non-proliferation regime. His delegation was convinced that, taken as a whole, the Part 1 and Part 2 measures of Programme 93+2 would strengthen that capacity considerably. The latest revelations about Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme were a reminder that the issue was not simply a theoretical one.

122. In the Asia and Pacific region, the DPRK remained a source of concern. New Zealand urged the DPRK to return to full compliance with the provisions of its safeguards agreement, which remained in force and legally binding. New Zealand fully supported the Framework Agreement as an important contribution to regional and international security, and looked to the DPRK to co-operate fully with the Agency in monitoring the freeze on its nuclear activities. New Zealand was concerned that the technical consultations between the DPRK and the Agency had made only limited

progress, and hoped that there would be no further delay in implementation of the measures to preserve the information required for verification of past nuclear activities.

123. The indefinite extension of the NPT was a major advance in nuclear non-proliferation. The enhanced NPT review process would begin in 1997, and it would be important for the Agency to have met the expectations of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference by effectively strengthening the safeguards system. However, the Agency's input did not stop there, and the Secretariat and the Member States would once again be examining the implementation of Articles III and IV of the Treaty. His delegation looked forward to co-operating with other Member States in the three-year review process.

124. One of the major commitments undertaken at the NPT Review and Extension Conference was to step up the efforts to put an end to nuclear testing, and New Zealand attached high priority to the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which had been adopted by an overwhelming majority. That was a historic achievement, and the Agency would have an important contribution to make to the implementation of the Treaty.

125. New Zealand attached particular importance to the study being carried out by an International Advisory Committee on the radiological situation on Mururoa and Fangataufa Atolls. The potential long-term environmental effects of nuclear testing in the region had for many years been a matter of the gravest concern to New Zealand and the other members of the South Pacific Forum. Accordingly, New Zealand was participating in the activities of the Committee and its task forces and working groups, and New Zealand laboratories were involved in analysing samples taken from the Atolls. He thanked the Agency for its support, and expressed the hope that the objective and detailed study, carried out with the full co-operation of the French authorities, would make it possible to determine the effects of past nuclear testing.

126. New Zealand welcomed the signature of the Protocols to the Rarotonga Treaty by the three nuclear-weapon States that had not already signed, which provided assurance that there would never again be nuclear testing in the South Pacific. His

delegation wished to take the opportunity to congratulate the African countries on the conclusion of the Pelindaba Treaty and the countries of South East Asia on the signing of the Bangkok Treaty. Clearly, it was now time to examine means of developing co-operation between the members of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

127. Welcoming the imminent entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, he said that marine transportation of nuclear material in the South Pacific was causing concern to many countries of the region. The Heads of Government of the South Pacific Forum countries had reiterated, at their summit meeting on 3-5 September, that such shipments should be made in accordance with the most rigorous international safety standards. His delegation took note of the Board's adoption of the revised Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material, and endorsed the Agency's intention to keep the Regulations under constant review. Likewise, he welcomed the progress made in the negotiations on a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management, and emphasized the importance of bringing the negotiations on revision of the Vienna Convention to a speedy conclusion.

128. With regard to technical co-operation, his delegation reaffirmed its support for the RCA. New Zealand intended to make a further extrabudgetary contribution for 1997 to the Joint UNDP/RCA/IAEA project. In view of the important contribution that project was making to the exchange of nuclear-related technical experience at regional level, the Agency should assign it high priority.

129. In conclusion, he said that for the first time New Zealand was seeking election to a seat on the Board of Governors, as it considered that the Agency's activities, particularly in the area of non-proliferation, were becoming increasingly relevant to all countries, especially those like New Zealand which did not have a major nuclear industry. New Zealand thanked the Member States of the South East Asia and Pacific group for their support.

130. Mr. FISENKA (Belarus), after welcoming the Republic of Moldova to the Agency, said that October 1996 would mark the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Agency's Statute. During that period, the Agency had endeavoured to achieve

its main statutory objective, which was the earliest and widest possible use of atomic energy to promote peace, health and prosperity in the world. The commemorative nature of the current session offered an opportunity for reflection on what had been accomplished, and what remained to be accomplished to promote common security and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. It could now be stated with assurance that the Agency had proved itself capable of controlling impartially and effectively substances which ranked among the most dangerous for mankind, namely nuclear material.

