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International Atomic Energy Agency
GENERAL CONFERENCE

FORTY-FIRST (1997) REGULAR SESSION

RECORD OF THE SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Austria Centre Vienna
on Wednesday, 1 October 1997, at 3.5 p.m.

President: Mr. NIEWODNICZAŃSKI (Poland)
Later: Ms. LÓPEZ RODAS (Guatemala)

CONTENTS

[*] GC(41)/28.

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(41)/INF/17/Rev.2.

97-04872 (XXXV)

Abbreviations used in this record

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
ACSS	Advisory Commission for Safety Standards
AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
Agreed Framework	Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASSET	Analysis of Safety Significant Events Team
Bangkok Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
Basic Safety Standards	International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources
CEG	Contact Expert Group for International Radioactive Waste Projects in the Russian Federation
CONCERT	Concertation on European Regulatory Tasks
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
ECU	European currency unit
EU	European Union
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
G-7	Group of Seven [leading industrial countries]
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (of UNESCO)
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
JET	Joint European Torus
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
Kyoto Conference	Third session of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
London Convention	Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (1972)
MOX	Mixed oxide
NDT	Non-destructive testing
NEA	Nuclear Energy Agency (of OECD)
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Abbreviations used in this record
(Contd.)

NUSS	Nuclear Safety Standards
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
Paris Convention	Paris Convention on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy (July 1960)
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PHARE	European Union programme of assistance for economic restructuring in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe
Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
R&D	Research and development
RAPAT	Radiation Protection Advisory Team
Rarotonga Treaty	South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty
RASSAC	Radiation Safety Standards Advisory Committee
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)
RIA	Radioimmunoassay
START	Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms
TACIS	Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States
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
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
Vienna Convention	Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (May 1963)
WASSAC	Waste Safety Standards Advisory Committee
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
World Bank	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
WWER	Water-cooled and -moderated reactor (former USSR)

GENERAL DEBATE AND STATEMENTS MARKING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AGENCY (continued)
(GC(41)/8)

1. Mr. D'ESCATHA (France), welcoming the admission of Malta and Burkina Faso to membership of the Agency, associated himself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union by the representative of Luxembourg, who had rightly commended the richness and diversity of the work done by the Agency since the entry into force of its Statute 40 years previously.

2. The first meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the NPT Review Conference, which had been held that year in New York, had provided an indication of the progress achieved towards the universality of the Treaty. That trend had recently been reconfirmed by the welcome announcement by Brazil of its intention to accede to it. The international community was thus approaching an objective which, although not within immediate reach, had to be relentlessly pursued, since it was the precondition for the effectiveness of the international non-proliferation regime.

3. It was common knowledge that the regime was not immune to crises: Iraq and the DPRK still remained subjects of concern. In Iraq, the work done by UNSCOM and by the Agency and its Action Team had been justly commended by many delegations. In renewing the appeal that had frequently been made to the Iraqi authorities to comply with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, he paid tribute, on behalf of his Government, to the action being undertaken by the Agency in that country, and more particularly to the late Professor Zifferero who had long been responsible for that action and who, in the course of that delicate mission, had displayed universally acknowledged professional and human qualities.

4. The North Korean question was another source of preoccupation for all those who were concerned with respect for international commitments on non-proliferation. France had noted with interest the important stage that had just been reached in the implementation of the Agreed Framework between the United States and the DPRK. It intended, both on a national basis and as a member of the European Union, to contribute to the implementation of that arrangement in the context of KEDO. However, it regarded as unacceptable the obstruction by the DPRK authorities of the Agency's legitimate mission of verifying the implementation of the DPRK's safeguards agreement. It was essential to pursue that objective and to be resolute in reaffirming the urgency and necessity of completing the task.

5. Iraq and the DPRK showed clearly what a difficult theatre of operation non-proliferation was for the international community. The slow maturation of the programme for strengthening safeguards illustrated the scale and diversity of the challenges involved in improving the Agency's investigational tools. The approval by the Board of Governors in May 1997 of Part 2 of Programme 93+2 thus constituted a major political commitment on the part of all the States parties to that decision. Being better equipped to detect any clandestine prohibited activities, the Agency, for its part, would have to adapt its operational methods to a new safeguards approach.

6. Admittedly, no system, however complex, would ever guarantee against violations, but the package of new control measures under Programme 93+2 would make it extremely difficult for a potential "proliferator" to engage in prohibited activities. It was thus important that the measures provided for in the Model Protocol should be put into effect as early as possible. France urged all States with a safeguards agreement to lose no time in concluding an Additional Protocol to that end.

7. His country, which had supported Programme 93+2 from the outset, had already announced that it would assume its responsibilities as a nuclear-weapon State. Accordingly, it had declared its readiness to apply numerous measures in the Model Protocol. As soon as present discussions had ended within the European Union to define the respective roles of the Commission and the Member States in negotiating Additional Protocols with the Agency, his Government would do everything it could to bring that process to a rapid conclusion.

8. Only a year after the opening of the CTBT for signature, gratifying progress had been made towards its implementation, and his country, which had been among the first signatory States, would initiate in the autumn the constitutional procedures required to ratify it. France was actively participating in the establishment of the CTBTO in Vienna, within the framework of the Preparatory Commission which had just held its third session. It was important to prepare without delay the institutional, administrative and technical framework necessary for the implementation of the Treaty, in particular the international surveillance system for verifying compliance with the commitments undertaken by the States parties. France was ready to make a major contribution to that end by providing the international community with the benefit of its experience and making equipment available to the four technical surveillance networks, where appropriate, in co-operation with other States parties willing to accept such equipment in their territory.

9. Even before signing the CTBT, France had decided to end testing and begin the process of dismantling its experimental site, which was now well under way. At the same time, the international scientific mission mounted by the Agency at France's request to evaluate the radiological situation on the Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls, as well as their geological stability, was continuing its work in close collaboration with the French authorities. France was confidently awaiting its conclusions which were to be submitted in a few months' time.

10. France had also taken the lead in a field no less significant for disarmament and non-proliferation by deciding unilaterally to cease production for weapons purposes of plutonium (from 1993) and of highly enriched uranium (in June 1996). Other nuclear-weapon States had taken an identical decision. That was to be welcomed, but such measures did not relieve the international community of the task of seeking a collective commitment to a universal, non-discriminatory and fully verifiable convention the mandate for which had been given in 1995 at the Conference on Disarmament. France approved that objective and regretted the continuing disagreements within the Disarmament Conference which had hitherto prevented negotiations getting under way.

11. For countries opting for spent fuel reprocessing, plutonium was a most valuable energy resource. It needed to be handled under optimum safety conditions and in accordance with the international non-proliferation regime. It was in that spirit that France was participating, with eight other countries, in drafting guidelines on the management of that material in all peaceful nuclear activities. Although not binding, those guidelines would introduce transparent practices which, moreover, were already largely observed by the French Government. Accordingly, the civil plutonium holdings in France had just been published, as they had been in 1996.

12. With respect to fissionable material from the dismantling of weapons, the procedures for safe and effective management had been examined at the international experts meeting held in Paris the previous year with Agency participation. Long-term storage, vitrification and, above all, consumption in power reactors in the form of MOX fuel had been identified as possible options. The recycling as MOX fuel of plutonium extracted from weapons now appeared to be the best option from the point of view of disarmament and non-proliferation, while simultaneously yielding energy. International co-operation was working in that direction: France was collaborating with the Russian Federation and Germany under the expanded AIDA-MOX programme to demonstrate the feasibility of the MOX option. The aim of that venture, which was open to other potential partners, was to establish a first pilot fuel fabrication unit in the Russian Federation.

13. France endorsed the statements made by the Director General of the Agency, Mr. Blix, at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on sustainable development and, more recently, at the annual conference of the Uranium Institute. Mr. Blix had rightly emphasized the advantages of nuclear power to meet the growing energy demand throughout the world. The full benefits thereof could only be obtained in parallel with an optimal safety regime, however. There again, international co-operation was essential and the French Government applauded the progress being made in that direction.

14. France welcomed the adoption, by the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, of the provisions covering the review meetings which would constitute the machinery for implementation of the Convention. It called on all countries that had not yet done so to accede to the Convention. That was no more than a first step, however.

15. A Diplomatic Conference had just adopted the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. That Convention, the first legally binding international instrument concluded in that field, would be an invaluable aid to all States for managing the back end of the nuclear cycle. It was, indeed, an instrument that could be used both by the countries that favoured direct storage of their spent fuel and by those that opted for reprocessing. France, for its part, had already stated that it would report under the Convention on its reprocessing activities, and it urged all countries undertaking reprocessing to do likewise. France, which had signed the Convention on 29 September, called on the international community to spare no efforts to see that the Convention enter into force as soon as possible.

16. The French delegation also welcomed the adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. The adoption of new legal and financial frameworks covering nuclear damage would facilitate international co-operation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the field of safety. It was more than ever necessary to pursue efforts, hitherto insufficient and no doubt too fragmented, to assist those countries in close collaboration with their authorities. French experts from the Institute for Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety were already providing such assistance.

17. The accident at Chernobyl on 26 April 1986 had been the most serious ever in a nuclear power plant, and it had had catastrophic consequences for populations and for the environment which could not be borne solely by Ukraine. Given that situation, it was essential that international co-operation for the benefit of the populations concerned be continued. The stakes involved and the scale of that co-operation gave it a worldwide dimension which had prompted the appeal for international solidarity made by the G-7 at the Denver Summit. France hoped for a favourable response to that appeal from the international community at the pledging conference that was to be held shortly in New York under the co-chairmanship of Ukraine and the G-7.

18. The development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy rightly remained a major objective of the Agency. Great efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of technical assistance had been under way for several years and were beginning to bear fruit. It was therefore important to continue to increase the involvement and commitment of the countries receiving technical assistance. Greater co-operation between those countries should also be encouraged, particularly in the framework of the Agency's regional assistance programmes.

19. Such action could not be undertaken without the sustained support of the donor countries. More than ever, their contribution to the TCF appeared essential, even though their economic situation might be difficult and was likely to remain so for a long time.

20. The Agency was faced with a heavier workload as a result of its increased responsibilities. The necessary strengthening of safeguards, at least in the initial phase, would involve additional expenditure, which would need to be offset by administrative savings. In particular, when operating with a zero- or near zero-growth budget, it was essential to avoid duplication of activities among the various intergovernmental organizations concerned with nuclear energy, particularly between the Agency and the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) of OECD.

21. The question of the composition of the Agency's Board of Governors had long been the subject of various proposals and intensive debate. It had to be recognized that hitherto no proposal had received wide support whether concerning the revision of Article VI.A, the question of the representation of certain Member States on the Board, or their membership of the regional groups provided for under the Statute. The deadlock clearly reflected the complexity of those issues. Any attempt at reform should therefore be carried out prudently, taking a long-term view of all the issues involved. Such was, indeed, the task entrusted the previous year by the General Conference to the Board of Governors. In that spirit, the global

compromise proposed by the Chairman of the Board seemed to represent a chance that should be taken in order to avoid a succession of fruitless discussions that were likely to jeopardize the harmony and success of the Agency's work.

22. At the national level, several significant events had occurred since the previous General Conference. French nuclear generating plant now comprised 56 pressurized water reactors (PWR) with a total capacity of 60 GW(e), plus two reactors under construction. Nuclear electricity generation in 1996 amounted to 378 billion kWh, i.e. 5.4% more than in 1995. That represented 77% of the national electricity production. Sixty-nine billion kWh had been exported to neighbouring countries and that level was likely to be maintained in future. The availability of the pressurized water reactors was 82.7% in 1996, 1.7% more than in 1995. That availability level confirmed the good performance of the nuclear plants. On the basis of studies conducted by Electricité de France since 1985, the lifetime of its reactors had been estimated at at least 40 years.

23. In 1996 the high safety standard of the French nuclear plants had been maintained. Sixty-three events had been classified at level 1 and two incidents at level 2 on the International Nuclear Event Scale (INES). The programme for the construction of four standardized nuclear power generation units (series N4) was continuing: two units were operating at Chooz, while at Civaux fuel loading had just started at one unit and construction of the second unit was continuing. Series N4 was characterized by three major innovations: its digital control and monitoring system, the 1500 MW Arabelle turbine, which was lighter and shorter than the 1300 MW turbines, and a new generation of steam generators.

24. In addition, France, in collaboration with Germany, was continuing the study of the EPR reactor (European pressurized water reactor) which was still more competitive and safe. The detailed preliminary design was now complete and work was now proceeding on the basic design optimization phase.

25. In the general policy statement he had made on 19 June 1997 to the National Assembly, the Prime Minister had announced that the Superphénix fast reactor would be abandoned. That decision was motivated not by safety considerations but by the cost of the reactor which was regarded as excessive. In-depth studies had been started at all levels to determine the decommissioning procedures. The Government had made clear that neither that decision nor the abandonment of the Le Carnet site affected France's long-term commitment to nuclear energy, which was essential for its energy self-sufficiency and for limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

26. With regard to the nuclear fuel cycle, the MELOX MOX fuel fabrication plant would reach its rated capacity of 120 tonnes per year in 1997. Twelve pressurized water reactors were currently using MOX fuel and four others had already been authorized to use it. In all, 28 reactors would be able to use that fuel.

