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President: Mr. PADOLINA (Philippines)

CONTENTS

<u>Item of the agenda*</u>		<u>Paragraphs</u>
-	Request for the restoration of voting rights	1 - 2
7	General debate and annual report for 1995 (resumed)	3 - 111
	Statements by the delegates of:	
	Cuba	3 - 10
	Iraq	11 - 16
	Kenya	17 - 27
	Bolivia	28 - 36
	United Arab Emirates	37 - 42
	Nicaragua	43 - 49
	Namibia	50 - 57
	Israel	58 - 67
	Peru	68 - 76
	Myanmar	77 - 82
	Zimbabwe	83 - 87
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	88 - 94
	Sri Lanka	95 - 103
	Kuwait	104 - 111

[*] GC(40)/22.

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

Abbreviations used in this record

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
Basic Safety Standards	International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
G-7	Group of Seven
ICRP	International Commission on Radiological Protection
MESA	Middle East and South Asia
NDT	Non-destructive testing
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PTBT	Partial Test Ban Treaty (Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water)
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
RIA	Radioimmunoassay
SMPRs	Small and medium power reactors
SPECT	Single photon emission computed tomography
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission for the Elimination of Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction

REQUEST FOR THE RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS

1. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had had before it a request from Kenya that the last sentence in Article XIX.A of the Statute be invoked in order that it might be permitted to vote during the current session of the General Conference. The Committee had recommended that the Conference permit Kenya to vote on the understanding that that decision did not constitute a precedent for the future.

2. The Committee's recommendation was accepted.

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

3. Ms. SIMEÓN NEGRÍN (Cuba), having welcomed the Republic of Moldova on its becoming a member of the Agency, noted that the current session of the General Conference had particular significance, since 1996 marked the centenary of the discovery of radioactivity.

4. Cuba was making tremendous efforts to overcome a complex economic situation, the main cause of which was the unjust and brutal economic, commercial and financial embargo which had been imposed for over 30 years by the most powerful nation in the world. That embargo had been condemned on various occasions by the United Nations General Assembly. Through the Helms-Burton Law, an attempt was now being made to force the international community to join that embargo. That Law, which had been criticized throughout the world, related mainly to international trade and displayed a marked lack of respect for other countries. It specifically opposed the completion of the Juraguá nuclear power plant and viewed as an act of aggression the operation of any nuclear facility on Cuban territory. It thus attempted to deprive Cuba of the social and economic benefits which the peaceful uses of nuclear energy could bring. It was not her intention to distract the General Conference from the important problems of a global nature which it had before it, but she had brought up the issue because the behaviour of the country concerned was totally unacceptable and contrary to the Agency's noble aims.

5. Despite the severe economic difficulties that it was facing, Cuba had, by virtue of the will of its people and through the promotion of scientific and technical training, not only been able to maintain social progress in such areas as health, science, and education, but had also been able to confront its problems and initiate an economic recovery, which had led to an increase in gross domestic product of 2.5% in 1995 and 9.6% in the first half of 1996. There had also been a recovery and realignment of Cuba's nuclear programme which was, more than ever, one of the country's main priorities. The Isotope Centre had been completed, put into operation and had already supplied over 17 types of radioisotope and labelled compounds. The Centre for Radiation Protection and Hygiene had also become fully operational. Sixteen research projects on the development of nuclear techniques had been included in seven national programmes related to health, food production and other areas of vital importance to the country. Special emphasis had been given to the programme on radiation protection and nuclear safety and, despite the restrictions which were being imposed, Cuba was continuing to work on the resumption of the construction of the Juraguá nuclear power plant. In all those efforts, the Agency's technical co-operation activities in Cuba were of vital importance since they were closely linked to national programmes. Cuba had made and would continue to make every possible effort to make optimum use of that co-operation.

6. Cuba supported, and would continue to contribute as far as it was able to, the measures to strengthen international co-operation in the area of nuclear safety, radiation protection and radioactive waste management. Particularly in the field of radiation protection, the support which Cuba was giving to other Member States was increasing, especially in its own region.

7. Turning to the strengthening of the Agency's technical co-operation activities, she said that it was essential to make every effort to ensure that those activities were implemented with the greatest possible efficiency and that they achieved the greatest possible impact. Calling on all States to pay their share of the target for voluntary contributions to the Technical Co-operation Fund, she noted that, despite its economic difficulties, Cuba had met its obligations in that regard. Cuba would also continue to

contribute to the ARCAL programme, which had proved to be a good mechanism for channelling co-operation at regional level.

8. The strengthening of the efficiency and effectiveness of safeguards was another important area. The aim should be to achieve the total prohibition of nuclear weapons, while ensuring that there was no discrimination in the application of the measures and that there was no violation of national sovereignty. It was also important to maintain a suitable balance between promotional and safeguards activities.

9. Cuba had continued to support the efforts of the international community to eradicate the threat of nuclear weapons. Following the signing of the Tlatelolco Treaty by the Cuban Government and the acceptance of the amendments thereto, Cuba was undertaking the steps required to ratify the Treaty. In order to be meaningful, the long-term aim of non-proliferation should be the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Cuba had therefore followed with interest the efforts of the international community to agree on a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty. However, the agreement that had been reached was very fragile, since it did not include a commitment on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their arsenals.

10. In conclusion, she urged all States to strive to utilize progress in the nuclear area to meet the challenges of the next millennium and not for the purposes of destruction.

11. Mr. GHAFOUR (Iraq) pointed out that since 3 September 1996 his country had been subjected to renewed military aggression from the United States of America, which claimed that it was implementing Security Council resolution 688(1991), although that resolution neither called for, nor authorized, the use of force. The President of the United States had also decided to suspend implementation of Security Council resolution 986(1995) and the "oil-for-food" agreement between Iraq and the United Nations. Furthermore, creation of the so-called "safe haven" had resulted in part of Iraq becoming a field for combat, destruction, vandalism and looting, open to the forces of other countries to enter at will, thereby violating Iraq's integrity and sovereignty. Thousands of innocent people in that part of Iraq had become victims of such atrocities since the end of 1991 while that superpower had taken no action. On

the other hand, when the majority of the Kurdish people had asked for the help of the central Government of Iraq in dealing with a foreign intervention, Iraq had been turned into a venue for United States presidential election celebrations, with cruise missiles instead of fireworks.