131. Belarus, which was pursuing a policy of reduction and complete elimination of nuclear weapons, fully supported the world nuclear-weapon non-proliferation regime and the complete banning of nuclear tests. It had voted for the United Nations General Assembly resolution approving the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and was ready to sign it in the near future.

132. Having renounced the right to keep the nuclear weapons it had inherited from the Soviet Union, and while it awaited an appropriate response from other countries in the region, Belarus had been seriously concerned recently by the possibility that such weapons could be deployed near its borders. With a view to contributing to the strengthening of non-proliferation, peace, security and stability in the region, it had suggested the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe. Belarus was of the opinion that such a zone should be multilateral, i.e. that a group of States in the region should participate and, moreover, that it should be integral. The treaty establishing that nuclear-weapon-free zone should also provide for the accession of nuclear powers which would undertake not to deploy nuclear weapons inside the zone. The Government of Belarus felt that the unique situation in Central and Eastern Europe at present made that idea particularly relevant, and created favourable conditions for its implementation. Belarus was currently holding consultations on that important issue with countries which it thought might join the zone. It intended to work progressively towards that objective, taking into account the strategic interests of the countries concerned, and being careful not to compromise security and stability on the European continent.

133. Belarus hoped that the proposal to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe would be well received by countries in the region and the Agency. It greatly appreciated the Agency's efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world. Thanks to the practical experience which had been gained, and the legal infrastructure which had been established in existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, the Agency could offer valuable consultative services for the elaboration of the necessary legal documents and thereafter assist in the multilateral negotiations with all interested States.

134. The Government of Belarus supported the Agency's efforts to increase the effectiveness of its safeguards system. As was well known, nuclear material accountancy was one of the cornerstones of that system. Belarus was in the process of setting up a nuclear material accountancy and control system which met the Agency's requirements, and he took that opportunity of thanking the United States, Sweden and Japan for the technical and financial assistance they had given to Belarus in that regard. Thanks to that assistance, which had been co-ordinated by the Agency, considerable progress had been made during the preceding year in installing the necessary technical infrastructure.

135. Belarus welcomed the measures to strengthen the existing safeguards system which were being proposed by the Agency under Programme 93+2. It recognized the need to implement the suggested measures and was aware that it would have to take the relevant political, legal and technical decisions. With regard to the legal aspect, national law would need to be revised. On the technical level, the Agency would have to bear in mind that certain countries, including Belarus, would not be a position to carry out by themselves all the tasks ensuing from the adoption of Programme 93+2. From an analysis by experts in Belarus it was clear that the country would require additional technical assistance to implement the programme, in particular for training and retraining of staff.

136. Recalling the valuable results of the co-operation between Belarus and the Agency over the preceding four years, he noted that solid and fruitful contacts had been established which augured well for a further strengthening of ties in the future.

137. Belarus was very appreciative of the Agency's new initiative to provide additional technical assistance within the framework of the 1997-1998 regional co-operation programme. Moreover, it welcomed the measures being taken by the Agency Secretariat to implement the Model Project "Upgrading Radiation Protection Infrastructure" in Belarus. His country appreciated the flexibility shown by the Agency in taking account of its national interests. The Agency's new policy would not only facilitate closer and more fruitful co-operation with Belarus but would also promote contacts with other countries in the region.

138. In 1996, Belarus and the world community had commemorated the tenth anniversary of the greatest technological disaster of the twentieth century, the Chernobyl accident, which had affected vast areas and millions of people, had caused large-scale contamination of the environment, had had a devastating effect on the development of the affected regions, and had resulted in an increase in social and psychological tensions. Without any exaggeration, Chernobyl had become a national tragedy for Belarus. Unfortunately, it had to be recorded that the country was having to rely principally on its own resources to deal with the consequences of the accident. At the same time, it was common knowledge that Chernobyl was a long-term problem of unprecedented complexity which could be dealt with successfully only through a united effort by the whole world community.