27. In the field of reprocessing, the La Hague plant had exceeded its rated capacity of over 1600 tonnes per year in 1996. In all, since 1976, close on 11 000 tonnes of irradiated fuel from light-water reactors had been reprocessed at La Hague.

28. In 1996, research on the management of high-level long-lived waste had progressed. The National Agency for Radioactive Waste (ANDRA) had filed three requests for authorization to install and operate underground laboratories (two in clay and one in granite). During the first half of 1997 the local authorities concerned had examined those applications, and public enquiries had also been held. The Directorate for the Safety of Nuclear Installations (DSIN) would then issue its own assessment and it would be for the Government to decide which underground laboratories it was prepared to authorize. At the same time, intensive research was proceeding in two other directions - long-term surface storage, on the one hand, and separation and transmutation of long-lived wastes, on the other.

29. In conclusion, he paid tribute to the Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, who, during his successive terms of office, had strengthened the role and prestige of the Agency which, through him, had gained the trust of the international community as the competent authority for verifying compliance with safeguards agreements. At the same time, under his stewardship the IAEA had taken on an essential role in promoting the use of nuclear techniques for peaceful purposes. It had been no easy task to find a successor to such an outstanding Director General and he therefore welcomed the appointment of Mr. ElBaradei to that post. The qualities the latter had displayed since joining the Agency in 1984 would ensure that the tradition of efficiency and competence established by his predecessor would be maintained.

30. Mr. FERNANDEZ-CUESTA LUCA DE TENA (Spain) said he would not attempt to recount the Agency's achievements since its establishment in 1957 as they spoke for themselves, but simply noted that in recent years the organization, after several decades of growth in all its areas of activity, had, with the help of Member States, reached a stage of maturity and consolidation characterized by a growing trend towards continuous internal evaluation that had seen considerations such as usefulness, quality, effectiveness and the sound management of available resources come to replace quantitative or purely technological aspects. That trend reflected the Agency's adaptation to a changing environment characterized by highly restrictive budgetary policies in Member States, by a profound change in the medium-term prospects for nuclear energy, and by the widespread dissemination of nuclear technology and its applications.

31. His delegation wished first of all to express its gratitude to the Director General for his leadership of the Agency since 1981, in particular during recent years when, despite many difficulties, he had managed the vital adaptation process with skill and dynamism, such that the Agency was now a prestigious organization equipped to meet the real needs of its Member States and the international community.

32. Looking to the future, his delegation was sure that the election as Director General of Mr. ElBaradei, whose personal and professional qualities were well known, was a guarantee of success for the Agency. Both the present and the future Director General could count on Spain's full support in achieving the Agency's statutory objectives, which were still as valid as when they had been set 40 years previously.

33. The Spanish delegation, which fully supported the statement made by Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, would confine itself to commenting on aspects of the Agency's

activities of particular interest to Spain, and to presenting the most important developments which had taken place in the Spanish nuclear industry since the previous General Conference.

34. Nuclear electricity production in 1996 had amounted to 56 323 GWh - an increase of 1.6% over 1995. That record figure represented around 35% of national electricity production. The average load factor had remained high at 86% thanks to the high quality levels in nuclear power plants and the constant attention devoted to safety and operator training. Moreover, constant investments were being made to maintain production equipment in the best possible condition and, in certain cases, to improve its performance. Thus, programmes begun in 1995 to replace generators and turbines had now been completed, optimizing the output of a number of power plants.

35. With regard to low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste, the El Cabril storage facility was equipped to handle all stages of its management, and was estimated to have sufficient capacity to cope with all Spain's needs until around 2013.

36. Regarding the storage of spent fuel, the work to replace storage racks with a view to increasing pool capacity in nuclear power plants was continuing, and should be completed in the coming months. Additional dry storage of fuel in metal containers was planned while pools were full to capacity.

37. Another activity receiving special attention in Spain was the dismantling of facilities. In the next few months it was hoped to begin dismantling unit 1 of the Vandellós nuclear power plant, once the plan for dismantling and closure had been approved by the Ministry of Industry and Energy. The plan provided for an initial dismantling phase lasting five years which would release over 80% of the site. That would be followed by a waiting period of 25 to 30 years, after which complete dismantling would be undertaken. Once that was completed, the site would be able to be used without restriction.

38. Finally, he wished to highlight the significant research effort being undertaken by Spain in order to provide sufficient support for its operational nuclear reactors, and to keep abreast with the latest developments in regard to both facility design and radioactive waste. Spain was resolved to continue strengthening those activities, as demonstrated by the signing the previous week of a framework agreement between the Nuclear Safety Council and the electricity industry, under which they would collaborate on research projects relating to nuclear safety and radiation protection which were of common interest.

39. Turning to the Agency's activities, he said his delegation welcomed the successful outcome of the negotiations on reforming the safeguards system. The Board's adoption in May 1997 of the Model Protocol intended to increase the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the system was a fundamental stage in the process of adapting the Agency to the changing environment he had mentioned. The adoption and speedy application of their respective protocols on a universal basis by Member States, together with full implementation of the Part 1 measures of Programme 93+2, should dispel any doubts as to the effectiveness and credibility of the safeguards system.

40. A further noteworthy aspect of the Agency's work was its support for Member States' efforts to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radioactive sources. In particular, his delegation attached great importance to the operationalization of the illicit trafficking database. The regular publication of information on recorded incidents was very useful, providing a means of assessing the actual scale and development of the problem and serving as a basis for preventive action without unduly alarming the public.

41. In the area of nuclear safety, as it had indicated during the meetings prior to the General Conference, the Spanish delegation was paying close attention to the Agency's progress in adopting rules of procedure for the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Following the meeting of representatives of the Contracting Parties in April that year, he was convinced that countries were well aware of their commitments regarding the submission of national reports in September 1998 and comments on those reports in 1999. Likewise, he felt sure that the countries with a high level of development in that field but which had not yet ratified the Convention would be able to do so before the first review meeting in 1999.

42. With respect to measures to strengthen international co-operation on nuclear safety, radiation protection and waste management, Spain welcomed the recent adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, in the preparation of which it had played an active role. As had been the case with the Convention on Nuclear Safety, Spain intended to sign that new international legal instrument as soon as possible.

43. Spain also supported the measures taken to establish demonstration centres for waste management prior to disposal, and encouraged the Secretariat to continue those international initiatives.

44. As Spain had always believed in the need to pool experience in the regulatory sphere as a means of promoting safety culture worldwide, it had participated actively in the setting up of the International Nuclear Regulatory Association and the Forum of Ibero-American Regulatory Bodies.

45. Spain would continue to collaborate on Agency programmes aimed at increasing nuclear safety in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. It attached special importance to the efforts being made to reorganize those countries' regulatory bodies and train their staff, and was contributing to them.

46. In radiation protection, and more specifically the health impact of exposures to low radiation doses, he wished to draw attention to the international conference to be held in Seville from 17 to 21 November that year under the joint auspices of the Agency and the World Health Organization. The large number of enrolments and of technical papers already submitted showed the level of interest in the conference among the international community. The Spanish delegation was convinced that the conference's conclusions would be instrumental in optimizing radiation protection for radiation workers and the general public.

47. Spain had supported and welcomed the establishment of the Advisory Commission for Safety Standards (ACSS) and had participated actively in its meetings and those of the Radiation Safety Standards Advisory Committee (RASSAC) and the Waste Safety Standards Advisory Committee (WASSAC). It was highly important that those bodies be strengthened as soon as possible and fulfil the tasks entrusted to them. Spain welcomed the consensus achieved by the experts on the transport of radioactive material and the amendments made to the new transport regulations.

48. Spain attached great importance to the Agency's OSART, ASSET and RAPAT services. It had asked for an OSART mission to be carried out at the Ascó nuclear power plant in 1998. It supported and was collaborating on the Agency's policy of establishing a worldwide safety culture, to which the International Nuclear Event Scale and the Incident Reporting System were making a positive contribution.

49. Lastly, with regard to technical assistance, Spain was pleased to note that the new strategies adopted in recent years based on innovative ideas such as Model Projects and Country Programme Frameworks had proved successful and were being reflected in a redirection of activities towards the transfer of technologies conducive to solving specific economic and social problems in developing countries.

50. That redirection was consistent with the current scarcity of financial resources, a situation that seemed likely to persist, given the large number of Member States facing budgetary restrictions which made it difficult to pay the voluntary contributions on which the funding of technical assistance depended. Spain was satisfied with the change of strategy, believing that efforts should be concentrated on using available resources as efficiently as possible rather than on seeking indefinite increases, quite apart from the fact that the Agency's Regular Budget was subject to a *de facto* freeze.

51. For its part, Spain had made great efforts in recent years gradually to increase its voluntary contribution to the TCF to around US $350 000, a level that it would try to maintain in future.

52. In addition to its contribution to the TCF, Spain contributed in a variety of ways to the Agency's technical assistance activities, for example by providing fellowships, hosting training courses, and in particular by funding certain technical assistance projects. Those voluntary contributions had also suffered from the restrictions he had mentioned. Nevertheless, the Spanish Government had responded to the request for financial support for the AFRA regional programme, and he was pleased to inform the Conference that Spain would be making a contribution of around $150 000 to that programme.

53. In conclusion, he said that his Government would continue to do everything within its power to maintain and expand collaboration between Spain and the Agency.

Mr. Lopez Rodas (Guatemala) took the Chair.

54. Mr. AL-NOWAISER (Saudi Arabia) welcomed Malta and Burkina Faso as members of the Agency, congratulated the new Director General, and paid tribute to his predecessor. It was natural that the developing countries should attach as much importance to technical co-operation as the developed countries did to issues relating to nuclear safety, safeguards and illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. Although nuclear energy applications in areas such as health, quality control, etc., were no longer the sole prerogative of the industrial countries, the contribution of the most advanced countries and the role of the Agency in technical co-operation should not be underestimated.

55. Mr. Blix had spoken of nuclear energy as a possible option for dealing with the dangers facing humanity and the environment due to pollution from the use of traditional fossil fuels such as oil, gas and coal. The Saudi Arabian delegation would dispute that analysis on the grounds that it was inappropriate to compare nuclear energy to other sources which were safer by far, and that in any case it was stated in the Annual Report for 1996 at the beginning of the chapter on the comparative assessment of nuclear power and other energy sources - a subject that was still being studied under an IAEA/UNEP/UNIDO/WHO project - that "All fuel chains for electricity generation involve some health risks and lead to certain environmental impacts". In that connection, it was sufficient to recall the Chernobyl accident.

56. Turning to technical co-operation, he welcomed the Agency's initiatives, including Model Projects and Country Programme Frameworks (CPF), that aimed to strengthen the technical and scientific capacity of developing countries. In that connection, a technical meeting on the Agency's energy planning programme had been held in May 1997 in Riyad. It should however be noted that the implementation rate for technical co-operation projects had been approximately 75% and that only 39 countries had paid their contributions to the TCF in full. His country therefore believed that the TCF should be financed from the Regular Budget.

57. Saudi Arabia highly appreciated the Agency's efforts to develop nuclear safety standards and legally binding international agreements on liability for nuclear damage. It had participated in the discussions of the working groups and standing committees which had elaborated the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. It had also supported the Agency's programme on the strengthening of the safeguards system, as it was convinced that such a mechanism would ensure that countries respected their commitments. It had no objection to the measures to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the system, despite the extra work and additional commitments involved for the Agency and for Member States. However, it would be difficult to understand the need or justification for strengthened safeguards if those safeguards were not applied to all countries with advanced nuclear programmes. His country would like to see a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and hoped that the General Conference would urge Israel to accede to the NPT and to place all its military facilities under Agency safeguards. His country would support any such initiative.

58. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, his delegation opposed any linkage of the expansion of the Board of Governors to the composition of regional groups. It also opposed the list of States by areas contained in Attachment 3 to Appendix I.A of document GC(41)/11, as that issue should first be the subject of consensus on the part of the regions concerned. The African proposal could be a reasonable starting point if it were modified as suggested by the Resident Representative of Saudi Arabia in his letter to the Agency of 29 July 1997.

59. Mr. OMER (Sudan) welcomed Malta and Burkina Faso as members of the Agency, congratulated the new Director General and paid tribute to his predecessor. The Agency should establish a balance between its technical assistance programmes and its safeguards programmes. He recalled that in resolution GC(XXV)/RES/388, adopted in 1981, the General Conference had requested that the necessary measures be taken for technical assistance to be funded from the Agency's Regular Budget or through other comparably predictable and assured resources. Thus, either all countries should be requested to make their voluntary contributions on time, or technical assistance should be partially or fully financed from the Regular Budget.

60. The situation in Africa required special treatment with regard to technical assistance programmes. Accordingly, greater attention should be given to the financing of AFRA projects relating to the applications of nuclear technology and training. He thanked the donor countries which had provided financial support for those projects and urged other countries, including the African countries, to do the same. He also requested the Agency to give more attention to the training of African personnel. Technical assistance to the developing countries was all the more important as rapid economic globalization and the easing of restrictions on international trade were taking place in the absence of any guarantee of fair competition.