12. The favourite hobby of United States leaders and high-ranking military officials seemed to be bombardment to the point of complete annihilation of a country or the total elimination of a people. It had started with the genocide of the original inhabitants of America and had been followed later by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At a press conference during the 1991 war with Iraq, General Schwarzkopf, Commander of Operation Desert Storm, had said that the air strikes on Iraq did not inflict damage on innocent civilians because the Iraqi people were not innocent since most of them had welcomed the so-called "invasion" of Kuwait and supported Saddam Hussein. General Schwarzkopf had added that the expression "innocent civilians" needed to be redefined. On 16 September 1990, *The Washington Post* had published a statement by General Dugan, Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, indicating that the list of targets in Iraq should be expanded to ensure a more devastating impact on the population and Government. The United States had dropped 120 000 tonnes of explosives on Iraq, exceeding several times the destructive power of the two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the United States policy of military aggression, starvation and sanctions had led to the deaths of over three-quarters of a million children from 1990 to 1996. Security Council resolutions 687 and 688 were being interpreted politically rather than legally in order to prolong the sanctions imposed on the people of Iraq, thereby starving its people and destroying its national and social fibre.

13. Iraq had repeatedly expressed the hope that the Agency, as a specialized professional organization, would exercise its mandate under section C of Security Council resolution 687 and not bow to political influence. The Agency had known for a long time that Iraq had no nuclear capabilities, as had been confirmed by Agency officials several times since 1992, and most recently in paragraph 27 of the Director General's report on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions

relating to Iraq contained in document GC(40)/13. That was the essence of paragraph 12 of section C of Security Council resolution 687.

14. As reported in paragraph 13 of document GC(40)/13, the Agency had conducted preliminary activities for ongoing monitoring and verification, including 600 - mostly unannounced - inspections. No indication of any prohibited equipment, materials or activities had been detected. The essence of paragraph 13 of Security Council resolution 687 had therefore been fulfilled.

15. In addition to the more than one million pages of information already provided on its nuclear programme, on 1 March 1996 Iraq had completed a document containing more than a thousand pages constituting the full, final and complete declaration of its nuclear programme. After discussion with Agency inspectors concerning the necessary additions, deletions, and modifications, the final document had been submitted on 7 September 1996. Iraqi technical staff had made enormous efforts to trace destroyed equipment, document it and present it in a way that facilitated the taking of inventories and verification by the inspection team. Iraq had implemented its part of the relevant Security Council resolutions and it was now the Agency's turn to meet its obligation by closing the file on Iraq and informing the Security Council that it should put paragraph 22 of its resolution 687 into effect. Regrettably, that had not yet been done. Disinformation campaigns aimed at engendering mistrust and suspicion were being continued by those interested in perpetuating the sanctions imposed on Iraq. In 1995, for example, false documents had been circulated on an alleged secret nuclear activity in Iraq. Co-operation between his country and the Agency had, as stated in document GOV/INF/770/Add.1, helped to reveal that those documents were not authentic.

16. The Agency, which had a responsibility towards the people of Iraq, should not be a party to, or facilitate intentionally or unintentionally, the starvation and mass elimination of the Iraqi people, which had in the past made such a valuable contribution to world civilization. Prior to the imposition of the sanctions, Iraq had imported most of its food, medicine and other vital supplies and it had subsequently made enormous efforts to provide its people with some of those basic needs in order

to avoid a terrible human catastrophe costing millions of lives. In conclusion, he urged that the sanctions on Iraq be lifted to enable its people to resume its active contribution to world civilization.

17. Ms. TOLLE (Kenya), having welcomed the Republic of Moldova as a new member of the Agency, said that the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in New York represented a major step forward in the field of nuclear disarmament and she looked forward to the first preparatory Committee meeting for the next NPT Review Conference.

18. The signing of the Pelindaba Treaty in April 1996 would strengthen further the non-proliferation regime and it illustrated the importance attached by African States to the NPT. Such regional agreements on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology were a useful means of reducing tension, encouraging sustainable socio-economic development and promoting confidence and regional security. It was essential to support such regional efforts to curb nuclear proliferation and Kenya was encouraged by the Agency's work in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, the strengthening of safeguards and the enhancement of nuclear safety.

19. An adequate and reliable source of energy was essential for sustainable economic development. Currently many countries, particularly the developing and least developed countries were overly dependent on hydroelectric power and fossil fuels; other sustainable energy sources, including nuclear energy, needed to be explored. The Agency therefore had an important role to play in the development of nuclear research reactors for developing and least developed countries.

20. Her Government welcomed the implementation of the Part 1 measures of Programme 93+2. The draft protocol under discussion, as contained in document GOV/2863, was a good working basis for further negotiation with a view to developing a balanced legal instrument of a universal and non-discriminatory nature to provide better assurance of the non-diversion of nuclear material.

21. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, her delegation was in favour of enlarging the Board to achieve a more equitable representation and to

reflect the prevailing global realities. In the past, Africa, in particular, had been marginalized as far as representation on the Board was concerned.

22. Turning to technical co-operation, she said that Kenya was grateful for the assistance it had received in the form of projects, training, the supply of equipment, expert missions and funding. Assistance had been provided in the areas of agricultural production, health care, radiation safety and radioactive waste management. Furthermore, Kenya's Institute of Nuclear Science had been upgraded with Agency support and was currently providing training and expert services in the application of nuclear analytical techniques and instrumentation for East Africa. Agency assistance had also enabled Kenya to improve its application of NDT techniques and its use of isotope methods to solve various water resources problems.

23. Kenya had made good progress in ensuring that the Agency's technical co-operation activities were in line with national goals and priorities. The Agency's multi-disciplinary expert mission to Kenya in April 1996 had identified the fields of health, water, agriculture and food as areas in which nuclear techniques could play a significant role and in which technical co-operation activities should be concentrated. Her country had high hopes of the Country Programme Framework, and hoped to exploit the relevant nuclear technology to meet the challenges of sustained national socio-economic development. She was confident that the Agency would provide assistance for the development of institutional capacity as well as a nuclear science and technology strategy.

24. As to regional co-operation, AFRA had played a vital role in strengthening the concept of regional co-operation and self-reliance. Kenya fully supported the activities undertaken within the framework of AFRA and urged the Agency to take action to ensure the sustainability of the benefits derived from AFRA projects.

25. While Kenya recognized the importance of the timely payment of contributions, it also noted that unpredictable difficulties caused by prolonged droughts, conflicts and other factors continued to affect the economic performance of some countries. Kenya was no exception in that respect, but she was pleased to report that her country's

economy was already showing positive signs and her Government had taken the necessary steps to address the issue of its financial obligations to the Agency.