139. At the end of 1995 and during 1996, a number of important international activities had been organized to mark the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident. International meetings had made it possible to conduct an accurate assessment of the situation ten years after the accident, as well as to make a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the assistance which had been provided and the investigations which had been carried out. Those meetings had shown clearly that there was a need for increased assistance to vast groups of people in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia, as well as for new research into the consequences of the accident. Belarus was very grateful to the European Commission, the IAEA, WHO, UNESCO, FAO and other international organizations for organizing those meetings.

140. It was also grateful to the Director General of the Agency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Irish delegation which had spoken on behalf of the European Union, the Ukrainian delegation and others for having once again drawn the attention of the participants at the General Conference to the extreme importance of the problems surrounding Chernobyl.

141. The international conference "One Decade After Chernobyl: Summing up the Consequences of the Accident" which had been held in Vienna, and which had been attended by representatives of 71 countries, had summarized the work of numerous organizations in various fields following the accident, and had examined the knowledge and experience that had been gathered. Without wishing in any way to depreciate the approaches used by the Conference to evaluate the consequences of the accident, or its recommendations and forecasts, he wished to draw attention to the appeasing tone of certain passages of the final document and the rather cautious and sometimes sceptical attitude towards the statistics collected in the three countries which had suffered most from the Chernobyl accident.

142. Attention to the consequences of Chernobyl should not be relaxed because those consequences were more extensive and long-lasting than had been thought. In that regard, he noted that the Secretary-General of the United Nations had concluded that assistance to the population of the affected States needed to be intensified, and he also acknowledged with gratitude the energetic appeal for international solidarity with the victims of Chernobyl which had been made by Pope John Paul II.

143. No one could feel entirely safe from accidents like Chernobyl. Mankind had to have the necessary knowledge and experience to minimize the negative effects of such accidents. Belarus scientists and specialists were constantly studying the situation in the affected areas. Using all the data collected, the Government had elaborated a new national programme which was based on an up-to-date assessment of the different Chernobyl problems and which stressed the need to rehabilitate the affected areas. Clearly, that was a long-term task which could not be concluded successfully without clearly-defined scientific guidelines or without the assistance of the scientific community.

144. He drew the attention of the participants at the General Conference to two important ideas which had been put forward by the President of Belarus at the international conference in April in Vienna on the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident. The first was to set up a joint international centre to study the problems of Chernobyl which would enable scientists from various countries working in that field to combine their efforts. The second was to create a planet protection fund which would be funded from part of the considerable profit generated by the nuclear sector and would be used to mitigate the consequences of nuclear accidents and implement major ecological programmes. He hoped that those ideas would be studied carefully by the Agency and other organizations of the United Nations system.

145. Turning to another subject which was painful for Belarus, namely its contributions to the Agency's Regular Budget, he admitted regretfully that it would be extremely difficult for his country to resolve that problem in the near future. Belarus' difficult economic situation was aggravated by the fact that it currently had to devote around 25% of its national budget to measures to remedy the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, and its financial difficulties had been further increased by the adoption at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations of an unjust and legally unfounded decision to increase by a factor of more than one and a half the base rate for Belarus' contributions to the regular budget of the United Nations for 1993-1994. That had resulted in an automatic increase in Belarus' contributions to the regular budgets of United Nations specialized agencies, including the IAEA.

146. In 1994, in view of the very difficult situation of Belarus, the United Nations had reduced its base rate from 0.48% to 0.28% for the period 1995-1997. Nevertheless, the arrears which had accumulated over the period 1993-1995 both in the Agency and other international organizations were too high for Belarus to pay in time and in full. However, despite its economic problems, Belarus was searching for ways to pay its arrears in contributions to the Agency as swiftly as possible.

147. In conclusion, he joined other delegations in approving the Annual Report for 1995. He also lent his support to the Agency's programme and budget for 1997 as a whole and reiterated his country's support for the policy of zero real growth.