61. Sudan welcomed the Additional Protocol to comprehensive safeguards agreements intended to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system, and also the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage.

62. The African continent had concluded a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone. However, the security of the continent would be strengthened if the Middle East region was also denuclearized and if all nuclear facilities and activities in that region were placed under Agency safeguards. To that end, the international community should work resolutely to induce Israel to accede to the NPT and submit its nuclear facilities to Agency safeguards. That was all the more necessary as the radioactive leaks coming from the Israeli Dimona reactor - an incident which, according to some Israeli media, had taken place the previous year - were an ill omen for the region. Similarly, he welcomed the fact that the African countries were continuing to work to resolve local conflicts by expanding participation in the political and economic process. Sudan, for example, was endeavouring to establish peace on its territory by means of a negotiated settlement acceptable for all parties. Ample proof of that

lay in the signing of the Khartoum peace agreement by the Sudanese Government and the majority of the rebel factions.

63. With regard to amendment of Article VI of the Statute, he recalled the relevant provision of resolution GC(XXV)/RES/389 and said that his delegation of course supported the African proposal presented by Sudan, particularly as, in its report to the General Conference, the Board of Governors had noted that it would be possible to reconcile the African and Canadian proposals on the expansion of the Board. The African proposal was supported by the Africa Group and the Middle East and South Asia Group, and had been welcomed by the Group of 77, China, and other countries. He therefore called on Member States to support that proposal, particularly as it differed from the Canadian proposal only in that it provided for an additional seat to be granted to the Africa Group.

64. With regard to the composition of the Agency's staff, he maintained that the representation of women and the recruitment of nationals from developing countries were insufficient and called on the Agency to make further efforts to obtain a fair balance in that area.

65. Sudan fully appreciated the technical assistance provided to it by the Agency over the past years, particularly in the areas of medicine, radiotherapy, food, agriculture, zootechnics, and animal reproduction, as well as in the location and evaluation of groundwater resources, radiation protection, environmental monitoring, maintenance and staff training.

66. Mr. TOSHEVSKI (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) thanked Mr. Blix for the services he had rendered to the Agency over the previous 16 years, congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his election to the post of Director General and welcomed the new members of the Agency. At a time when the Agency was celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of its Statute, its members could be proud of all it had achieved and the reputation it had earned.

67. The activities carried out by the Agency in collaboration with the Member States and other international organizations had contributed to the attainment of its main objective, namely to promote the utilization of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes while providing safeguards against the harmful effects of nuclear activities. His country fully supported the activities designed to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system, to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources, and to make nuclear safety truly international.

68. His delegation attached great importance to the measures for strengthening international co-operation in nuclear safety, radiation protection and waste management. It supported Agency activities aimed at resolving international waste management issues. The improvement of regional co-operation with a view to a more integrated approach to problems of mutual interest was particularly important in that regard.

69. His Government appreciated the very valuable technical assistance provided to it in recent years in the application of nuclear techniques in nuclear medicine, animal production,

radiation protection and non-destructive testing. That support, tailored for end-users, was of crucial importance to his country.

70. The top priority for his country was co-operation to strengthen the radiation protection infrastructure. As a country in transition it also needed to adopt a new approach to energy planning and looked forward to co-operation with the Agency in those fields.

71. His country would welcome any training programme organized by the Agency on its territory in areas for which it possessed appropriate facilities and the requisite know-how.

72. In conclusion, his delegation reaffirmed its support for the Agency's programmes and activities which had been effective in promoting the application of nuclear science and technology for global security and development.

73. Mr. HÖGBERG (Sweden), having welcomed Malta and Burkina Faso as members of the Agency, delivered the following message from the Swedish Prime Minister, Mr. Göran Person, on behalf of the Government on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Agency and the forthcoming retirement of the Director General, Mr. Hans Blix.

> "The International Atomic Energy Agency can this year look back at four decades in the service of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The IAEA is entrusted with the important task to verify that basic obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are complied with to prevent diversion of nuclear technology from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons. It is also incumbent upon the Agency to promote globally the application of the highest standards of safety in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, both through its safety programme and through part of its technical co-operation programme. In celebrating its fortieth anniversary, the IAEA can, indeed, be proud of the achievements. The efficient and dedicated work by the Agency has also laid the foundation for further achievements in the decades to come. Sweden joins all other Member States in their heartfelt congratulations to the Agency.
>
> "Sweden is greatly honoured by the fact that two Swedes have served as Director General during altogether 36 of the 40 years of the Agency's existence. We thank all the Member States for the confidence which has been placed in Dr. Eklund and Dr. Blix over the years. For Sweden, it has been a unique epoch. We are glad and proud that Swedish nationals have been able to make this contribution to the IAEA and to the United Nations.
>
> "As Dr. Hans Blix will soon retire from the post as Director General, the Swedish Government seizes this occasion to extend to him our deep-felt appreciation and gratitude for the excellent work he has carried out during his 16 years as head of the Agency. Dr. Blix and the rest of the staff of the Agency have, with the solid support of the Member States, created an organization which has, indeed, fulfilled its tasks well and stands ready to take on new challenges in the coming century. We salute a distinguished international civil servant and a fellow countryman on his retirement from

active service. In doing so, we wish at the same time, Hans Blix and his family the very best for the years to come.

"The Swedish Government also avails itself of this opportunity to warmly welcome the appointment of Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei as the next Director General of the IAEA. We look forward to co-operating with him in meeting the important challenges facing the IAEA in the years to come."

74. Associating himself with the statement made by Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, he said that the NPT was the cornerstone of efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Under that Treaty, the States Party had also undertaken to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament. Sweden urged those States which had not yet done so to accede to the NPT and to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency.

75. The CTBT had been signed by more than 145 States which testified to the strong will to put an end to all nuclear weapons testing and other nuclear explosions. It was of the utmost importance that all States ratify that Treaty as soon as possible, particularly the 44 States whose ratification was required for its entry into force. It was deeply regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament had not yet commenced negotiations on a cut-off treaty. Sweden sincerely hoped that it would be able to do so in 1998.

76. While welcoming the positive developments in recent years in nuclear disarmament, Sweden urged the nuclear-weapon States to pursue with determination systematic and progressive efforts to further reduce their nuclear arsenals, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons.

77. It was imperative that all States comply fully with their safeguards obligations. The fact that the Agency had still not been able to verify the correctness and completeness of the DPRK's initial declaration remained a source of deep concern. Sweden reiterated its call for full co-operation by the DPRK with the Agency.

78. The Agency had been entrusted with the important task of monitoring and verifying Iraq's compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions in the nuclear field. Sweden commended the Agency for the work it had done in close co-operation with UNSCOM. It urged Iraq to co-operate fully with the Agency's Action Team to ensure complete implementation of the resolutions in question.

79. On 15 May that year, the Board of Governors had approved the Model Protocol elaborated under Programme 93+2, which constituted an important milestone in the process of strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the Agency's safeguards system. However, it also marked the starting point of the following phase, which was particularly important, namely the early conclusion of additional protocols on the basis of the Model Protocol and their implementation. Sweden urged all States having safeguards agreements with the Agency to conclude additional protocols without delay and to ensure that

all the measures foreseen under those protocols were fully implemented. Only then would it be really possible to say that the goal of strengthening safeguards had been attained.

80. Sweden welcomed the fact that the Convention on Nuclear Safety had entered into force and that the preparatory meeting organized under the Convention had laid the foundations for an efficient review process. It also welcomed the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and had signed that Convention on the first day it had been opened for signature. It urged all Member States, especially those with nuclear power plants in operation, to accede to both Conventions as soon as possible to make them truly comprehensive. Moreover, Sweden believed that the Agency had a very important role to play in promoting nuclear safety through its various programmes and initiatives in that area. Thus, the Agency would be able to exert an indirect, but important, influence on the review process foreseen under both safety-related conventions.

81. Before taking any decision regarding the development of the nuclear fuel cycle or the use of radioisotopes for medical, industrial or other purposes, Member States should consider the broad safety and environmental aspects involved. The two aforementioned conventions were good examples of how Member States endeavoured to reach international agreement on those aspects. It was important that the Agency itself take them into account in its own activities, particularly within its technical co-operation programme. Also, Sweden would like the Agency to take a comprehensive look at uranium resources and the environment under the auspices of the existing Joint IAEA/NEA Uranium Group and develop an integrated programme covering environmental impacts, emissions into air and water, the working environment, radiation safety, decommissioning and restoration of sites, in line with its commitment to contribute to global sustainable development.

82. He was pleased to announce that Sweden had just pledged its full share of the TCF target for 1998. Sweden supported and appreciated the Agency's efforts to co-ordinate its activities with bilateral co-operation in such areas of mutual interest as nuclear safety, radiation protection and national systems for accounting and control of nuclear materials.

83. In conclusion, he congratulated the staff of the Agency and the Director General on their performance.

84. Ms. OK (Turkey), after welcoming the admission of Malta and Burkina Faso to the Agency, paid tribute to Mr. Blix who was leaving the Agency after having realized a long-term dream: the strengthening of safeguards and the improvement of nuclear safety. The measures that had been adopted to strengthen the safety of nuclear installations and of the management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, and in particular the safety of the transboundary movement of radioactive waste, were of particular importance to her country.

85. Her delegation also congratulated the new Director General whose vast experience in safeguards, external relations and, above all, in human relations would undoubtedly help him to continue successfully the work begun by Mr. Blix, in particular for the benefit of the developing countries.

86. She welcomed the establishment in Vienna of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and hoped that the countries that had objections to the principle of step-by-step disarmament would see their way to join in the implementation of the CTBT. Her country intended to play a significant part in the verification regime established by the Treaty. Situated on a critical seismological site, it possessed seismic research and control facilities which it would make available to the CTBTO. Her delegation hoped that there would be close co-operation between the Agency and the CTBTO Secretariat.

87. Turkey was surrounded on its eastern and western borders by WWER-type reactors and was faced with the possibility of the transboundary movement of radioactive waste and spent fuel through its internal and territorial waters. Her delegation considered that the countries operating those reactors should be responsible for their safety and for the safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel generated by them. It therefore hoped that the two conventions that had just been adopted would come into force without delay and would constitute a framework within which those countries would assume responsibility for their nuclear activities. Her delegation considered, however, that a start should be made on the preparation of a separate binding instrument on the safe transport of radioactive materials.

88. Programme 93+2 had been completed in a spirit of co-operation. The United States and other nuclear-weapon States had entered into voluntary commitments that would help promote the universalization of the strengthened safeguards system. She hoped, in that connection, that, in spite of the problems facing them, the countries of Asia and the Middle East which had concluded INFCIRC/66-type agreements would shortly join the full safeguards system.

89. During the past year, the Agency had been actively assessing and improving the situation of reactors with low safety standards, particularly in Eastern and Central Europe and in the Newly Independent States. Her Government was following very closely the Agency's work on assessing the safety of RBMK and WWER-type reactors in those regions. She was pleased to note that follow-up missions and seismic review missions had been arranged in all WWER-440/230 plants. Article 6 of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which had already entered into force, provided that, if the safety of an installation could not be upgraded, plans should be made to shut it down as soon as possible. The Secretariat, in co-operation with Member States, in particular those operating old power plants, should therefore continue to ensure that the activities undertaken by the Agency to strengthen the safety of such plants were as transparent as possible. It should submit periodic reports on that subject to the Review Meetings of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and formulate recommendations as to whether plants should or should not continue in service. Furthermore, it should provide any information it possessed on accident risks to the Member States concerned.

90. In that connection, the authorities of her country were co-operating with those of Armenia to prepare emergency plans, develop early warning systems, train staff and exchange views and equipment, as necessary. The purpose of such co-operation was to help upgrade the safety of the old WWER-type reactor at Medzamor which had been shut down in 1988

and restarted five years later, and to take the necessary measures for the protection of people living in both countries.

91. The services provided to Member States by the Agency's Engineering Safety Section had been particularly useful in clarifying questions concerning the seismic safety of WWER-type power plants, several of which were located in neighbouring countries. Such matters were regarded as very important in that region where seismic events were frequent and where the public was keenly aware of the problem. Furthermore, Turkey welcomed the considerable effort being made to revise the NUSS standards and guides, in particular those concerning the siting and design of nuclear power plants, and it intended to make substantial use of those documents in the licensing process for the power plant due to be built at Akkuyu.

92. During the previous century, energy had brought vast social and economic benefits. Driven by the rapidly industrializing countries, global energy demand would certainly increase in the coming decades, particularly in the electricity sector where it was expected to double in 25 years. Her country was itself in an energy-intensive phase of development and expected sharp growth in the electricity sector. Annual per caput consumption was currently 1500 kWh, i.e. half that in Eastern Europe and a quarter that in Western Europe.

93. During the past ten years, electricity generation capacity had increased by an average of 9% per year and reached 21 000 MW at the end of 1995, a ten-fold increase as compared with 1970. A further four-fold increase would be required to meet expected demand in 2020. Turkey planned to award contracts during the current year for the construction of nuclear units with a total capacity of 3000 MW, the entry into service of the first unit being scheduled for 2005. Nuclear and hydroelectric energy would provide 11% and 23% respectively of the increase in capacity over the coming 20 years. The need to conserve energy and improve the efficiency of the transmission and distribution system would also play a role. Her country was actively promoting the use of solar energy, particularly for residential purposes.