26. Having commended the Agency's efforts to increase the number of Professional staff members from developing countries in the Secretariat, she expressed her delegation's appreciation of the increase in the number of women in Professional posts. However, the representation of women was still low and she urged the Agency to step up its efforts to increase the representation of women in Professional positions, paying particular consideration to women from developing countries.

27. Finally, she noted with satisfaction that the next meeting of the open-ended group of legal and technical experts that was preparing the convention on the safety of radioactive waste management was to be held in South Africa and she urged the Agency to increase the number of such high-level international meetings taking place on the African continent.

28. Mr. MEYER MEDINA (Bolivia) said his delegation was pleased with progress made towards strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system in order to detect any diversion of nuclear materials. His Government strongly supported efforts to implement Part 1 of Programme 93+2 and believed that negotiations regarding Part 2 should be continued with the same determination. A concerted effort would help attain the objectives of improving the system's efficiency and of protecting world peace and security.

29. In February 1995, Bolivia - convinced that the safeguards system should apply to all countries, whether they possessed nuclear facilities and material or not - had ratified the safeguards agreement resulting from its signing of the NPT and the Tlatelolco Treaty. Bolivia was a peace-loving country traditionally committed to non-proliferation and complete nuclear disarmament. It had therefore supported the recent approval by the General Assembly of the CTBT. His country was opposed not only to nuclear tests, but also to arms production.

30. Bolivia looked forward to a further increase in the technical co-operation provided by the Agency pursuant to Article IV(2) of the NPT, which stated that Parties

should "facilitate ... the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy". Although countries receiving technical assistance from the Agency were becoming aware of the peaceful applications and uses of nuclear energy, further efforts should be made in order to bring maximum benefit to all sectors of society. Some countries still viewed nuclear technologies with scepticism and knew little of the valuable contribution they could make to sustainable and balanced development. His Government was determined to contribute to the dissemination of information on the benefits of nuclear technology and planned to hold - in co-operation with the Agency - a seminar in 1997 on nuclear energy policies and uses with the active participation of the media, politicians and scientists.

31. Technical co-operation between developing countries was successfully being promoted, as demonstrated by the recent donation to Bolivia from the Argentine National Atomic Energy Commission of two cobalt therapy units for the radiotherapy services of hospitals in La Paz and Sucre. Bolivia was very grateful to Argentina for that valuable donation. As for the ARCAL programme, like other regional programmes, it had proved to be an effective way of obtaining technical assistance. His Government fully supported that programme and reaffirmed its conviction that ARCAL members should give it a high priority.

32. Bolivia was receiving considerable support from the Agency in various fields, particularly human and animal health, agriculture, radiation protection and the control of ionizing radiation. It had established a suitable infrastructure and had acquired the capability of carrying out itself substantial parts of the nuclear projects which were being implemented. A high-level Agency mission had visited Bolivia in April 1996 to evaluate not only the co-operation programme in progress, but also to establish a new programming focus for the coming years. He was grateful for that mission and felt sure that the structural changes in Bolivia and the efforts being made had not gone unnoticed.

33. He was pleased to see that Agency resources to support the transfer of technology had increased considerably as a result of voluntary contributions from Member States to the TCF and he thanked countries which had contributed.

34. Bolivia reaffirmed its support for the new approaches in the technical co-operation programme to reflect national priorities in scientific, technological, economic and social development. It also welcomed the "partner in development" concept, which would give a more strategic orientation to technical co-operation with developing Member States and improve the capability in national institutions for defining and developing the application of nuclear technology for sustainable human development and promoting horizontal co-operation.

35. His Government had been making great efforts in recent years to transform Bolivia into a modern State. There had unfortunately been a delay in ratification of the Conventions on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and Assistance in the Case of Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. However, he hoped that that process would be completed in the shortest possible time. His country was aware of the need to attain a suitable level of protection of the population against the harmful effects of ionizing radiation and approval of a law on radiological protection and safety was expected shortly.

36. Finally, he noted that the Bolivian Government had approved payment of its arrears to the Agency's Regular Budget, thereby demonstrating its willingness to meet its financial obligations.

37. Mr. AL SHAMSI (United Arab Emirates), having welcomed the approval of the Republic of Moldova for membership of the Agency, noted that the Agency had been playing an increasingly important role in world affairs in recent years, channelling nuclear expertise into areas that served the interests of mankind and opposing the use of nuclear energy for military purposes. The United Arab Emirates had consistently discharged its obligations to the Agency as a firm believer in its humanitarian aims and hoped to continue and increase its collaboration through

technical co-operation programmes for the peaceful use of nuclear technology in such areas as medicine and agriculture.

38. Like many other countries, the United Arab Emirates had a problem of water scarcity and depended on the desalination of sea water for its water supply. It had therefore been following with enthusiasm the Agency's endeavours to obtain fresh water economically through the use of nuclear technology and encouraged it to persist with its action in that crucial area.

39. The international community had recently taken a welcome step forward in the area of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and although that step fell short of global aspirations for the elimination of such weapons, it was certainly a promising development, especially when viewed alongside the creation of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

40. On the other hand, the situation in the Middle East still posed a threat to world peace. The spirit of détente in international relations was still absent from Israel's political thinking. It refused to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. Its arsenal of nuclear weapons posed a permanent threat to its neighbours. Furthermore, there had been reports of nuclear accidents at the Dimona reactor related to the storage and disposal of nuclear wastes; the existence of such a reactor in an earthquake-prone area represented a threat not only to human life, but also to the environment and groundwater sources in the region.

41. The international community should live up to its responsibilities and take determined action to eliminate nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East. The Agency's safeguards system should be applied to nuclear facilities in all States, including Israel, so that the Middle East could become a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

42. Finally, with respect to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, he said that it was high time to expand the Board of Governors in order to reflect major political developments and the spread of nuclear technology. As to discussions on the

composition of regional groups, his country believed that the issue of the Board's expansion should first be settled, particularly since deferral of membership of a group did not impede the provision of technical assistance by the Agency. Moreover, factors other than geographical location should be taken into account in the formation of groups and the decision to admit or reject a member should be left to the regional groups themselves.

43. Mr. ARGÜELLO HURTADO (Nicaragua), after congratulating Moldova on becoming a new member of the Agency and welcoming the safeguards agreement signed between Chile and the Agency, thanked the Director General for his continuous efforts to maintain the provision of technical assistance to developing countries and his determined pursuit of the Agency's safeguards objectives.