148. Ms. AGGREY-ORLEANS (Ghana), having extended a warm welcome to the Republic of Moldova, said that on the threshold of the twenty-first century the quest for international peace and security and a better quality of life was becoming ever more urgent. Although the world had become relatively more secure, the task of controlling conflicts to prevent them escalating into even more dangerous confrontations seemed unending. The desire of the world community for peace and security put it under an obligation to support the Agency, whose purpose was "to seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world". For that reason Ghana advocated general and complete disarmament, and in particular the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. That accorded with Article VI of the NPT which aimed at the early and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

149. In that regard, Ghana welcomed the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its approval by the General Assembly. Irrespective of any differences that might exist or reservations which Member States might have, the Treaty would serve the best interests of the international community and would shield it from the danger which the absence of a morally and legally binding instrument would continue to pose. Her delegation therefore urged all Member States, especially those whose ratification was crucial for the entry into force of the Treaty, to act in the interest of humanity.

150. In April 1996, African leaders had signed in Cairo the Pelindaba Treaty establishing an African nuclear-weapon-free zone, thereby affirming their desire for the continent to be free of a potentially terrible and destructive force. Ghana was confident that that instrument would help to promote nuclear non-proliferation and therefore appealed to the nuclear-weapon States, to whom Protocol III of the Pelindaba Treaty was applicable, to sign and ratify the relevant parts of the Treaty. Her delegation wished to thank the Agency for the assistance accorded to Africa in the

preparation of the Treaty and felt sure that such co-operation would be maintained throughout the implementation of the Treaty.

151. The Ghanaian delegation also welcomed the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific and South East Asia and hoped that other regions would consider following suit.

152. The coming into force in October of the Convention on Nuclear Safety was another encouraging event which would contribute appreciably to sustainable development. Global interdependence meant that all countries were under an obligation to seek the highest standards of safety. Her delegation had also taken note of the close co-operation characterizing the preparation of another important instrument, the convention on the safety of radioactive waste management.

153. Ghana reaffirmed its support for the Agency's safeguards activities. It took note of the efforts to streamline and strengthen the Agency's capacity in that regard. The ongoing deliberations were a necessary step towards ensuring the observance of non-proliferation commitments, but due consideration should also be given to the legitimate interests of Member States.

154. Turning to technical co-operation, she noted that progress had been made with technology transfer in the areas of isotope hydrology and seawater desalination and that assistance had continued to be provided in the areas of agriculture, nutrition, health and industry. Those technical co-operation programmes were valuable for they not only contributed to economic growth but also improved the quality of life of the people.

155. She expressed appreciation for the fruitful co-operation between her country and the Agency. Over the years the Agency had provided Ghana with technical assistance in vital sectors of the economy. It had contributed to research into diseases affecting Ghana's major cash crop, cocoa. It had also co-operated with Ghana in the implementation of projects on mutation breeding and tissue culture of some local staples such as cassava and yam.

156. After several years of intensive research, Ghana had now acquired expertise in radiation disinfestation of foodstuffs and, with the Agency's assistance, was now exploring the possibility of semi-industrial irradiation of food crops to further reduce post-harvest losses. The gamma irradiation facility, inaugurated in March 1995 by the Director General, would have a significant impact on the food and agricultural sector.

157. Use of the sterile insect technique to eradicate insects threatening agricultural production in different parts of the world was a practical and beneficial application of nuclear technology. With the requisite support, that technology had the potential not only to increase agricultural production but also to solve some related health problems.

158. In the past year remarkable efforts had been made to promote the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology in the health sector in Ghana. The Ministry of Health and the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission, in an effort to improve the national health system, had embarked on a programme to commercialize medical and pharmaceutical products sterilized by gamma irradiation.

159. The Agency's Model Project to establish a national brachytherapy, teletherapy and nuclear medicine network by creating hospital centres in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale was well under way. The Accra centre had been completed and should commence operations early in 1997. Construction of the second centre at Kumasi had commenced. Ghana sincerely thanked the Agency, the People's Republic of China and the United States of America for the substantial assistance granted with that Model Project.