94. Turkey reaffirmed its belief that illicit trafficking in nuclear materials was a transboundary problem which could not be resolved at the national level. The identification of the international dimensions of the problem and their solution would become possible only through the conclusion of a binding international instrument which would commit the parties to ensure the control and security of radioactive sources and to report any loss or theft of such sources to the Agency. Her delegation therefore urged the Secretariat to initiate the drafting of such an instrument.

95. She supported the idea of reviewing the Agency's recommendations concerning the physical protection of nuclear material (INFCIRC/225/Rev.3), as proposed in document GOV/INF/818. She also favoured more flexible use of the Regular Budget and the technical co-operation programme to support effective measures. The Agency had now realized that it would have to enter into a long-term commitment for activities previously covered by extrabudgetary funding.

96. Her delegation was satisfied with the implementation of resolution GC(40)/RES/12, relating to the establishment of predisposal waste demonstration centres. Two training

courses had already been held in Istanbul and she hoped that a resolution would be adopted to encourage the establishment of new centres in other regions.

97. Her country had very close political, social, economic and historical links with the Middle East and was concerned that the Director General had made little progress in his quest for ways of establishing an effective verification system, particularly through full-scope safeguards, in a future nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and she urged him to pursue consultations and use opportunities as they arose during the coming year.

98. She commended the Department of Technical Co-operation on its efforts to strengthen collaboration with other international organizations, and also paid tribute to the Secretariat for its co-operation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, UNEP, WMO, UNDP and the World Bank in a project designed to improve regional capacity to evaluate pollution of the Black Sea. That project, which provided for the establishment of six laboratories, would serve as a model for other regions of the world, in particular the Caspian Sea region.

99. Her delegation welcomed the Secretariat's activities to strengthen technical co-operation between the Agency and Member States. It particularly thanked the Department of Research and Isotopes and the Department of Technical Co-operation for the assistance they had provided under the project entitled "Technical support for an electron beam facility". The technical and economic advantages which countries, particularly the developing countries, derived from the use of ionizing radiation for industrial and environmental purposes were considerable. More than 40 developing Member States, including her own country, had acquired industrial radiation sterilization facilities with the help of the Agency.

100. The Turkish Atomic Energy Authority had been hosting more and more co-ordinated research meetings and regional and interregional courses, and a regional workshop of IAEA Member States in Europe on the technical co-operation programme would be held in Istanbul from 15 to 17 October 1997. The Turkish authorities were prepared to allocate additional resources to host other such Agency activities.

101. The use of nuclear technology to improve the management and assessment of water resources in the Member States continued to be a significant activity in the Agency. In that context, her delegation considered that the wider use of isotope hydrology techniques, particularly in arid regions, should be a priority of the Agency, and it welcomed the initiatives taken by the Agency to improve the integration of such techniques in the activities of Member States. It was vital for the Agency's isotope hydrology subprogramme to produce concrete results at the national, regional and global levels. Her delegation urged the Agency to continue the activities it was conducting to incorporate isotope hydrology into university curricula, to establish regional isotope hydrology laboratories for assuring quality of analyses and to develop co-operation with other relevant international organizations.

102. While further research and development in isotope hydrology might be desirable, her delegation considered that the Regular Budget should also fund practical applications in addition to national and regional projects implemented within the framework of technical

co-operation programmes. In that context, her country would be interested in co-operating with the Agency in making its expertise and infrastructures available with a view to incorporating isotope hydrology more fully into regional activities in arid zones, such as those in West Asia, the Middle East and the Balkans. The Secretariat should initiate regional projects which would enable the experience gained in one region to be applied easily in others with similar climatic and geological features.

103. A resolution had been adopted at the fortieth session designed to improve the representation of women in the Secretariat and to correct the gender imbalance at the Professional and higher levels. Her delegation thanked the Secretariat for the detailed information it had provided on that matter in document GC(41)/19 and for the efforts it had made to improve the situation in 1996. The results had, however, been disappointing: the proportion of women in that category had risen from 18% to 18.6% between 1 August 1996 and 1 August 1997 and, although it had reached 62.8% in the General Service category, it had remained very low in scientific and technical areas (10.6%).

104. She appreciated that it was difficult to recruit women nuclear engineers and safeguards inspectors, but she considered that other Professional posts in the Department of Research and Isotopes, the Department of Technical Co-operation, or the Department of Administration should be easier to fill. She therefore urged the Secretariat to continue its efforts to achieve a more equitable representation of women in the Secretariat.

Mr. Niewodniczański (Poland) resumed the Chair.

105. Mr. LOPEZ RODAS (Guatemala) expressed the deep gratitude of his country, which throughout 36 years of civil war had known it could count on the friendship and support of the peoples and governments represented at the Agency. After the signing of lasting peace agreements by the Guatemalan Government and the National Revolutionary Union in December 1996 with support from the international community, Guatemala had again found dignity and hope and could once more take its place among the nations of the world. In a climate of peace and reconciliation it was now preparing, confidently and with pride in its own special characteristics, to take on the challenges of the third millennium.

106. Guatemala had long considered the applications of nuclear energy to be a vital aid to its development and the well-being of its population. Fourteen years previously, in expanding its ongoing programme, the General Directorate for Nuclear Energy (DGEN) had stepped up the use of nuclear techniques. From that time on, the authorities had taken steps to provide for the radiation protection of the population, the environment and occupationally exposed personnel. A legal framework for radiation protection was in force to ensure that those objectives were met. A law on nuclear energy and licensing regulations had been promulgated, and regulations on radioactive waste, radiation protection and the transport of radioactive material would soon come into force. The Centre for Radioactive Waste Storage and Management, due to come into operation in 1998, would collect all spent radioactive material which had already been located and recorded. The Centre would be commissioned shortly with assistance from the Agency and from expert missions. In addition, a licensing procedure had been initiated for radiodiagnostic facilities in public hospitals and health centres,

which constituted one of the main sources of population exposure, the aim being to protect the large number of people using such services.

107. Guatemala was demonstrating its commitment to the development of nuclear techniques by making its infrastructure available to the Agency for regional courses and by accepting fellows, who came to acquire and exchange scientific and technical knowledge, thus contributing to Latin America's development. Such co-operation also enabled Guatemala to raise its standards and to benefit from the technical assistance, equipment and advice provided by the Agency's Departments and by various friendly countries.

108. Guatemala was a participant in the ARCAL Programme, under which it had hosted regional meetings. It favoured the continuation of that programme, whose socio-economic advantages would be felt by all the countries of Latin America.

109. With regard to health, the progress made in medical imaging and in endocrinology based on the use of radioimmunoassay had led to the introduction of scintigraphy studies, enabling Guatemalan doctors to make accurate diagnoses and thus treat their patients more effectively. In particular, those techniques had facilitated the early diagnosis and treatment of congenital hypothyroidism, a very common complaint in Guatemala. In July 1997, 32 588 such examinations had been carried out on Guatemalan children.

110. In the agricultural sector, the DGEN had developed improved plant varieties using biotechnology and radiation-induced mutation. The DGEN was also helping industry through its nuclear analytical, non-destructive assay and gamma spectrometry laboratories. Radiological monitoring of the national territory was being conducted by means of gamma spectrometry, which was also being used to check that imported and exported foodstuffs were not radioactively contaminated. With regard to environmental protection, radioactive tracer techniques had been employed to monitor contamination and eutrophication of various water bodies in the country. All the information now available on Guatemala's lakes had been obtained through a study of the main water courses and lakes, as well as of the waste which had led to their contamination. Lastly, pest control activities carried out in co-operation with the United States Department of Agriculture had brought success with the suppression of the Mediterranean fruit fly under the MOSCAMED programme.

111. The Agency had contributed substantially to the development of nuclear applications in Guatemala which now urged that a balance be maintained in the distribution of the Agency's resources so that the maximum possible number of requests for assistance could be met. Guatemala was resolved to accede to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Guatemala pledged itself to support technical assistance projects and to pay a voluntary contribution to the TCF for 1998.

112. He paid tribute to the Director General and his staff for all the work accomplished over the year. He congratulated Mr. ElBaradei and wished him every success in his difficult job as

new Director General of the Agency. Finally, he urged everyone to work with energy, creativity and dedication for the common good and world peace.

113. He presented Mr. Blix with a commemorative plaque in gratitude for all the assistance and support the Agency had given to his country.

114. Mr. STUB (Norway), having welcomed Burkina Faso and Malta to the Agency, paid tribute to Mr. Blix for his remarkable leadership of the Agency over more than 15 years. The professionalism with which he had performed his duties was the key to the many positive results achieved during that period. Norway now looked forward to co-operating in the future with his successor, Mr. ElBaradei.

115. Pointing to the Agency's successful record over its 40-year existence, he noted that the most recent example of the Agency's effectiveness had been the adoption the previous month of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Norway had signed the Convention and intended to ratify it in the near future. It welcomed the broad scope of that instrument which also covered on a voluntary basis reprocessing and military spent fuel and waste. His delegation commended France, Japan and the United Kingdom for having already declared their intention to report on their reprocessing activities in accordance with the provisions of the new Convention.

116. The revision of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the adoption of the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage were also important developments. Norway welcomed the expanded definition of nuclear damage and the increase in liability levels, although it still considered those to be inadequate. The supplementary funding system would be based on the principle of solidarity with all victims of civil nuclear accidents. Norway believed that the strengthening of the channelling principle, under which claims had to be addressed to the operator of a nuclear facility, would encourage participation in international nuclear safety projects and facilitate the development of a safety culture.

117. Norway attached great importance to the establishment of coherent and up-to-date legislative and regulatory frameworks for nuclear activities and was actively supporting, through the International Group of Legal Experts, the development of new nuclear legislation in several countries whose economies were in transition.

118. The new conventions which had been adopted and those which had already entered into force should serve as an added stimulus to international co-operation, and in particular to technical co-operation activities targeted at countries whose economies were in transition and developing countries. Norway strongly supported the technical co-operation programme and had already pledged its contribution to the 1998 target in full.

119. Norway attached great importance to the Agency's efforts to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation by enhancing the effectiveness of its comprehensive safeguards system. It welcomed the Board's approval of the Model Additional Protocol arising from

Programme 93+2. Norway intended to conclude an Additional Protocol to its 1972 safeguards agreement and would shortly be contacting the Secretariat for that purpose.

120. Norway urged the widest possible accession by States to the four new binding international legal instruments that had been developed under the auspices of the Agency. It also strongly supported the efforts to encourage the largest possible number of countries to accede to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty adopted the previous year. It regarded the permanent banning of all nuclear test explosions as vitally important, and was disappointed that a few countries continued to defy world opinion by preventing the Treaty's entry into force.

121. Illicit trafficking of nuclear material was also a matter of international concern. Norway was actively involved in various projects to strengthen systems for prevention and detection. It appreciated the initiatives taken by the Agency in that regard, and recommended that its efforts be further intensified, including assisting various countries to establish national legal frameworks and transparent mechanisms that would enable them to combat such trafficking more effectively.

122. Norway welcomed the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. In 1992, the Norwegian Government had initiated an assistance programme to enhance safety and reduce the risk of any accidental radioactive releases from the Kola nuclear power plant until it was shut down. In order to protect human health and the environment, it was essential to shut down as soon as possible all nuclear facilities where satisfactory safety levels could not be achieved.

123. Norway advocated the use of alternative energy sources posing less risk to the environment, and also stressed the fact that improved energy efficiency would reduce the need for further increases in energy production.

124. Norway recognized that a serious nuclear accident could have worldwide repercussions. The 1986 Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident was a good basis for giving the alert, but in its current form it could not provide the necessary communications in a crisis situation. Norway thus urged the Agency to take the lead in establishing a communications system that would enable Member States to obtain the information they needed in order to take decisions and actions on a fully informed basis in the event of a nuclear accident.

125. Although Norway itself produced very little radioactive waste and spent fuel, it attached great importance to their safe management. It therefore welcomed the adoption of the Joint Convention but felt that, in addition to a proper legal and regulatory framework, practical measures were required in order to deal with the problem. Engineering and management skills, political commitment and financial resources were also necessary as were, in many cases, joint international efforts.

126. Accordingly, within the framework of its "Plan of Action for Nuclear Safety Issues", Norway had devoted considerable effort to collaborative ventures, particularly with Russia. In

the areas near the Russian-Norwegian border and the Arctic seas, there were large accumulations of radioactive waste and spent fuel, of both civil and military origin. Norway intended to develop further its co-operation with Russia in order to establish improved infrastructures and management systems, especially for dealing with the problems posed by the decommissioning of a large number of nuclear submarines.

127. An important part of that effort was the Contact Expert Group (CEG) which had been set up under the Agency's auspices to work with Russia in identifying priority projects and exchanging information, and to facilitate technical discussions in general between Russia and its foreign partners. The large quantities of waste and spent fuel from decommissioned submarines in the Russian Federation were a cause of great concern. The CEG was preparing a report for submission to the Agency's Board of Governors. The Norwegian Government was prepared to take new initiatives, if necessary, in order to improve international co-operation on the matter.