44. On his visit to Nicaragua earlier in the year, the Director General himself had witnessed the beneficial effects of the peaceful application of nuclear techniques on the daily lives of the poorest sectors of the country's population. His Government was grateful to all the countries which had made such assistance possible, especially the major donors. Nicaragua, which had a good record of paying its contributions, believed that the Agency's technical assistance should be provided on as universal a basis as possible, regardless of political considerations and factors such as a country's contributions to the Agency's Regular Budget and that the poorest countries should be given the greatest assistance. His country was in favour of Model Projects, which offered a means of helping broad sectors of populations, and also supported the ARCAL programme and the greater emphasis being placed on regional co-operation programmes by the Agency.

45. Although there were no safeguards in Central America, his delegation had followed the discussions of Programme 93+2 with great interest, and strongly supported the work of the Committee on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Improving the Efficiency of the Safeguards System established by the Board in June. A new safeguards system was vitally important, but he trusted that the cost of implementing the Part 2 measures of Programme 93+2 would not be detrimental to

the resources available for technical co-operation and that a balance would be maintained in the overall distribution of resources.

46. Turning to personnel matters, he commended the efforts that had been made to recruit more women, despite the fact that the increase during the past year had not been spectacular owing to the difficulties of finding Professional women with suitable qualifications for the Agency.

47. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, he said that any reform must take into account the strong desire of many countries which had recently made rapid progress in the application of nuclear technology to have a permanent seat on the Board, and also the wish of some regions to increase the number of their members, while not allowing any loss of other Member States' representativity. It was important to maintain the balance inherent in the existing Article VI by ensuring that a significant number of elected seats were open to less developed countries. Above all, the work should be carried out on the basis of a consensus among Member States.

48. His Government welcomed the forthcoming entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and supported the Secretariat's efforts to ensure that a number of conventions and agreements in the nuclear field were ratified by the greatest possible number of countries and brought into force with the minimum of delay.

49. Finally, he wished to acknowledge publicly the work of the Agency's staff, particularly in the field of technical co-operation. It was their dedication and loyalty which had earned the Agency the distinguished position it now occupied within the United Nations family.

50. Ms. SCHIMMING-CHASE (Namibia), having welcomed Moldova as a new member of the Agency, commended the Agency on its achievements in the areas of radiation protection, nuclear safety, radioactive waste management and on the technical assistance provided to various Member States.

51. Namibia was greatly encouraged by the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, and by the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by the United Nations General Assembly.

52. Namibia's main development objectives were to foster economic growth, to reduce poverty and inequality, to increase income-earning opportunities, to develop human resources, education and vocational training and agriculture, to achieve self-sufficiency in food production and to provide primary health care services to all. Ionizing radiation and radioisotope technologies were being used to promote Namibia's socio-economic development in the areas of mining and processing of mineral resources, manufacturing, agriculture, hydrology and primary health care. Namibia was grateful to the Agency for its continued support and advice in those areas.

53. A number of technical co-operation projects - relating to the country's radiation protection infrastructure, the diagnosis of animal diseases, animal nutrition, the upgrading of a radioimmunoassay laboratory, the establishment of a basic radiotherapy unit, and the creation of a uranium database - were currently under way.

54. In the field of animal disease control, progress had been made in the development of serological and molecular biological techniques in an effort to eliminate the need for the cordon sanitaire, separating the south of Namibia from the north, where farmers were prevented from participating in the meat markets because of the prevalence of contagious bovine pleuropneumonia. The Agency had helped to train technicians and had supplied the Central Veterinary Laboratory with the necessary equipment for performing tests to improve disease control.

55. Namibia was also very grateful to the Agency for providing assistance in the planning and construction of a radiotherapy centre, which was urgently needed, and for providing expert missions to help establish the country's radiation protection infrastructure. The radiotherapy centre, due to be completed towards the end of the year, would provide services to other countries in the region.

56. An international meeting on the use of radiation for the detection of diamonds concealed on humans had been held in Namibia in collaboration with the Agency, and Namibia looked forward to further co-operation in the safe use of radiation for non-medical purposes.

57. Other areas of particular interest to Namibia included the establishment of the basic infrastructure needed to use radioisotope techniques to study infectious tropical diseases and disorders resulting from malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency, as well as the production of potable water through the desalination of sea water or by other means.

58. Mr. FRANK (Israel), after welcoming the Republic of Moldova as a new member of the Agency, said that the new Government in Israel had made clear its commitment to the peace process in the Middle East and had emphasized the importance of enhancing the security of all countries as well as of the region as a whole. Though the peace process had experienced some difficulties, vigorous efforts were now under way to revitalize it. Much had been accomplished in recent years, but an arduous road still lay ahead. Determination, goodwill, patience and restraint were required from all parties involved.

59. Some States in the region continued to distance themselves from the peace process, still denied Israel's right to exist, refused to renounce war as a means of settling disputes, and attempted to impede the peace process by means of terror and violence, either directly or through proxies. The recent additional revelations concerning Iraq's plans and capabilities for weapons of mass destruction, and in particular for biological warfare, as well as the determination of others to acquire weapons of mass destruction in violation of their international commitments, demonstrated the complex nature of the security situation in the Middle East. It was incumbent upon the international community to assist rather than complicate the difficult negotiations that were taking place in the region. It was therefore highly desirable to refrain from initiating actions or adopting resolutions in international organizations which were not consistent with the existing regional realities.

60. In the field of global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, Israel had recently launched a significant organizational and legislative initiative aimed at moving beyond broad policy guidelines on export control and achieving full adherence to the principal supplier regimes. Israel had also contributed extensively to the work on the CTBT. Although the text of the CTBT did not satisfactorily address

some of Israel's major concerns, Israel had joined the broad consensus on it and believed that the successful conclusion of the CTBT could become a significant milestone in the area of international security. He urged all other countries, in particular the other States in the Middle East, to help make the CTBT a truly universal treaty. Noting that Israel had endorsed the PTBT as early as January 1964, he said that its decision to endorse the CTBT was a manifestation of its long-standing policy in the nuclear field. Israel had also been active in promoting an effective verification regime for the CTBT and in promoting a system of regional seismic verification.

61. Regrettably, no progress had been made during the current year in the deliberations of the multilateral working group on Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS). The reason for that was quite clear: no progress was possible if an attempt was made to impose one party's agenda on other participants. He called upon all the participants to renew their efforts in that important area.