160. The country's first research reactor, GHARR-I had been in full operation since its installation and commissioning in March 1995 and was already making an impact especially in the mining industry which made use of its neutron activation analysis services. Two thousand samples of various origin could be analysed each year. The research reactor was also used extensively in the AFRA programme for training in reactor core calculations. A start would also be made shortly on producing

radioisotopes for domestic use in industry, medicine and agriculture as well as for export to other countries in West Africa.

161. Nuclear non-destructive testing techniques were also being used to provide a wide range of services to industries in Ghana and were expected to capture around 70% of the market by 1997, once the necessary infrastructure was in place.

162. The Ghanaian delegation was deeply conscious of the fact that the Agency's technical assistance had a price. It therefore appealed to Member States to see that the Agency had the resources necessary to meet its obligations in that field.

163. In conclusion, she said that Ghana would continue to support the Agency in fulfilling all its various responsibilities.

164. Mr. NIEWODNICZAŃSKI (Poland), after welcoming the Republic of Moldova and endorsing the statement made by the delegate of Ireland on behalf of the European Union, said that a number of events confirmed man's determination to create a world free of nuclear weapons. They were the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995, followed by the conclusion of the CTBT in 1996; the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones; the continuing negotiations on a treaty to end the production of weapons-grade nuclear material; the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit; and the forthcoming conference on the management of nuclear materials derived from dismantled weapons. However, further assurances were still required to confirm that positive trend, not only as regards non-proliferation and disarmament, but also as regards the safety of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. For 40 years, the public had been raising questions about global nuclear security to which the Agency, either directly or indirectly, had been seeking the answers, but much remained to be done.

165. His delegation reaffirmed its support for the Agency's activities and new initiatives aimed at strengthening safeguards. The increased use, especially for the effective implementation of Programme 93+2, of the best specialists and of national laboratories possessing the necessary analytical techniques, was justified. In that regard, Poland was willing to offer the services of its nuclear institutes.

166. Aware that it was important for the effective implementation of the Agency's technical assistance programme that Member States honoured their pledges to the TCF, Poland wished to announce that, as every year, it would pay its full share of the target.

167. Poland welcomed the Secretariat's activities to strengthen technical co-operation between the Agency and its Member States. It was particularly grateful to the Agency for the assistance it had provided under the Model Project entitled "Industrial-scale Demo Plant for Electron Beam Purification of Flue Gas". Once successfully completed, that project, apart from its unique demonstration potential, would not only have a beneficial effect on the environment of the region concerned and the neighbouring countries but would also offer the possibility, through Agency training programmes, of strengthening regional and international co-operation with other Member States experiencing similar environmental problems. In view of the scale of the project, Poland would welcome assistance from new donors, and invited all Member States with an interest in training specialists to co-operate on the project.

168. The initiative launched the previous year by the Department of Technical Co-operation to strengthen regional co-operation among European countries had proved fruitful. The holding of regular meetings for the purpose of exchanging experience and identifying new areas of common interest should enable those countries to agree on a list of regional projects to be implemented in the next biennial cycle.

169. In order to demonstrate its support for that type of co-operation and the importance it attributed to international co-operation in the field of nuclear safety and radiation protection, Poland had organized a meeting dedicated to such matters in Warsaw in June which was attended by representatives of 15 countries of the region. The meeting, co-sponsored by the Agency, had also discussed the question of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and radioactive sources.

170. Poland took a keen interest in all activities aimed at tackling more effectively illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and radioactive sources. It welcomed the

establishment of the Agency's database of recorded incidents, and confirmed its willingness to participate in that initiative. It had made the necessary arrangements and would shortly provide the Agency with the details of its contact point for exchanges of information on illicit trafficking.