128. In 1993, the International Arctic Seas Assessment Project had been launched by the Agency in close co-operation with the Norwegian and Russian Authorities in order to evaluate the future impact of the radioactive waste dumped by the former Soviet Union, and to formulate recommendations on possible remedial action. The evaluation had led to a report which was to be presented at the forthcoming consultative meeting of the 1972 London Convention later that month. The report's findings concurred with the results of the scientific work carried out jointly by Norway and Russia, which were submitted regularly to the consultative meetings of the London Convention. One of the report's conclusions was that, because of their diet, the populations of the Arctic regions were generally exposed to higher levels of radionuclides than the populations of temperate zones. Radioactive contamination in the Arctic arose from long-range transport of radionuclides from three main sources outside the region: releases from reprocessing plants, fallout from Chernobyl and nuclear weapons testing.

129. Although Norway had no nuclear energy programme, like most countries it used ionizing radiation in industry, medicine and research. As recent history showed, no country could remain unaffected by the fallout from nuclear accidents. For that reason, it was vitally important that all applications of nuclear energy be subjected to the highest safety standards and that safety be given absolute priority, as stressed in the Declaration of the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit. In that regard, the Agency's efforts to formulate safety fundamentals and safety standards were of the greatest importance.

130. Mr. KIENER (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, welcomed Malta and Burkina Faso as new members of the Agency, and congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his election to the post of Director General; he also complimented Mr. Blix on the integrity and courage he had shown in defending the ideals of the Agency in the face of all the opposition and criticism to which nuclear energy was subject.

131. Two important diplomatic conferences had been held recently, the first on an instrument for the safety of spent fuel management and the safety of radioactive waste management, which would complement the 1994 Convention on Nuclear Safety and serve as a

global reference in that field. The purpose of the second was to adopt a Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and a Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Those new documents were in line with Swiss policy which had always been in favour of a modern civil nuclear liability regime taking into account both the concerns of populations and existing risks; Switzerland was grateful to all those responsible for the preparation and adoption of those texts, particularly the chairmen of the negotiating groups.

132. In order to tackle the major problems associated with the growth in the world population and its future needs, ways of converting energy would have to be found which were economical, safe and environment-friendly. In that context, the Agency was playing a pivotal role in preparations for the Kyoto Conference; thanks to its efforts, there was reason to hope that the advantages of nuclear energy would not be overlooked at that Conference, where the role of energy would be acknowledged as critical for climate change.

133. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons provided for a balanced commitment by making it obligatory, on the one hand, for States renouncing nuclear weapons to conclude safeguards agreements with the Agency and, on the other, for those with nuclear weapons to undertake without delay negotiations aimed at the elimination of nuclear arsenals and the conclusion of a comprehensive disarmament treaty. In 1995, the NPT Review and Extension Conference had set forth principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as recognizing the principal role of the Agency in that regard. At its first session, in the spring of 1997, the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference to be held in the year 2000 had taken stock of what had been accomplished since 1995; one of the objectives set in 1995 had been the negotiation of a cut-off treaty; it was extremely regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva had still not started negotiations on that subject, that the nuclear arsenals of NPT signatory countries had still not been substantially reduced and that no international control had been introduced although more than 180 countries were party to the NPT, 115 of which had signed safeguards agreements with the Agency. Clearly, the balance hoped for when the NPT had been concluded had not yet been achieved. He feared that the slow progress towards disarmament might provide excuses for those hesitating to commit themselves further down the NPT road; he was also surprised to see certain nuclear powers demanding more and more transparency and safeguards from States which had made considerable efforts in that direction, without offering anything equivalent in return.

134. With the adoption of the draft Model Protocol on the strengthening of safeguards by the Board of Governors, the process aimed at improving the effectiveness of the safeguards control system had reached completion. Switzerland had supported the venture from the outset but, although in the course of the negotiations it had called for all States to undertake commitments on an equitable basis, the prospects for universal application of the Protocol were somewhat vague. Furthermore, the provisions of the Protocol would require greater efforts from the countries with comprehensive safeguards agreements than from the others, particularly those with nuclear weapons. Before adopting that instrument, Switzerland would wait and see how the statements made by the nuclear-weapon States were put into practice

through additional safeguards agreements with the Agency and through amendment of their national legislation. Switzerland had participated actively in the pilot experiment on the remote monitoring system and was ready to start the second phase of that operation. The system would be extended to five Swiss power plants and to the Paul Scherrer Institute.

135. In Switzerland the nuclear energy situation had hardly changed in the past year. The country was still highly dependent on it for its electricity supply. On the political front, nuclear energy was being opposed by every possible legal means although a moratorium on the construction of nuclear power plants was in place until the year 2000. The Swiss Government had held talks on future electricity supply with leading figures in the energy field with a view to establishing a favourable political base for future decision-taking. Nuclear energy had occupied an important place in those discussions and in particular it had been proposed that the views of the Swiss population be sought each time there were plans to build a nuclear power plant.

136. With regard to nuclear waste management, construction of an interim storage centre at Würenlingen was proceeding according to plan. With respect to the plan to store low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste in central Switzerland, the Government was hoping to win the confidence of the local population, which would be consulted on the construction of a pilot gallery. The management of low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste remained much more a political than a technical issue.

137. The Secretariat had recently issued a document on the medium-term perspective showing the trends for the Agency's main activities and assessing the resources required for their implementation. That paper had been extremely useful and Switzerland hoped that the work envisaged would be performed for the benefit of the great majority in a spirit of peace. On the fortieth anniversary of the creation of the Agency, Switzerland reaffirmed its support for the vital role the organization was playing in the promotion of international co-operation.

138. Mr. KASEMSARN (Thailand), having welcomed Burkina Faso and Malta as new members, congratulated the Agency on its fortieth anniversary and on its remarkable success in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Agency had also served as an intermediary for international exchanges in nuclear science and as the principal agent for nuclear technology transfer while at the same time performing its verification role through its safeguards system which was widely accepted as an integral part of the international non-proliferation regime. As a developing country, Thailand had benefited from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for its economic and technological development, and he considered that the Agency, in pursuing its constructive role, would continue to serve international peace and security. He also paid tribute to the Agency's Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, whose remarkable efforts had resulted in reforms and, in particular, had contributed to strengthening of the safeguards system and the technical co-operation programme. He was confident that those activities would be vigorously pursued by the new Director General, Mr. ElBaradei.

139. During the past year, progress had been made in the safeguards field. The Model Protocol adopted by the Board of Governors in May 1997 could be perceived as a major achievement but, in his delegation's view, for the enhanced safeguards system essential for

maintaining international security to be credible, effective and non-discriminatory, and satisfy the international community's desire for tighter non-proliferation control, it would need to be implemented in its entirety by all Member States. Mindful that those new measures required proper preparations, his Government was now in the process of concluding an Additional Protocol.

140. It was encouraging to note the outcome of the recent diplomatic conferences on the management of nuclear waste and spent fuel and on liability for nuclear damage. The Conventions and the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention that had been adopted should contribute to protection of the environment and thus a safer world. Those instruments should not negatively affect the least developed countries or States with no nuclear installations, and he took the opportunity to thank the Secretariat for the role it had played in their adoption.

141. The creation of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO in Vienna had given new impetus to global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts aimed at a nuclear-weapon-free world, and had increased Vienna's importance in the eyes of the international community. Referring to Article VI of the NPT, he stressed that all the States Parties shared responsibility for taking the necessary measures to eliminate existing nuclear weapons and should endeavour to create a favourable environment for such measures. The effective verification regime set up by the CTBTO and the Agency's strengthened safeguards system were part of that environment. They should be implemented in a complementary manner and be the cornerstone of the global arms control regime.

142. As the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference had reaffirmed, the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthened global and regional peace and security. There were now four nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the one in South East Asia recently established by the Bangkok Treaty, for which Thailand was the depositary. That Treaty had been signed in Bangkok by the heads of government of ten South East Asian countries on 15 December 1995 and had entered into force on 27 March 1997. To date, nine of the ten signatory States had ratified it and Thailand, as depositary, had formally deposited it with the United Nations in accordance with the Charter.

143. For the Treaty to be more effective, the co-operation of all the nuclear-weapon States was essential. His delegation believed that the consultations between the States Parties and each of the nuclear-weapon States in June 1997 in Kuala Lumpur, had been very useful and it hoped that that process would continue with a view to finding a solution which satisfied both sides. His delegation urged the nuclear-weapon States, as a demonstration of their commitment to security in that part of the world, to endorse the Treaty by signing its Protocol, currently being reviewed by the States Parties.

144. The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South East Asia was a positive contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts aimed at a nuclear-weapon-free world. He underlined the important role being played by the Agency in verifying compliance of the States Parties to the Bangkok Treaty with their obligations by means of its safeguards system, which would be supplemented by the regional control bodies and mechanisms provided for under the Treaty.

145. As had been reported in the media, Thailand was facing severe economic and financial difficulties. Austerity measures had been taken and the State budget for 1998 had had to be cut substantially. Thailand therefore urged the Agency to adhere to the zero real growth budget principle and called on all Member States to pay their contributions to the Regular Budget on time. Thailand was concerned about financing of the technical assistance programme and considered it desirable to incorporate the TCF in the Regular Budget, so as to make its resources more predictable and assured and facilitate long-range planning.

146. Mr. de OURO-PRETO (Brazil), after welcoming Burkina Faso and Malta to the Agency, paid tribute to Mr. Blix for the efficiency and dedication with which he had managed the Agency, and expressed confidence that Mr. ElBaradei would discharge his duties at the head of the Agency with the same dedication and skill as his predecessor.

147. Brazil had been actively involved in the work of the Agency over its 40 years' existence. It was a Brazilian, Mr. João Carlos Muniz, who had presided over the Conference on the Statute of the IAEA, which had opened at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 20 September 1956. Brazil had been among the first 18 countries to ratify the Statute, which had entered into force on 29 July 1957.

148. Despite the confrontations of the Cold War, which until recently had constantly influenced the Agency's activities, it had accomplished its role in non-proliferation very successfully. The latest example of its work in that area had been the adoption the previous May of the Model Additional Protocol for the application of safeguards, which was a significant step towards strengthening the safeguards system. The Agency had also been responsible for important developments in nuclear safety and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In that regard, Brazil intended to sign the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

149. Turning to safeguards, he noted that the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) had been in operation over five years and had gradually improved its technical capability. It had helped improve confidence in the international safeguards system, in which the Agency played the central role, and would shortly be concluding a co-operation agreement with the Agency. That agreement would help greatly to improve the co-ordination of the two organizations' activities, and would strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of safeguards in Brazil and Argentina.

150. For Brazil, 1997 had been a remarkable year in the nuclear sphere. At the international level, Brazilian policy on non-proliferation, elaborated jointly with Argentina, had been strengthened by President Cardoso's decision in June 1997 to submit the NPT to the Brazilian Congress with a view to Brazil's accession. Technically speaking, Brazil already fulfilled all the requirements of the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system through the entry into force of the Tlatelolco Treaty and the quadripartite safeguards agreement between Brazil, Argentina, ABACC and the Agency. However, the decision to accede to the NPT could not but strengthen Brazilian policy on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. As President Cardoso had stated recently, the legal justification for and strategic and political importance of nuclear weapons were diminishing. In the modern world, power lay in competitiveness and

social cohesion. Brazil's accession to the NPT - which had become more universal, dynamic and participative - would further the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation.

151. On the domestic front, the preceding year in the nuclear field had been notable for the resumption of construction work on the Angra II nuclear power plant, the inauguration of nuclear fuel cycle activities on an industrial scale, the production of 20% enriched uranium, national implementation of the requirements of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the completion of a repository for the nuclear waste arising from the radiological accident at Goiânia, a significant increase in the production of radioisotopes for medical, industrial and scientific purposes, the initiation of decentralization of Brazil's nuclear sector and the inclusion of a distinct social component in Brazil's nuclear programme.

152. Those initiatives were part of a programme organized by the Presidential Secretariat for Strategic Affairs (SAE), in collaboration with the National Commission for Nuclear Energy (CNEA), Brazilian Nuclear Industries (INB), the Nuclebrás Company and the Navy Technological Centre, whose principal aims were: to establish a nuclear fuel cycle on an industrial scale; to maintain the safety of nuclear facilities; to develop the uses of nuclear energy for the benefit of society; to promote research and development in nuclear technology; and to ensure the commercial viability of the nuclear industry's heavy equipment sector and maintain its technological and productive capacity.

153. For the Brazilian nuclear programme, the resumption of work at Angra II was a highly important event in view of all the various projects and positive effects that would derive directly from it. In that regard, he also wished to mention the new institutional arrangement of the Brazilian electricity industry: a new enterprise specifically responsible for nuclear electricity generation was being set up through the merging of NUCLEN and the Furnas electricity plant. It was hoped that the new structure would make nuclear electricity generation more efficient, enabling it to take on a more important role in the Brazilian energy mix.

154. With regard to the nuclear fuel cycle, a start had been made on the Lagoa Real project in Bahia, with the aim of producing 300 t of uranium concentrate per year. All the necessary work on the project was well advanced, including geological and geotechnical studies for mining operations and research on the environmental impact of the plant, which was due to become operational in the first half of 1998.