62. Turning to the proposed resolution on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East which was before the General Conference, he noted that similar resolutions had been passed by consensus since 1991. In the past, Israel had joined the consensus on those resolutions despite their inherent deficiencies, because it saw the nuclear-weapon-free zone as an important element in its overall peace, security and arms control policy. At the same time, Israel had stated its fundamental reservations over the language and relevance of the resolution and had distanced itself from its modalities. The nuclear issue could not realistically be lifted out of the comprehensive framework of peace and security in the region. The primacy of the peace negotiations could not be undermined. Any attempts to change the text of the resolution which had been adopted by the preceding two sessions of the General Conference was bound to be counter-productive. Such changes would be detrimental to the peace process in that they would suggest that it could be circumvented using international bodies. If the consensus was to be preserved, the current text of the resolution should remain unchanged.

63. Turning to the resolution on the composition of regional groups which was before the General Conference in connection with the item on Article VI of the Statute,

old hostilities still remained with regard to Israel's participation in MESA. Paragraph 7 of document GOV/2864 stated that Article VI was clearly premised upon the assumption that every Member State of the Agency was a member of a regional group, and that any Member State which was not would be ineligible to serve as a member of the Board and such ineligibility would be contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States upon which the Agency was based and which was enshrined in Article IV.C of the Statute. The Director General's report also stated that where a doubt existed as to whether a Member State belonged to a particular area, it was clear that the decision on that issue could not be taken solely by the Member States who were acknowledged as being within that area, since that might result in the State in question being excluded from all areas. Under such circumstances, it was the joint responsibility of the Board and the General Conference to determine whether a State fell within a particular area.

64. Certain Member States of the MESA area had attempted to deny Israel's basic rights and the General Conference had an obligation to intervene and redress the situation. Not to do so would be to yield to political coercion. He urged the General Conference to take practical steps to end the discrimination against Israel and restore its sovereign equality inside the Agency. How was it possible to ignore obvious geographical and political facts in the Middle East and at the same time support resolutions such as the one on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East, which pertained to the region as a whole? The General Conference should not become an arena for political protests or a venue for political discrimination. That would not be consistent with the Agency's responsibility and activities as provided for in its Statute.

65. The plans to strengthen the effectiveness of safeguards had been one of the major issues on the Agency's agenda in recent years. Israel supported in principle the strengthening of safeguards, and it found Programme 93+2 a commendable effort. However, that Programme could not offer any lasting guarantees unless the political will was there. In that regard, the experience of UNSCOM should serve as a warning. The main goal of Programme 93+2 was to provide credible assurance of the

non-diversion of nuclear material from declared activities and of the absence of any undeclared nuclear activities. With regard to assurance of the absence of undeclared activities in a country, such assurance could only be provided if comprehensive safeguards were in force and therefore could not apply to countries with INFCIRC/66-type agreements. As to the need to ensure that declared nuclear material was not being diverted to non-peaceful purposes, unlike document INFCIRC/153, document INFCIRC/66 already went beyond limiting safeguards exclusively to nuclear materials and there was therefore no need to resort to complementary legal authority. The possibility mentioned in the Director General's report in document GOV/2863 of providing information about export licences was worth considering. While Programme 93+2 might, under certain conditions, improve safeguards, precautions had to be taken to prevent complacency.

66. Illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources had been an issue of concern in recent years. Israel attached great importance to the efforts to combat illicit trafficking and commended the activities undertaken by the Secretariat in that regard and described in document GC(40)/15. He encouraged the Agency to continue its work in that area.

67. Finally, noting that the General Conference was taking place at a time of tremendous global and regional changes, he said that it was essential to enable the Agency to concentrate its efforts on carrying out its statutory tasks. He hoped that in the coming months the peace process in the Middle East would move forward and that true confidence and reconciliation among all States in the region would overcome old suspicions and hostility. The Agency and the General Conference could assist by standing squarely behind the primacy of the peace process.

68. Mr. CHAUNY de PORTURAS-HOYLE (Peru) joined other speakers in welcoming the Republic of Moldova as a new Member State of the Agency.

69. Peru had supported the recent General Assembly resolution on the CTBT. That Treaty constituted a vital step towards achieving the most prized objectives of the Agency: non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and a more secure world free from the

threat of nuclear confrontation and where the utilization of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes could be fully realized.

70. Fifty years previously, the world had been shaken by the bombs which had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The nuclear era had started badly. Since that time, most of humanity had associated nuclear energy with mass destruction. However, the peaceful use of reactors - to generate electricity for example - was of vital importance since it was quite clear that the burning of fossil or biomass fuels was not sustainable and needed to be drastically reduced. Where there was not a sufficient number of waterfalls, the only alternative capable of meeting the energy demand of large urban populations was nuclear energy. Despite the negative publicity it had received, nuclear energy had an impeccable safety record in countries which had a good grasp of the technology. It was also highly competitive in price and, contrary to what its detractors would have people believe, it had a minimal environmental impact.

71. Peru had signed a safeguards agreement with the Agency guaranteeing that its nuclear activities were exclusively for peaceful purposes and ensuring the necessary transparency in those activities. Peru therefore supported Programme 93+2, which aimed at improving the effectiveness of safeguards. In the negotiations surrounding that initiative, he hoped to see a clear expression of political will and good faith, and a firm commitment from all States to nuclear non-proliferation. The expectations and rights of the non-nuclear-weapon States should be recognized with a balanced sharing of the burden of the new responsibilities and respect for the sovereignty of States and for confidentiality. He also hoped that the new mechanisms would constitute a decisive step towards international disarmament.

72. Peru was also following with great interest the negotiations on amendments to the Agency's Statute, and in particular those relating to a modification of the current composition of the Board of Governors. Outside the developed world, Latin America occupied a leading position in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Any extension of the membership of the Board should take account of that fact and ensure greater representation of the Latin American region. Major changes had taken place

in the international situation in recent years, which the Agency could not ignore. He therefore welcomed the initiatives which were under consideration and hoped that they would bear fruit in the near future.

73. The Government of Peru was most appreciative of the technical assistance which it received from the Agency and hoped that those activities would be maintained at the level they had reached in recent years. It had recently made serious efforts to meet its financial obligations to the Agency, including the payment of its assessed programme costs.