171. The main task of the Standing Committee on Liability for Nuclear Damage was to revise the Vienna Convention. It might be assumed that the task had already been accomplished, since the draft protocol to amend the Vienna Convention was complete. Yet, as far as the draft supplementary funding convention was concerned, certain issues had not been settled, such as the structure of supplementary funding, the relationship between the proposed convention and regional agreements on the same subject (such as the Brussels Supplementary Convention), and contributions to the supplementary fund. Contrary to expectations, those matters had not been resolved during the Standing Committee's fifteenth session, and unfortunately they were unlikely to be resolved at the next session in October. As Poland was surrounded by countries operating nuclear facilities, it attached particular importance to amendment of the Vienna Convention, and urged countries which had not already done so to accede to it.

172. Poland did not see any need to link the revision of the Vienna Convention to the supplementary funding convention, since they were autonomous instruments. The draft protocol to amend the Vienna Convention prepared by the Standing Committee could be considered a substantial improvement on international law concerning civil liability for nuclear damage, and the revised Vienna Convention should become the main international instrument in that field. Recalling that the revised Vienna Convention, which limited the liability of the nuclear operator, did not resolve the problem of adequate compensation for nuclear damage, Poland urged the Secretariat and the States parties to the Convention to convene a diplomatic conference as soon as possible for the purpose of adopting the revised text, and to continue work in the Standing Committee with a view to reaching consensus on a draft supplementary funding convention.

173. Poland, which had no nuclear power plants but was surrounded by countries which operated them, considered it essential to conclude a full set of bilateral agreements on early notification of a nuclear accident and on co-operation in the field of nuclear safety and radiation protection. He was thus pleased to report that Poland had already concluded eight such agreements with its neighbours.

174. In conclusion, he expressed his country's appreciation to the Director General and the Secretariat for the effective way they were handling the Agency's difficult task of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

175. Ms. ALEMAYEHU (Ethiopia) said that the General Conference provided an excellent opportunity for evaluating the Agency's work and for Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the objectives of the Agency and the principles enshrined in its Statute. Nuclear technology had developed at an unprecedented rate over the past 20 to 30 years, and even more spectacular progress was anticipated at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Agency thus had an even more important role to play in the new world order, especially in harnessing nuclear energy for the benefit of mankind. Beyond the year 2000, its contribution to peace and sustainable development worldwide would indeed be vital.

176. Ethiopia commended the Agency and the Director General for the excellent quality of the Annual Report for 1995, which was clear, informative and comprehensive. The Agency had successfully discharged its functions and accorded due emphasis to measures promoting sustainable development.

177. In its programme and budget for 1997 and 1998, the Agency had sought on the whole to follow up the resolutions and decisions of the General Conference and the Board of Governors. Her delegation supported all the Agency's programmes, including the strengthening of the safeguards system, but still believed that there should be a balance between safeguards and regulatory activities on the one hand, and those aimed at promoting the transfer and dissemination of nuclear science and technology on the other.

178. It was encouraging to note that food and agriculture were to be given high priority for the coming two years. Past experience had shown that the famine and drought which were rife in Africa could only be tackled by making agriculture the main development objective. Consequently, projects focusing on irrigation, genetic improvement of food products, soil fertility, control of animal diseases and water resources management would all help to resolve the crucial food security problem in Africa. Projects relating to human health - another important area covered by the programme - also gave African countries the chance to use nuclear medicine to tackle certain diseases such as cancer and communicable and hereditary diseases, which could otherwise not be treated.

179. The Technical Co-operation Report for 1995 showed highly encouraging results. Thus, the implementation rate had reached 75.7% for the overall programme, which was a record, and 85.5% for the Model Projects. The Agency had endeavoured to provide technical assistance to the developing countries that fitted in with the objectives of sustainable development. Moreover, it had strengthened the capacity of developing countries to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes. However, successful implementation of Model Projects would require further strengthening of the technical co-operation programme, with care being taken to ensure increased assistance for the least developed countries.