155. Also in connection with the nuclear fuel cycle, preliminary studies were under way for construction of an isotope enrichment plant using technology developed by the Navy Technological Centre in São Paulo in collaboration with the Energy and Nuclear Research Institute of CNEN. The plant was expected to become operational in eight years' time, and would probably meet all the enrichment needs of Angra I and part of those of Angra II.

156. Another important project in that field was the Resende nuclear fuel rod fabrication plant. The project was of strategic importance, as it would enable Brazil to become one of 12 fuel element producers worldwide. Its implementation would result in foreign exchange savings of around $12 million on the initial fuel loading of Angra II alone, and in additional

savings of $8 million on periodic refuelling of Angra I and Angra II. Total investment in the project amounted to $24 million, and the plant should produce 50% of the nuclear fuel used in Brazil.

157. In nuclear safety, a series of measures were being taken to reassure the population and to fulfil the international commitments undertaken by Brazil as a Contracting Party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The number of inspections of nuclear facilities had increased, a financing system for radiation protection and nuclear safety had been established, and appropriate legislation was in preparation. In addition, a national system for the investigation of radiation events had been set up over the whole of Brazilian territory, enabling a prompt response to be made to any radiological emergency. On the subject of emergency preparedness, Brazil had successfully conducted a full emergency drill in Rio de Janeiro in June with the participation of Agency technicians.

158. With respect to the social uses of nuclear energy, the $2 million invested in nuclear medicine over the past two years had significantly increased production of radiopharmaceuticals and led to the manufacture of new products such as samarium, thallium and fluorine-18. The public had benefited, latest figures indicating that over a million patients in Brazil were now being treated with radiopharmaceuticals.

159. Another important project was the construction of a prototype food irradiator. Studies in that field were being carried out in collaboration with the Agency. The development of food irradiation would reduce losses of agricultural products, boost food exports, and increase the availability and hygienic qualities of food in general. Several other socially important nuclear application projects were under way in the industrial and environmental sectors.

160. Mr. CACCIA DOMINIONI (European Commission), associating himself fully with the statement made by Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union (EU) and associated countries, said that the current General Conference constituted a special occasion in that it marked the Agency's 40th anniversary. During that period the Agency had become one of the most effective international organizations.

161. It was a fact that the use of nuclear energy, not only for electricity production but also for medical, agricultural, industrial and other purposes, played a highly important role in daily life. The Agency had made an essential contribution in that context, in particular through the elaboration and worldwide harmonization of safety and radiation protection standards, the implementation of a global safeguards system against the proliferation of nuclear material for military purposes, and the provision of technical assistance in the area of peaceful nuclear applications. The European Commission offered its best wishes to the Agency for the future, and trusted that it would continue to fulfil its important tasks.

162. The results achieved to date by the Agency were inseparably linked with two men: Mr. Eklund, who had served as Director General from 1961 to 1981, and his successor, Mr. Blix, who had been in office since 1981. He was sure that Mr. Blix, who was due to retire later in the year, would continue advocating vigorously the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and

extended his best wishes to him. He also expressed his sincere congratulations to Mr. Blix's successor, Mr. ElBaradei.

163. In July the Commission had formally expressed its opinions on the applications for accession to the EU submitted by a number of States, and the matter was currently being discussed by the EU's other institutions. The actual negotiations on accession would begin in 1998.

164. The energy sector would play a big part in those negotiations. Applicants having nuclear power plants on their territory - most of which were Russian designed - would have to undertake firm commitments regarding nuclear safety matters. In anticipation of their accession, those States had made significant efforts to adapt their legislation in the areas of radiation protection, safety and radioactive waste management to that of the EU.

165. With regard to the EU's energy policy, the strategic choices outlined in the Commission's White Paper of December 1995 placed particular emphasis on integration of the European energy market, with a view to increasing competitiveness and promoting employment, managing external dependency in order to assure future energy supplies, and ensuring the compatibility of energy and environmental objectives for the sake of sustainable development.

166. With regard to the integration of the European energy market, the electricity directive which had been adopted at the beginning of the year had now entered into force, and the gradual process of opening up the market, due to last six years, had begun. The gas directive was expected to be adopted shortly. That would improve the competitiveness of the electricity and gas sectors and enable users in the EU to obtain energy supplies regardless of national boundaries.

167. In September 1996 the Commission had adopted, in draft form, the fourth illustrative nuclear programme (PINC), pursuant to Article 40 of the EURATOM Treaty. After a comprehensive consultative and information process, involving inter alia the European Parliament, the nuclear industry, NGOs and environmentalists, a slightly revised final text had been approved by the Commission the previous week. The main objective of the document was to assess how nuclear energy could contribute to the realization of the major energy objectives he had mentioned. It expressly concluded that the nuclear option should be kept open for the future.

168. Turning to the forthcoming Kyoto Conference on climate change, he stressed that nuclear energy had an important role to play in tackling that serious problem. The use of nuclear energy already served to avoid the emission of some 700 million tonnes of CO_2 each year in Europe as a whole.

169. It was true that, for the time being, the low cost of natural gas made the nuclear option less attractive, especially as the latter involved high investment costs and long construction times. Therefore, in the next decade the construction of new nuclear power plants could only

come about through a reasoned decision by investors to opt for combating the greenhouse effect or for the long-term advantages.

170. The Commission had welcomed with great satisfaction the adoption by the Board of Governors of the Additional Model Protocol under Programme 93+2 aimed at strengthening the Agency's safeguards. It was now important for the Additional Protocols to enter into force without delay throughout the world. In July, the Commission had submitted to the Board draft negotiating mandates for Additional Protocols to the three safeguards agreements in force between the Agency, the European Community and its Member States. The Commission was sparing no effort in the matter and hoped that the EU would be able to begin negotiations with the Agency's Secretariat in the very near future.

171. He was pleased to report that the application of Agency safeguards in the EU had gained much in efficiency as a result of the verification arrangements adopted under the New Partnership Approach. Various technical issues relating to particular facilities, such as nuclear power plants using MOX fuel, had been resolved. The two parties would continue to co-operate closely on the Agency verification measures approved by the Board in 1995, including the use of new equipment and unannounced inspections.

172. Another important area in which the European Community had a direct role to play was the common European supply policy for nuclear fuels. On the uranium market, the price increase seen during the first half of the previous year had been followed by a slight decrease. That had led the Commission and the EURATOM Supply Agency to continue monitoring the markets closely and to pursue a policy of diversification of sources of supply in line with the EURATOM Treaty objectives of security of supply and viability of the EU's basic nuclear industries. That policy, which had been implemented in a flexible manner, using the Supply Agency's exclusive right to conclude contracts, was aimed at avoiding over-reliance on any single source of supply. The Supply Agency continued to recommend the EU's uranium users to cover most of their needs through multi-year contracts at prices allowing recovery of normal production costs.

173. The Commission and the Supply Agency were paying close attention to the effects of the entry on the world market of uranium and enriched material derived from the dismantling of nuclear warheads, in particular the introduction of the equivalent of 500 tonnes of highly enriched weapons-grade uranium which was to be diluted and transferred over the next few years under the terms of an agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States. The Commission urged all the parties involved to ensure that such material was placed on the market in a regular, equitable and responsible manner, in order to avoid any destabilizing effects.

174. The EU was contributing to the efforts to establish a worldwide nuclear safety culture through nuclear safety research programmes carried out in Member States on a cost-sharing basis and its Joint Research Centre, and by promoting constant efforts in the competent bodies of the EU to achieve consensus on safety requirements and the best safety procedures.

175. The European Union's assistance to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the nuclear safety field involved a considerable human and financial effort. The Commission was particularly anxious, in view of future EU expansion, that safety standards comparable to those of the EU should be attained in all European countries. In order to help achieve that objective, in 1997 about $95 million had been allocated for nuclear safety projects under the TACIS and PHARE assistance programmes, taking the funds provided since the beginning of those programmes, to over $800 million. That figure included a contribution of $110 million to the G-7 Action Plan for Ukraine, which was intended to help solve the sensitive problems concerning the shutdown of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, the safety of the shelter over unit 4, and the achievement of acceptable safety levels in the two units under construction at Rovno and Khmelnitsky. In accordance with the conclusions of the Denver Summit, additional funding would be made available for the shelter implementation plan.

176. It should also be mentioned that on 22 September the Commission had approved aid amounting to $1.1 million for the victims of the Chernobyl accident in Ukraine, the Russian Federation and Belarus. The total amount of assistance already approved in favour of Chernobyl victims was around $9 million.

177. EU assistance in the nuclear safety field continued to be planned in co-ordination with other donors, and to take into account the valuable work carried out under the Agency's auspices. The EU hoped that that important assistance would help countries which had not yet acceded to the Convention on Nuclear Safety to do so in the near future. Co-operation among 25 nuclear regulatory bodies from the EU, countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States was promoted through the Commission's CONCERT group, which had recently drawn up conclusions on the experience acquired with nuclear safety assistance to date, and had prepared guidelines for future co-operation.

178. The Commission welcomed the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and would endeavour to resume the discussions on EURATOM's accession. It also welcomed the successful conclusion of the diplomatic conference to adopt a Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. That convention should help assure the public that the safety of spent fuel and of radioactive waste management was an objective being pursued at the international level. The Commission was likely to seek a mandate to sign and accede to the convention.

179. With regard to radiation protection, on 30 June 1997 the EU Council of Ministers had adopted a revised version of the directive on protection against the dangers of medical exposures to radiation, which had to be included in the national legislation of EU Member States by 15 May 2000, the date by which the new Basic Safety Standards adopted in 1996 also had to be brought into force under national legislations.

180. In the hopefully unlikely event that a nuclear accident could not be avoided, a liability regime was needed which offered prompt and adequate compensation to the victims. The existing regime had been extended through the adoption on 12 September of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and of the Convention

on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Those instruments took account of the developments which had occurred in the legal, technical and economic spheres since the adoption of the Paris and Vienna Conventions in the 1960s, and provided for considerable additional compensation. The Commission therefore welcomed the adoption of those two instruments.

181. The Commission also supported the Agency's work to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear material. Among other things, the EU was co-operating with the Agency on means of detecting radioactive substances at borders. The Commission had also been continuing its co-operation with certain third countries with a view to ensuring reliable nuclear material accountancy, control and physical protection.

182. In addition the Commission, in co-operation with Member States, was organizing courses for customs officers on the detection of radioactive substances and on the nature of radiation hazards. Particular emphasis was placed on participation by countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

183. With regard to the nuclear fission safety programme, following the call for proposals published in 1995, 168 shared-cost projects and 41 concerted actions had been selected in 1995, 1996 and the first half of 1997, with Community funding amounting to around $144 million. The projects covered five areas: study of innovative solutions, reactor safety, management and storage of radioactive waste and decommissioning, radiological impact on man and the environment, and historical liabilities. The European Community Joint Research Centre had carried out activities in several areas, especially prevention and management of severe accidents, safety of the fuel cycle with a view to reducing the impact on man and the environment, and nuclear safeguards and fissile material management. In the area of safeguards, the Joint Research Centre was responsible for implementing the Commission's support programme for the Agency.

184. With regard to research in the field of controlled thermonuclear fusion, which was focused on magnetic confinement, two new association contracts had been concluded with Ireland and Austria. In addition, the trilateral Euregio agreement - which linked the fusion activities carried out in Belgium, the Netherlands and North Rhine-Westphalia - had been ratified. Construction of the TJ-II stellarator in Madrid had been completed; the JET facility at Abingdon (United Kingdom) had achieved a world record in fusion energy production, and a socio-economic fusion research programme for 1997-98 (SERF) had been established.

185. The ITER Council had adopted the ITER detailed design report, cost review and safety analysis, and had issued guidelines for the work to be completed by July 1998. The ongoing research looked as if it would require an extension of the current agreement to cover a transition period of around three years from July 1998 to prepare the ground for construction decisions.

186. With regard to EURATOM's external relations, an important event had been EURATOM's accession to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), which had taken effect on 19 September. The European Community had thereby become a

member of the KEDO Executive Board alongside its founding members, the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The European Community would contribute to attempts to solve the non-proliferation problem on the basis of re-establishment of compliance with the NPT and safeguards in the DPRK in return for the construction of two safe and reliable light water reactors and the interim supply of other energy sources.

187. In conclusion, he said that the European Commission had always participated actively in international co-operation in the nuclear field. The Commission considered that efficient international regimes for nuclear safety, safeguards, physical protection and non-proliferation would always be necessary in order to ensure the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy in the future. With that in mind, the European Commission would continue to co-operate closely with the Agency and its new Director General.

188. Mr. POOLOKASINGHAM (Sri Lanka), welcoming Malta and Burkina Faso as new members of the Agency, sincerely thanked both the Agency and Mr. Blix, on the fortieth anniversary of the Agency and the eve of its Director General's retirement, for the contribution they had made to the international community.

189. The Agency was a specialized organization within the United Nations system with a dual mandate: to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy and to ensure that fissionable material was not diverted to military purposes.