74. Since the preceding General Conference, there had been a number of developments in various fields. Peru had brought a multi-purpose irradiation facility into operation, which was the key feature of a major project on food marketing that would help large sectors of the population. The tissue bank, which was being run by the National Institute for the Child, would make the national production of biological tissue possible, which would generate significant foreign currency savings in the medium term. Work was continuing on the establishment of an inventory of groundwater in southern Peru, including the identification and quantification of exploitable water resources and an evaluation of the water resource potential of the whole southern part of Peru. The plans for the production of samarium-153 and dysprosium-165 had been consolidated. Samarium-153 was currently being used with great success in the treatment of cancer patients, and dysprosium-165 was being used in preliminary tests on human beings. The cereals programme at the National Agrarian University had helped enhance some improved varieties of barley. Finally, in the field of nuclear safety, a project to solve the contamination problems caused by mining and industry had been approved.

75. The Peruvian Nuclear Energy Institute was grateful to the Agency for having designated Peru as the official host country of various international training events, including a workshop on the implementation of the ICRP-60 recommendations and the Basic Safety Standards, a regional workshop on the calibration and electronic assessment of X-ray equipment used for medical diagnosis, a regional training course on the use of isotope techniques in human nutrition and a regional training workshop

on quality control of SPECT systems. Peru had also taken part in various activities under the ARCAL Programme. As in the past, the Peruvian Government was grateful to the Government of the United States of America for the extrabudgetary contributions which had made possible the funding of important international technical assistance projects.

76. The Government of Peru reconfirmed its support for the Agency's activities and urged all Member States to adopt a spirit of flexibility in the various negotiations on the structure, role and functions of the Agency with a view to achieving a better world, free of the threat of nuclear destruction, where the enormous benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy could be enjoyed by all.

77. Mr. NGWE (Myanmar) warmly welcomed the Republic of Moldova as a new member of the Agency. His delegation appreciated the very important role played by the Agency in promoting international co-operation for the development of nuclear science and technology, nuclear disarmament, nuclear safety and safeguards.

78. Since attending the first International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy and becoming a member of the Agency in 1957, Myanmar had participated in various activities to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy. After signing the NPT Treaty in 1992, his country had concluded a safeguards agreement with the Agency and in 1994 it had become a member of the RCA with a view to co-operating more actively within the Asia and Pacific region in the development of nuclear science and technology. Myanmar had also welcomed the signature of the South East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty in Bangkok at the end of 1995.

79. His country believed that the world community would eventually reach a consensus on the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. The recent adoption of the CTBT by the General Assembly was a milestone in that direction. Myanmar hoped that all the nuclear-weapon States would abide by the Treaty. In addition, it welcomed the forthcoming entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, to which it was considering becoming a party.

80. Irradiation techniques were being applied to improve crop yields in Myanmar. A good quality and high-yielding species of rice had been successfully developed and introduced in Myanmar and the country's scientists were now working, in co-operation with the Agency, on the application of similar techniques to improve bean and pulse production. Nuclear techniques were also being used in the diagnosis of livestock diseases, as well as to improve the breeding efficiency of cattle.

81. Myanmar was undergoing a transition to a market economy and efforts were being made to increase prosperity. Nonetheless, its people were aware of the need to protect the environment and a major environmental improvement project was currently under way to afforest and increase the availability of water in the nine arid districts of Myanmar's central zone. Nuclear techniques used in the exploration and management of hydrological resources would be relevant to those efforts. Other areas where nuclear techniques were having an increasing impact were medicine, where attempts were being made to produce radiation sterilized tissue grafts, and industry, where technologies such as rubber vulcanization and food irradiation had recently been introduced. As industry developed, so the demand for energy would grow. Although it possessed a vast hydroelectric potential, Myanmar was also investigating the benefits of nuclear power. The increasing use of nuclear applications in Myanmar, both in the public and the private sector, meant that there was a need for an adequate radiation protection infrastructure. A radiation protection law had already been drafted and was expected to come into force in the near future.

82. Myanmar, which was making efforts to catch up with countries more advanced in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, was grateful for the assistance it had received - and hoped to continue receiving - from the Agency. His country firmly believed in the values upheld by the Agency and Myanmar would never seek to compromise the principle that nuclear energy must be used solely for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of mankind.

83. Ms. KAWONZA (Zimbabwe) welcomed the Agency's increasing commitment to the promotion of nuclear applications in the economic and social development of the developing countries, especially on the African continent. She also

appreciated the progress it had made in assisting Member States to establish a sound radiation protection and radioactive waste management infrastructure. For its part, Zimbabwe had resolved to expand its radiation protection service commensurate with the increasing demands being made of it.

84. Zimbabwe had been encouraged by the efforts to improve the Agency's technical assistance programme through the timely implementation of project activities identified within the Country Programme Frameworks in such areas as agriculture, human health, water resources and management, and the building of national capabilities. Her Government was grateful to the Agency for the benefits gained by Zimbabwe's subsistence farming community from that programme and looked forward to taking part in a Model Project on biofertilizers, which should make a significant contribution to cereal production and the prosperity of small farms in rural Zimbabwe. Her country had participated in regional projects on such topics as communicable diseases and immunoassay. Furthermore, as soon as the necessary domestic formalities had been completed, Zimbabwe would submit to the Agency its application to join AFRA. On the subject of Africa, she welcomed the fact that most of the African nations - amongst them Zimbabwe - had signed the Pelindaba Treaty, proclaiming Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

85. She recognized that the tardy payment or failure to pay contributions to the TCF by the majority of the developing countries, which nevertheless benefited from the transfer of advanced technologies through the Agency's technical assistance programme, had undesirable financial implications on the Agency's budget. However, measures to resolve that issue should not compromise the promotion of the application of nuclear techniques in developing countries. The Agency should consider carefully the possible repercussions of proposed measures on the momentum and achievements of its technical co-operation programme and should explore, together with the Agency's major budget contributors, other - more persuasive - ways of recovering TCF arrears.

86. One of the subjects of concern to her delegation was the privatization of nuclear power plants and it believed that any such moves should be debated under the auspices of the Agency before being implemented in any Member State.

87. Finally, she noted that by the end of the current session of the General Conference, Member States would have a clear idea of the Agency's direction and focus in the coming years with regard to the promotion of the peaceful application of nuclear techniques to help resolve the world's development problems.

88. Mr. EL-NOAIMI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the world was facing major economic difficulties that called for urgent national and international action to promote economic and social development in such key areas as the environment, health, food supplies and water resources. The Agency had an important role to play in that regard. His country, which was severely hampered by the punitive economic sanctions imposed on it, was grateful for the Agency's technical co-operation in technology transfer and the provision of expert assistance for projects of direct benefit to the population such as the improvement of barley varieties and the production of radiopharmaceuticals.