180. Her country was one of the beneficiaries of the technical co-operation programme. In 1991, at Ethiopia's request, the Agency had undertaken the first country programme review, which had helped Ethiopia identify areas for technical co-operation and assign them priorities in line with its national development plans and which, in particular, had inspired it to look for opportunities to use nuclear science and technology in the service of development. A Model Project on the use of the sterile insect technique to eradicate the tsetse fly in Ethiopia was being set up. As Ethiopia had the largest livestock population in Africa, the presence of the tsetse fly and the disease it transmitted to livestock affected some five million people. That Model Project was thus vital for Ethiopia, which was grateful to the Agency for having proposed it as a major priority for the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. It

was especially grateful to the Department of Technical Co-operation and its Head, Mr. Qian.

181. Also welcome was the initiative to improve and strengthen the implementation of the technical co-operation programme through the Standing Advisory Group for Technical Co-operation (SAGTAC). Given the limited resources at the Agency's disposal, it was essential to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme in order to meet the development needs of the recipient countries.

182. Her delegation noted with satisfaction that implementation of the regional Model Project on water resources in Africa had made great strides, and that the Agency had taken steps to strengthen the socio-economic impact of the utilization of isotope techniques in water resources exploitation and management in Member States, and to enhance their benefits to the end-user. In that regard, she emphasized that the availability of clean drinking water was crucial to the developing countries, as it had a direct effect on human health, contributed to the optimum utilization of economic resources, and helped to promote sustainable development. It followed that the Agency should press forward with its activities in that area.

183. The Ethiopian delegation wished to thank the Agency for the initiative it had taken, in response to requests by African States, to establish the African Regional Co-operative Agreement (AFRA), which had gained in importance since its entry into force on 4 April 1990, and whose objectives were to facilitate technical co-operation among developing countries, to pool available resources, and to promote communication and collaboration between the scientists of the region. However, that type of regional arrangement, which fostered the transfer of nuclear technology, required detailed and judicious planning that met the needs of all the participating countries, as well as a firm commitment on their part. The Agency played a vital supporting role in that regard. It should continue to encourage regional initiatives until they were firmly established. That was especially important in the case of Africa, where the countries of the region, with one or two exceptions, lacked the required scientific and technical capacity in the nuclear field. The extension of the agreement for a further five years

was proof of its success. Ethiopia, which had been a party to AFRA since 1993, would continue to contribute to its activities.

184. The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty), signed in Cairo on 11 April, was an important landmark in African history. Since its inception, the Organization of African Unity had been striving for the denuclearization of the African continent which, like other regions without nuclear weapons, had lived in a state of uncertainty during the Cold War. A new era of peace and co-operation had begun, as indicated by the Declaration adopted by the African States on the occasion of the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty, which testified to the importance of regional and international co-operation for the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

185. The text of the Treaty centred on two issues - the protection of African States against possible nuclear attacks on their territories, and the development and practical application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in the interest of sustainable social and economic progress on the African continent. Particular attention was also paid to the mechanism for ensuring the effective application of the Treaty's provisions. The establishment of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy was a clear indication of the African countries' determination to abide by those provisions. It should not be forgotten that the principles laid down in the Treaty were the fruit of long years of negotiation. The United Nations had also played a significant role by facilitating international co-operation and arranging forums for discussions. The Agency also deserved special appreciation for its contribution to the preparation of the Treaty. There was no doubt that the Agency would fulfil the verification role that it would be required to carry out through its safeguards system.

186. The report of the Director General on the employment of women in the Secretariat, contained in document GC(40)/19, deserved special attention. For over 20 years the world community, aware that women were not participating on an equal footing with men in world affairs, which equally concerned them, had been trying to redress the situation. The United Nations had taken significant steps to improve the lot of women. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, had

endorsed a Platform for Action which deserved the support of all States. The initiative taken by the Agency pursuant to resolution GC(39)/RES/20 to increase the number of women staff was very encouraging. Equally commendable was its intention to recruit more women from the developing countries. Although the results had not yet matched expectations, Ethiopia encouraged the Agency to maintain its efforts.