190. The Agency's promotional activities had been responsible for most, if not all, of the transfers of peaceful nuclear technology to developing countries, including Sri Lanka. It was held in high esteem by the entire world - hence its remarkable financial stability - and was rated amongst the best, if not as the best, of the United Nations specialized agencies thanks to its efficiency in fulfilling its mandate as regards technology transfer and support for research and development, and now also its explicit insistence that its technical co-operation activities lead to visible end-user benefits. Since nuclear science and technology were viewed as an additional tool for integrated use with conventional methods, the Agency's activities had also had the important spin-off of giving tremendous impetus to the overall development of science and technology in developing Member States.

191. Under the leadership of Mr. Blix, the Agency had effectively met the challenges to the future of nuclear power posed by the Three Mile Island accident in 1979 and the even more serious Chernobyl accident in 1986. Despite those setbacks, which had led to widespread adverse public reaction against nuclear power, the amount of electricity generated by nuclear power plants had increased by 39% over the past decade, with 443 power plants operating worldwide as opposed to 374 in 1986, and a further 35 plants under construction. That was attributable to the prompt action taken by the Agency to strengthen nuclear power plant safety and emergency radiation protection measures, to the growing demand for electricity, and to increasing concern over the greenhouse effect and acid rain. Nevertheless, it was important to note that most of the technical co-operation budget had been spent on non-power sectors such as agriculture, industry and medical applications which, together with energy planning, were priority sectors in most developing countries such as Sri Lanka.

192. Sri Lanka was pleased to note that some of its scientists had contributed actively to the Agency's international activities, particularly in the field of agriculture and medicine. The Agency's efforts to strengthen and streamline its safeguards activities in response to recent concerns about its credibility in that sphere were also praiseworthy.

193. There was no doubt that the effective way the Agency had carried out its mandate and tackled the serious crises with which it had been confronted over the past 15 years was due to the dynamism and innovative spirit of the outgoing Director General, Mr. Hans Blix. The following extract from the statement of the President of the IAEA Staff Council at the thirty-ninth Ordinary Staff Assembly held in December 1996 was perhaps the best tribute to him:

> "Unlike many other organizations, the Agency has a long tradition of openness and transparency in its staff/management relations. ...We have benefited from the unflinching support of our Director General, who has made no bones about the prime need for competence and integrity when recruiting staff. ... the Director General and Staff Council are united in their conviction of the need to maintain a truly independent and competent civil service ... "

That was fundamental to the success of any organization, and Member States were responsible for ensuring that the Agency not only continued to maintain but also strengthened that invaluable attribute.

194. He congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his unanimous appointment as Director General to succeed Mr. Blix. With the experience he had acquired both at the Agency and in the United Nations, he was well equipped to guide the Agency in the years ahead and Sri Lanka wished him every success.

195. Now that the half-way mark had been reached in preparations for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to be held in the year 2000, it was opportune to take stock of the follow-up to the decisions taken in 1995. Achieving universality of the Treaty remained a key objective, but non-proliferation strategies should not obstruct the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear technology. It was therefore imperative to negotiate a legal instrument to ensure the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and stockpiling of fissile material. Agency safeguards were essential to guaranteeing compliance with the NPT. Sri Lanka urged States Party which had not yet done so to sign safeguards agreements and expected the Agency to continue to play a central role in nuclear non-proliferation, the regime on the production and stockpiling of fissile material, and safeguards.

196. All nuclear and non-nuclear States alike had the inalienable right to produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to undertake research in that field without discrimination. The obligation undertaken by States Party pursuant to Article IV of the NPT was important. The unilateral application of restrictive measures which went beyond the safeguards required under the Treaty and which hampered peaceful nuclear development should be eliminated. Preferential treatment should be given to non-nuclear-weapon States,

taking particular account of the needs of developing countries with respect to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

197. Sri Lanka had consistently supported the creation - by a consensus of the countries concerned - of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Given the strategic importance of the States of Central Asia, his delegation welcomed the initiative aimed at establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region.

198. Turning to Sri Lanka's nuclear programme, he said that his country had no large nuclear facilities such as power or research reactors. Its activities were directed towards the peaceful use of nuclear energy for agricultural, medical and industrial purposes. Keenly aware as it was of the contribution which nuclear technology had already made and could still make to national development, his Government had allocated the necessary funds for strengthening the infrastructure of the Atomic Energy Authority. Co-operation between the Agency and a number of Sri Lankan institutes under the Agency's technical co-operation programme had resulted in socio-economic benefits through the application of nuclear techniques in agriculture, medicine and industry.

199. In the medical sector, a human tissue bank, nuclear imaging facilities and radioimmunoassay laboratories had been established, and cancer therapy facilities upgraded, with support from the technical co-operation programme. A project on high dose brachytherapy was being implemented under the 1997-1998 cycle. A project had been launched in 1997 with a view to remedying iron deficiencies with iron-fortified wheat which would help overcome malnutrition among low-income groups. He noted with satisfaction that the Agency had identified the development of food and nutrition strategies as a key area for the 1999-2000 programme and suggested that the aforementioned project be extended up to the end of the 1999-2000 cycle in order to ensure its successful completion.

200. In the agricultural sector, the productivity of certain crops had been improved through better agronomic practices developed via research employing nuclear techniques, and through the breeding of better crop varieties via radiation-induced mutation. Nuclear techniques had also been applied successfully to improve reproduction in buffaloes, cattle and goats, to improve nutrition, and in the control of diseases.

201. In the industrial sector, the use of nuclear techniques in the preventive maintenance programme of the petroleum refinery had led to a significant reduction in down time. Considerable gains had been made by a number of industries through the use of NDT techniques. The Atomic Energy Authority now had the capacity to conduct NDT training programmes up to level III, except in eddy current testing.

202. Sri Lanka welcomed the initiatives taken by the Agency to ensure that the technical co-operation programme generated greater socio-economic benefits and was better oriented towards the needs of end-users. The Model Project concept, Country Programme Frameworks and Integrated Evaluation Framework would no doubt lead to the realization of those goals. However, due consideration should be given to the vastly differing conditions in Member States when defining country programmes.

203. For Sri Lanka, nuclear power was not a viable option for electricity generation at the current time as the commercially available reactors had too large a capacity to be connected to the national grid. Although the demand for electricity was growing rapidly and was doubling approximately every eight years, that option could not be not open to the country in the near future unless small and economic nuclear power plants became commercially available.

204. In recent years, considerable improvements had been made to the national regulatory programme on radiation safety. Additional staff had been recruited and the necessary equipment acquired, some of it through the Agency's technical co-operation programme. The national regulations were being revised to ensure conformity with the Basic Safety Standards. The staff of the Atomic Energy Authority had received training through Agency training courses and fellowships. Sri Lanka was participating in the interregional Model Project activities on upgrading of radiation protection and waste management infrastructures and was confident that it would be in a position to conform to the Basic Safety Standards in the near future.

205. The RCA, to which Sri Lanka was party, had brought considerable benefits to the participating countries. He thanked the Agency and the Member States concerned for organizing a programme to highlight the achievements and activities of the RCA during the 25 years it had been in existence. Sri Lanka welcomed the changes which were being made to the management structure of the RCA but felt that care should be taken to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities in order to maintain the programme's continuity.

206. His country would continue to pursue its policy of utilizing nuclear science and technology to improve the quality of life of its people. That policy was implemented through the Atomic Energy Authority, which was also the national focal point for Agency activities.

207. In conclusion, he reconfirmed his Government's active support for the Agency's programmes and activities which had been very effective in promoting the application of nuclear science and technology for development, and without which developing countries such as Sri Lanka would have made little progress.

208. Mr. HOBEICA (Lebanon), having welcomed the new Director General and paid tribute to his predecessor, said that one of the main responsibilities of the Agency, which was celebrating its fortieth anniversary, was the setting up of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In that regard, the Middle East region was of special interest, particularly as the peace process was not moving forward. The fact that Israel had reneged on the Oslo agreements and was pursuing its settlement policy in defiance of international resolutions was not likely to advance the process. As long as Israel continued to occupy part of Lebanese territory and resort to violence, repression and detentions without trial in its dealings with the region's inhabitants, the threat of war would continue to loom over the Middle East and Israel's undeclared arsenal of weapons of mass destruction would continue to cause concern.

209. It was also the Agency's responsibility to strengthen the safeguards system and ensure that certain safety standards were established through legally binding international agreements. In that respect, he welcomed the Model Protocol aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and

improving the efficiency of the safeguards system, and the fact that some of the Agency's inspectors responsible for verifying the application of safeguards were Lebanese nationals. However, safeguards should be fully implemented in all countries on a systematic basis. There was one State in the Middle East, namely Israel, whose undeclared nuclear reactors were a threat to its neighbours and other countries. The international community should put pressure on Israel to accept Agency safeguards as other countries in the region had done.

210. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, the African proposal seemed to be the most acceptable to a large number of Member States. However, linking the enlargement of the Board to the inclusion of Israel in the Middle East and South Asia Group was both unprecedented and unacceptable. Though every country did have the right to belong to a regional group, equally every group had the right to accept or reject any request for admission to it.

211. Turning to technical co-operation, he said that, although the Agency was not properly speaking a development body, the rapid economic globalization which was taking place meant that it would have to move beyond its traditional role and strengthen its partnership with counterpart organizations with a view to building new partnerships with national planning and development ministries, international aid organizations and the private sector. In that respect, he welcomed the fact that the Agency was focusing on technology management aimed at resolving economic and social problems.

212. After years of forced delay, Lebanon was trying to make up for lost time: thus, with the co-operation of the Agency, it had set up the National Atomic Energy Centre which was responsible for several Agency-approved projects, in particular on monitoring of rinderpest and control of the medfly. Also worth mentioning was the project on the use of a Van de Graaff accelerator which was being carried out in co-operation with the Agency and should help the National Atomic Energy Centre strengthen its capacity for elemental analysis. His country found the increased use which was being made of isotope hydrology in the development and management of water resources particularly interesting and saw it as an important factor as regards stability and development in the Middle East. The Agency should intensify its efforts in that area at both national and international level with a view to making isotope hydrology an integral part of water management.

213. Finally, he noted with satisfaction that Lebanon had signed, on the preceding day, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Furthermore, in 1997 the Lebanese parliament had ratified the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. It had already ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety in the preceding year.

214. Mr. GREGORIČ (Slovenia), after congratulating Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment to the post of Director General and paying tribute to the work of Mr. Blix during

his 16 years at the head of the Agency, welcomed the Agency's two new members, Burkina Faso and Malta.

215. A number of important events had occurred in 1997, which marked the fortieth anniversary of the Agency's establishment, including the adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and of the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. The work done by the legal and technical experts in that regard was to be commended. Congratulations were also due for the speed with which the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management had been negotiated and adopted. Slovenia, which had signed the Convention on the day it had been opened for signature, was fully convinced that those three new international instruments would promote even closer collaboration between Member States and enhance nuclear safety worldwide.

216. Turning to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, to which Slovenia was party, he said that the Contracting Parties, in adopting the Convention, had established a framework for peer review of national reports. That peer review process implied a firm obligation on the part of the Contracting Parties to submit regular reports for review. During the meeting of the Contracting Parties held at the Agency in April 1997, the date of the first review meeting had been set and all the Contracting Parties were now obliged to do their best to prepare their national reports.

217. The thirtieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Tlatelolco Treaty, an instrument which had helped keep nuclear weapons out of Latin America and had encouraged the acceptance of global non-proliferation, also fell in 1997. The regional approach to non-proliferation established by the Tlatelolco Treaty had been followed in the South Pacific by the Rarotonga Treaty, in Africa by the Pelindaba Treaty, and in South East Asia by the Bangkok Treaty. Those four treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones were an encouragement to other regions of the world, in particular the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent, to take positive steps towards elaborating a similar treaty which required the States Party to it not only to comply with non-proliferation obligations but also to abide by undertakings in the areas of nuclear trade, nuclear safety and the management of radioactive material.

218. In June 1997, the Slovenian parliament had ratified the country's safeguards agreement with the Agency. Moreover, Slovenia welcomed the text of the Model Protocol which had been elaborated by the Committee on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Improving the Efficiency of the Safeguards System, and intended to conclude an agreement of that kind in the near future. In that regard, he took note of the progress which had been made with the implementation of other measures to strengthen the efficiency and improve the effectiveness of Agency safeguards within the framework of Programme 93+2.

219. Illicit trafficking in nuclear material was another matter of concern to Slovenia and all Member States. The Agency's role in combating such trafficking deserved the praise of the international community. Slovenia was honoured to be among the fifty countries taking part in the programme set up by the Agency to support the global efforts to combat illicit trafficking

and the unauthorized use or movement of nuclear material and other radioactive sources dangerous to public health. In December 1996, a successful mission had been carried out in Slovenia by the newly established International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS).

220. The past year had been a particularly busy one for his country. As a new Agency member, it had sought a seat on the Board of Governors for the first time. It was firmly committed to the Agency's objectives and attached great importance to its role and activities in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. He thanked his colleagues from the Eastern Europe Group for supporting his country's candidature.

221. Slovenia continued to attach great importance to the Agency's technical co-operation programme. The Agency's efforts to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of technical co-operation activities and to promote sustainable development were to be commended. He also welcomed the introduction of the Model Project concept, and the regional approach to technical co-operation projects and regional co-operation agreements.