89. The unjust sanctions imposed on the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had adversely affected its participation in many international organizations, including the Agency. He urged the Agency to take steps to eliminate the restrictions imposed on the transfer of technology to his own country and those in similar circumstances so that they could use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The attempt to deprive developing countries of the benefits of nuclear energy was a breach of the Agency's Statute.

90. Turning to a problem of concern to many African countries, he said that Africa's shortage of water resources could be alleviated by the use of nuclear technology for groundwater prospecting and desalination of sea water. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had been among the first to recognize the potential of the desalination of sea water in 1989, channelling large-scale human and financial resources into a project in that field. It intended to continue with its efforts and examine all options for co-operation with the Agency.

91. His country welcomed the Agency's action to strengthen the safeguards system under Programme 93+2, which was the cornerstone of international efforts aimed at the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. His country had consistently called for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction from the international community and had fully implemented the Part 1 measures of Programme 93+2. Most of the measures proposed under Part 2 called for new legislation or changes in existing laws, which was a lengthy process, particularly in a country such as his own where power was vested in the people and all new legislation required popular endorsement at various levels of the decision-making process before being promulgated. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya therefore considered that implementation of the measures in question should be postponed until the necessary local legislation had been promulgated or should be implemented in individual States in the light of existing legislation and extended to other States on completion of the requisite legislative procedures. At all events, he stressed the universality of Programme 93+2, which must be implemented without discrimination. In his own region, Israel possessed an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction that was not subject to a safeguards agreement or to international control. As there was no guarantee that Israel would refrain from using such weapons, his country considered that the world should be freed of all weapons of mass destruction before the proposed safeguards system was implemented. Only then would the Agency's efforts gain real credibility and only then would small countries be confident that their development programmes and plans were safe.

92. Some nuclear-weapon States accused his country of possessing nuclear materials for nuclear weapons production and programmes that violated the NPT. Those accusations constituted systematic intimidation by States that were determined to sabotage his country's future and to thwart its efforts to achieve higher living standards through the peaceful use of nuclear energy in such areas as hydrology and medicine. The clearest evidence of such terrorism against his country was the recent announcement by the States in question of their plans for nuclear bombardment of the tunnels employed for the great man-made river project in the Tarhunah region on the pretext that they were being used to build a gas production plant. Many delegations

had visited the site and confirmed that those accusations were groundless and that the purpose of the tunnels was to convey drinking water and water for irrigation and industrial purposes to populated areas. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, a small country with limited material and technical resources, had signed a safeguards agreement with the Agency under which regular inspections were conducted. The Agency therefore had an obligation to put a stop once and for all to the deliberate terrorism against his country. The sole purpose of safeguards seemed to be to perpetuate the domination of nuclear-weapon States. If the Agency really wished to establish a workable safeguards system, it must put an end to discriminatory policies and apply its programme to all countries.

93. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya supported the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, but recognized that that goal could never be attained so long as one party in the region possessed huge arsenals of nuclear and conventional weapons. It was therefore essential to destroy those weapons and oblige Israel to submit its nuclear facilities to Agency safeguards in accordance with the NPT. The fact that major nuclear powers continued to aid and abet Israel left his country in some doubt as to the seriousness of the international community's efforts and its ability to address such issues effectively. For its part, Africa had set an example to the rest of the world with the establishment of an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, which demonstrated Africa's awareness of the importance of international peace and security.

94. One way of building confidence and enhancing the Agency's role would be to provide for equitable representation of developing countries in the Agency and their full involvement in policy- and decision-making. He supported the demand for expansion of the Board of Governors to ensure better representation of Africa, Asia and Latin America and to reflect changes in the membership of the Agency and in the world nuclear community. Such a reform would enhance the Board's efficiency and credibility as well as its ability to take important decisions. He trusted that the consultations on the amendment of Article VI of the Statute would lead to a settlement of the issue by consensus. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had also consistently called

for an increase in the number of senior Agency staff from developing countries in view of the considerable expertise that was currently available in those countries.

95. Mr. DIAS (Sri Lanka), after welcoming the Republic of Moldova as a new member of the Agency, said that the current session of the General Conference, like the previous one, had been preceded earlier in the year by the signing of an important multilateral document in New York. The previous year had seen the indefinite extension of the NPT, while in the current year the document in question was the CTBT recently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly.

96. Several aspects of the CTBT were disappointing to his Government. Firstly, it would have preferred a text that incorporated specific measures to achieve nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons. Secondly, the Treaty's scope was confined to test explosions only and did not extend to non-explosive testing and vertical proliferation concerns. Thirdly, it had expected that the Executive Council and other organizational bodies responsible for the Treaty's administration would be more equitable in their geographical representation. Finally, his Government felt that the Treaty might entail an erosion of the sovereign right of countries to decide for themselves how and when to subscribe to international treaties. Despite those drawbacks, Sri Lanka had supported the adoption of the CTBT, since it was a specific measure to eliminate underground nuclear test explosions and a step forward in the disarmament process. His Government had also offered to make available a seismic monitoring station for use as part of the CTBT verification system and expected that the Agency's longstanding experience of verification activities would facilitate considerably the efforts to make that system multilateral.

97. With regard to illicit trafficking in nuclear material, his delegation commended the Secretariat for its continued efforts to develop countermeasures and the action it had taken to establish a database. The abundance of radioactive material, the easy access gained to it by criminal elements, and its potential for use as a means of mass contamination by terrorist groups all highlighted the need to strengthen the international regime to prevent such activities. The Agency's efforts notwithstanding, its Member States should do more to strengthen bilateral and regional co-operation

among themselves in order to share information, expertise and experience on illicit trafficking and terrorist activities, and those countries which espoused terrorism as a means of achieving political aims should be denied access to nuclear material. The series of anti-terrorist measures recently announced by the G-7 countries offered a good model for developing further international co-operation in that area.

98. Having commended the countries of the African region on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa on the basis of consensus, he said that he would like to comment on aspects of Sri Lanka's atomic energy programme. His Government had recognized the potential of nuclear technology in the context of national development and had allocated money to Sri Lanka's Atomic Energy Authority in order to develop the national infrastructure. Sri Lanka had no large nuclear facilities and its nuclear activities were mainly concentrated in industry, medicine and agriculture. In recent years, the Atomic Energy Authority had given highest priority to strengthening its radiation protection programme through the recruitment of additional staff and the acquisition of hardware. It would thus soon be possible to monitor all radiation workers regularly. Moreover, it was mandatory for all users of radiation and radioisotopes to be licensed by the Atomic Energy Authority and periodic safety inspections of their facilities were carried out. An emergency response plan was being developed and by the end of 1997 Sri Lanka would be able to comply fully with the Basic Safety Standards.