187. Ethiopia attached great importance to the work of the Agency and supported its objectives in all its areas of activity. Having ratified the NPT as early as 1970 and signed a safeguards agreement with the Agency which had entered into force in December 1977, Ethiopia was determined to comply fully with the letter and spirit of those instruments.

188. As part of its reconstruction effort, the Ethiopian Government had formulated a comprehensive policy of development, peace and democracy which gave a prominent place to science and technology and aimed to make scientific activity more productive, efficient and development-oriented. It also placed emphasis on R&D and the utilization of energy techniques appropriate to Ethiopia, and encouraged the use of new technologies in the fields of agriculture, health and industry.

189. Aware that no credible nuclear programme could be established in a country without safeguards and regulations which covered all aspects of safety thoroughly and transparently, Ethiopia had promulgated a law on radiation protection in 1993. That was the standpoint from which Ethiopia conducted its relations with the Agency and co-ordinated its efforts with those of other developing countries, especially in Africa, with a view to promoting the sustainable economic and social development of the continent.

190. The policy of universality adopted by the Agency had enabled all countries - developed and developing - to participate on an equal basis in implementing its programmes and strategies. That was why, even if it was difficult to protect the world from nuclear dangers, the task was not an insurmountable one as long as the Agency could count on the unfailing support and co-operation of all peace-loving nations. Finally, she welcomed the Republic of Moldova as a new Member State of the Agency.

191. Mr. CÁCERES AGUILERA (Paraguay), having welcomed the Republic of Moldova to the Agency, said his country reaffirmed its support for the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy and co-operation for development, emphatically rejected the possibility of using nuclear energy for military purposes, and confirmed its legal commitments with regard to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the application of safeguards.

192. Paraguay's National Atomic Energy Commission was currently involved in various technical co-operation projects on nuclear medicine, radiopharmacy,stockbreeding, nuclear analytical techniques, waste management and radiation protection. Paraguay had submitted for the following biennial programme a project on the application of isotope techniques for the study of aquifers and contamination of water resources.

193. In 1996 Paraguay had had the honour of hosting the thirteenth technical co-ordination meeting of ARCAL, which had been attended by representatives from the participating countries, the Agency and donor countries. The ARCAL programme was appreciated in Latin America and the Caribbean because it was an excellent example of international integration and co-operation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. For Paraguay, which was currently making efforts to consolidate the South American Common Market, it was further proof of the political will to achieve development which contributed to the well-being of all the inhabitants of the country and the region. Paraguay considered it essential, within the framework of the process to strengthen ARCAL, to prepare a regional co-operation plan identifying the areas and sectors where Agency co-operation efforts should be concentrated in the coming years.

194. Paraguay had taken part in the first meeting of presidents of the nuclear bodies of the South American Common Market, held in Argentina, during which it had been agreed to include nuclear issues in the Common Market's scope of activity and to establish a working group on nuclear energy and its applications. Within that group a sub-group comprising Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay had been set up to study the technical and economic advantages of using isotope hydrology in the development of water resources.

195. He wished to inform the General Conference that his country would be paying its pledged voluntary contribution to the Technical Co-operation Fund for 1997.

196. On the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the discovery of radioactivity, the Nuclear Documentation Centre at the National Atomic Energy Commission had published the first issue of the Atomindex Paraguay as well as the first issue of its nuclear bulletin. Furthermore, the Commission was connected via Internet to all the countries in the world.

197. With regard to training, the National Atomic Energy Commission was continuing to organize national and international courses on such topics as radiation protection, nuclear analytical techniques (theory and practice), nuclear instrumentation, the ELISA technique and other analytical techniques, thereby providing training to more than 60 specialists and students. With a view to advertising the benefits of nuclear energy, it was about to organize its third open day on topics related to the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. In addition, it was continuing to develop its links with various public bodies in order to promote the advantages of nuclear energy.

198. Finally, on behalf of his Government, he thanked the Director General and the staff of the Agency for their continuing efforts to meet all the challenges in the nuclear field, and called on all Member States to provide the Agency with the support it needed to fulfil its statutory objectives.

The meeting rose at 7.5 p.m.