99. Over the past year, Sri Lanka had completed a number of successful projects, including the establishment of a human tissue bank and further upgrading of its nuclear imaging facilities. However, further expansion of the RIA facilities was necessary, as the existing RIA laboratories were still unable to cope with the demand. In the industrial sector, considerable gains had resulted from the introduction of NDT technology, and nuclear analytical techniques were being used for environmental monitoring and quality control of products. In the area of agriculture, new varieties of peanut and sesame had been developed through radiation-induced mutations, and the application of nuclear techniques had led to further improvements in crop production and animal production and health.

100. Sri Lanka took a keen interest in the development of small- and medium-power reactors, since its national grid was too small to be connected to one of the commercially available nuclear reactors. Although several designs of SMPRs had been introduced hitherto, none had been commercially developed. A number of developing countries would stand to gain if SMPRs became commercially available.

101. His Government noted with satisfaction the level of maturity reached in a wide range of activities by the RCA after almost 25 years' existence. Nevertheless, the RCA Member States and the Agency would need to step up their efforts in order to guide the Programme into the next century - the former by accepting greater responsibility for project management and the latter by taking appropriate action to ensure the maximum effectiveness of its RCA management structure.

102. Sri Lanka's Atomic Energy Authority would continue to pursue environmentally friendly policies in striving to improve the nation's way of life through the application of nuclear science and technology. Despite the constraints it experienced in trying to realize those objectives as a developing country, Sri Lanka continued to make voluntary contributions to the Agency.

103. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his Government's active support for the Agency's programmes aimed at promoting the application of nuclear science and technology for development and noted that without such assistance, developing countries such as Sri Lanka would have made very little progress.

104. Mr. AL-GHAIS (Kuwait) said that the Agency's most important task was the application of safeguards to prevent the diversion of nuclear materials for military purposes. Unfortunately, the present system had some loopholes - of which Iraq and the DPRK had taken advantage. Programme 93+2 had therefore been developed to strengthen the system and enable the Agency to detect undeclared nuclear facilities. He hoped that the additional protocol relating to Part 2 measures would soon be adopted and that Programme 93+2 would enjoy universality.

105. Kuwait welcomed the recent adoption of the CTBT by the General Assembly and hoped that it would not only enter into force soon, but also be the prelude to global

disarmament. It was also pleased to note that the Convention on Nuclear Safety would shortly enter into force.

106. Signing of the South East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the Pelindaba Treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, marked a significant step forward in nuclear arms control. Kuwait hoped that the Middle East region would follow suit. However, Israel's refusal to join the NPT and to submit its nuclear installations to Agency safeguards was hindering that process. Furthermore, it was imperative that the Iraqi Government refrain from its irresponsible behaviour, which was leading to a loss of the necessary mutual confidence. He urged the Director General to continue his efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and looked forward to the elimination of not only nuclear, but all kinds of, weapons of mass destruction in that region.

107. Iraq was persisting in its policy of showing contempt for the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Conference. Since the thirty-ninth session of the General Conference, facts had emerged proving beyond any doubt that Iraq had made several covert attempts to obtain nuclear weapons. On page 3 of the report on the twenty-eighth on-site inspection in Iraq, contained in document GOV/INF/781, it was stated that Iraq had acknowledged for the first time that the activities carried out by the Fourth Group, initially at the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission, Tuwaitha, and later at Al Atheer, were for the direct purpose of producing nuclear weapons and not as previously asserted merely to define, through studies and experimentation, the necessary capabilities that would have been required in the event of a political decision to embark upon the production of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, Iraq was carrying out research in the field of centrifuge enrichment and was conducting experiments to develop a nuclear warhead delivery system. With foreign assistance, Iraq had acquired a supercritical machine for continuous nuclear reactions - as stated in paragraph 15 of the report on the twenty-ninth inspection contained in document GOV/INF/783. It had also imported 180 gyroscopes for launching long-range missiles, knowing that such missiles could carry nuclear warheads.

108. As the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM had stated at the beginning of September, the Iraqi régime was still hiding forbidden weapons, including long-range missiles, which threatened the security of its neighbours. Iraq continued to hinder the work of the inspection teams by denying access to a number of sites. That had led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 1060(1996) deploring Iraq's failure to comply with Security Council resolutions 687, 707 and 715 and demanding its full co-operation with UNSCOM. On 23 August 1996 the President of the Security Council had described Iraq's conduct as a gross violation of its obligations under Security Council resolutions 687, 707 and 715 and had called upon Iraq to grant the Special Commission's inspection teams immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to all areas they wished to inspect.

109. Prolongation of the economic sanctions imposed by the Security Council and the delay in implementation of Security Council resolution 986 - the so-called oil-for-food resolution - were clear proof of Iraq's continued intransigence. Furthermore, paragraph 27 of the report by the Director General on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq, contained in document GC(40)/13, stated that the IAEA was conscious that the expertise and know-how acquired by Iraqi scientists and engineers could provide an adequate base for re-constituting a nuclear-weapons-oriented programme and noted that a continuing high level of vigilance was necessary to avert that risk. Kuwait welcomed the Agency's ongoing verification and monitoring in Iraq, and urged it to be cautious and keep the Iraqi nuclear file open. Close co-operation between the Agency and Member States would guarantee implementation of the export/import mechanism, adopted under Security Council resolution 1051(1996), which aimed to prevent Iraq from obtaining materials to develop an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Recent events proving the aggressive nature of the Iraqi régime had made it imperative for all States and international organizations to join efforts to deal with the problem.

110. Turning to the composition of regional groups, he said that the primary responsibility for decisions concerning such groups lay with the respective groups, as had been agreed by the General Conference in resolution GC(39)/RES/22.

Furthermore, it was difficult to take any decision in that regard so long as Article VI of the Statute was being amended. Amendment of that Article could lead to an increase in the number of seats on the Board and hence in the number of seats allocated to each regional group.

111. With regard to personnel policy, Kuwait urged the Agency to give fair opportunities to all countries, taking into consideration the following four criteria: equitable geographical distribution, increase in the representation of the developing countries, increase in the representation of women, and the contributions to the Agency's Regular Budget, taking due account of the need to ensure efficiency. Finally, he called upon the Director General to pay particular attention to applications submitted by developing countries which were either not represented or were under-represented.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.