222. All Member States should bear in mind that further efforts were needed to achieve additional savings without impairing the Agency's capacity to meet its programme objectives. Prompt payment of assessed contributions by all Member States would improve the Agency's financial situation, promote stability and facilitate the planning of activities.

223. Ms. DORAN (Ireland), associating herself with the statement which had been made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, paid tribute to Mr. Blix for his accomplishments during his 16 years at the head of the Agency, and congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment. Ireland welcomed the achievements of recent years in the area of nuclear non-proliferation, such as the START Treaties, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the adoption of the Model Additional Protocol aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system, which demonstrated that progress was possible with the necessary political will.

224. Her country particularly welcomed the fact that, since the last General Conference, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Djibouti had acceded to the NPT, and Brazil had stated its intention to do so. All the commitments entered into by States under the NPT, reinforced by the principles and objectives agreed upon at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, were the foundations on which any further action should be based.

225. Addressing the United Nations General Assembly the previous week, Ireland's Foreign Minister, Mr. Raphael Burke, had said: "Now is the time for serious consideration of an integrated approach, encompassing both bilateral and multilateral negotiations, culminating in an international agreement on a total ban on nuclear weapons. We must inject a real sense of urgency into translating the goal of the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons into a more concrete reality. My plea is for reflection on the part of all; for compromise and for co-operation, and for a flexible rather than a dogmatic approach."

226. In order to achieve the early elimination of nuclear weapons, it was essential to strengthen confidence in the effectiveness of the non-proliferation regime. In that regard, the

adoption in May 1997 by the Board of Governors of the Model Additional Protocol to safeguards agreements was a welcome development. Ireland urged all Member States to conclude an additional protocol with the Agency as soon as possible. As had already been mentioned by the representative of Luxembourg speaking on behalf of the European Union, all members of the Union including Ireland were determined to conclude their protocols at the earliest possible date.

227. Ireland was one of the Member States of the Agency which had decided not to use nuclear energy to generate electricity. While it recognized that the application of radioactivity brought benefits in science, technology and medicine, her country believed that nuclear power was unacceptable in view of the dire consequences that could arise from a nuclear accident. It was also clear that there was still considerable public anxiety over the environmental impact of radioactive waste management and disposal. In the recent past, the issues of waste transport and dumping at sea, siting of facilities and monitoring of waste disposal arrangements had provoked international controversy, and it was likely that radioactive waste management and its related problems would continue to give rise to vociferous concern at international level.

228. For the Irish Government, safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel was one of the most important aspects of nuclear safety and it therefore welcomed the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. That Convention was a useful addition to those negotiated under the auspices of the Agency with the aim of strengthening safety and international co-operation in the nuclear sector. The final text was a significant improvement on the original proposal, and her delegation particularly welcomed the fact that the scope of the Convention had been extended to include spent fuel management. Ireland would have preferred the Convention to include reprocessing as an integral part of spent fuel management and had supported proposals to that effect; however, consensus had only extended to voluntary arrangements. Nevertheless, in time the concern expressed at international level might influence those countries which had opposed the inclusion of reprocessing within the scope of the Convention. It was to be hoped that the voluntary declaration provided for in Article 3 of the Convention would act as an incentive to all countries to declare their reprocessing activities.

229. Having no nuclear power plant of its own, Ireland welcomed the provisions in the new Joint Convention which obliged States to consult their neighbours on the siting of facilities they planned to build. A similar consultation procedure was to be found in Article 17 of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Those consultation obligations were relevant to Ireland's long-standing objections to the operation of nuclear facilities at Sellafield on the west coast of Great Britain, mainly on the grounds that a serious accident at that site could cause contamination in Ireland. Although the new Joint Convention would not, of course, lead to the closure of Sellafield, its entry into force should promote an international climate where the legitimate fears and concerns of neighbouring countries would be accorded greater understanding and respect. Ireland had just signed the Joint Convention and it urged all Member States to do likewise without delay.

230. With respect to the issue of liability for nuclear damage, Ireland as a country with no nuclear facilities had a clear interest in securing the broadest possible liability regime covering operators, insurance companies and the States where facilities were sited. That regime should provide for the highest possible levels of compensation and offer simple, effective, speedy and impartial mechanisms for settling claims.

231. In 1986, the Chernobyl accident and its transboundary effects had revealed the inadequacy of the existing nuclear liability law. Since then, the Agency had been seeking ways to harmonize, strengthen and broaden the international legal regime on civil liability for nuclear damage, and to develop a liability instrument that would attract wide adherence by both nuclear and non-nuclear countries with a view to achieving a single and comprehensive legal system. The Agency's Secretariat, its Legal Division, and those involved in the negotiations which had culminated in the adoption of legal instruments at the recent diplomatic conference, should be congratulated.

232. However, Ireland felt that the funding which would be made available to victims of nuclear damage under the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the new Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage was inadequate. It would have preferred a system of unlimited liability under which compensation would be granted for all nuclear damage. Nevertheless, it hoped sincerely that the instruments concerned would provide a framework for the modernization and strengthening of the international nuclear liability regime. Without an effective and generally recognized liability regime, international efforts to improve nuclear safety would be substantially undermined.

233. Mr. AL-BOUANIN (Qatar) congratulated the new Director General on his appointment, paid tribute to his predecessor and welcomed Malta and Burkina Faso to the Agency. He urged Member States to give more support to the Director General so as to enable him to step up his consultations with countries in the Middle East with a view to achieving full application of the safeguards system and the placement of all facilities in the region under Agency control. The conclusion of an agreement establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East would clearly be a decisive factor in promoting a climate of mutual trust, and an important step towards a general, just and lasting peace in the region.

234. Drawing attention to the Director General's report on the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East, he said that his country, aware of the need for all countries in the Middle East without exception to accede to the NPT, was extremely concerned over the failure of the peace process owing to the repressive measures and acts of provocation of the Israeli Government which was continuing to establish settlements on Arab-occupied territory and was trying to shirk its obligations under agreements concluded with the Palestinian Authority. He stressed the need to work towards the establishment of a general peace in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

235. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, the increase in the number of Member States had made the question of equitable representation of the developing

countries on the Board of Governors more urgent than ever. As for the composition of the regional groups, account should be taken of all the pertinent political factors, but the decision should be taken by the regional group concerned.

236. The Agency should not concentrate its activities on safeguards and the safety of reactor operation and radioactive waste management: it should also allocate more resources to assisting developing countries with technology transfer, an objective which was its raison d'être. The developing countries should be able to benefit from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in such fields as agriculture, health, protection of the environment and food preservation. In that connection, Qatar attached great importance to projects relating to the supply of water to arid zones and hoped that the Agency would play an active and effective role in the application of nuclear techniques to exploitation of groundwater resources. It was time to see tangible results from the projects on the construction of economically competitive and ecologically safe facilities for the production of potable water by nuclear desalination.

237. Mr. FÖRSTER (Netherlands) first of all fully endorsed the statement made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. He paid tribute to the Director General and the Secretariat of the Agency on its fortieth anniversary and welcomed its two new members, Malta and Burkina Faso. He also congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment as Director General on the eve of the third millennium. The mission the Agency had been entrusted with 40 years ago had been two-fold: to enable all countries to make the best use of progress in nuclear science and technology, while at the same time safeguarding the world from their use for military purposes. That mission remained as relevant now as it had been in 1957, from both the political and the environmental point of view, and the Agency should continue its work.

238. The main objective of the Netherlands energy policy was to improve energy efficiency by a third over the next 25 years and ensure that, by the year 2010, 10% of its total primary energy consumption came from renewable energy sources, with a view to stabilizing CO_2 emissions which should not exceed the 1990 level at that point. In addition, the electricity and gas markets should open up as a result of liberalization of the international energy market. One direct consequence of that development had been the closure, on 26 March 1997, of the Dodewaard reactor. That decision had been taken by the Netherlands electricity company SEP because the reactor could no longer produce electricity at a competitive price in the light of the impending de-regulation of the European electricity market. The closure of Dodewaard would be used to gain experience in decommissioning.

239. In the Netherlands, as in several other countries, nuclear power had a number of drawbacks: public acceptance was limited owing to the problems of radioactive waste, perceived proliferation risks and its low competitiveness. However, it also had a number of advantages such as its relatively stable price, the high level of uranium reserves and the lack of any CO_2 emissions. Weighing up the advantages and disadvantages was no simple matter, and unnecessary at present in the Netherlands where there was a surplus rather than a shortage of energy; however, changing circumstances could shift the balance one way or another in the

future. Therefore, the Netherlands Government had stated that the nuclear power option would be kept open; in order to maintain a certain level of competence, the Netherlands would remain involved in a broad range of nuclear R&D activities. It would continue to take part in work on the development of common safety standards and practices, mainly within the framework of the Agency, and would participate in international research programmes on new reactor types.

240. As had been mentioned by the representative of Luxembourg and the Director General, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was still not co-operating fully with the Agency as regards verification activities, and was therefore not complying fully with the safeguards agreement it had signed. It was true that the discussions with the DPRK on KEDO had progressed somewhat. The European Union was now a member of KEDO and had committed itself to contributing a maximum of 15 million ECU per year. The monitoring and verification tasks in Iraq continued to be hampered by the unwillingness of the Iraqi authorities; UNSCOM was consequently unable to carry out its mandate in full and very little progress had been made during the past year.

241. Technical assistance to developing Member States, which remained one of the Agency's main activities, was making a definite contribution to the social and economic development of those countries. As always, the Netherlands would pay its assessed voluntary contribution to the TCF in full and on time.

242. The CTBTO had settled in Vienna at the beginning of 1997. Evidently, Vienna had been selected by the international community with a view to taking advantage of the competence accumulated there, and benefiting from synergy with the Agency. Co-operation between the two organizations would be helpful to both and should lead to cost savings by avoiding duplication of effort. He thanked the Director General for his positive attitude in that regard and trusted that he would explore further the scope for co-operation.

243. Mr. ALQAMTTI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), after welcoming Malta and Burkina Faso to the Agency, congratulated the new Director General on his appointment and paid tribute to his predecessor. The fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Statute offered an opportunity for reflecting on what approaches should be adopted in the future to enable the Agency to contribute to solving key problems affecting economic and social development, the environment, health, food reserves, water resources, peace and security, on which the fate of the entire world population depended. He hoped that the Agency would continue to play a role in attaining those noble objectives by promoting constructive dialogue between Member States.

244. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya attached high priority to the Agency's technical co-operation activities in all fields in which nuclear energy was used. For that reason, despite the difficulties it faced as a result of the economic sanctions imposed on it, it was making efforts to strengthen its economic co-operation relations with the Agency, as could be seen from the projects aimed at increasing livestock productivity using RIA techniques, raising the quality of radiotherapy and improving certain barley varieties.

245. Technology transfer was nevertheless subject to the iniquitous embargo placed on the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which meant that the country was being held back on the technological front. Evidence of that were the measures the Agency had taken with regard to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, such as the cancellation of the project on non-destructive testing, and the fact that equipment was no longer being supplied to it and its engineers were being excluded from training fellowships or other activities, even though it had concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement under which the Agency was conducting regular inspections. He therefore called upon the Agency to lift all restrictions on technology transfer to the developing countries, and to put an end to such practices where they were being applied to his country so that the latter could benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in accordance with the principles governing technical co-operation, and the Agency's Statute. Failing that, all the agreements concluded between the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Agency would be worthless.

246. Many developing countries, including his own, would not be able to meet their growing energy needs in the coming decades without having recourse to nuclear power. Low- and medium-capacity reactors were well adapted to the consumption levels of small countries. In 1989, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had submitted a draft resolution on seawater desalination using nuclear reactors which had been approved by the General Conference in resolution GC(XXXIII)/RES/515 and which requested the Director General to assess the technical and economic potential for using nuclear reactors in seawater desalination. An international advisory group had recently been set up to carry out that study and it seemed likely that practical results would be achieved as regards the commissioning of demonstration reactors. His country attached enormous importance to that project and intended to participate in all the activities related to it.

247. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya also attached high priority to disarmament and international security because it was convinced that weapons of mass destruction were a threat to international peace and security. For that reason, it had been a constant advocate of denuclearization of the Middle East in international fora. In that regard, it was essential that Israel - the only country in the region with nuclear weapons - submit its nuclear installations to Agency safeguards and control, in accordance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. There could be no peace in the region as long as some powers continued to help and support Israel.

248. His country welcomed the Agency's efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system under Programme 93+2 whose aim was the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The mere use of the term non-proliferation, as opposed to elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, was a direct acknowledgement of the right of certain countries to possess such weapons, and that was flagrant discrimination and conjured up the spectre of mass destruction. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya felt that, for Programme 93+2 to be truly universal, all weapons of mass destruction had to be eliminated. He recalled that Israel, which had an arsenal of weapons of that type, had not accepted either Agency safeguards or any other international control. Under those circumstances, safeguards merely allowed a number of countries possessing such weapons to dominate others.

249. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, the developments which had taken place in the world were arguments in favour of an expansion of the Board of Governors, and the latter's credibility and moral and political authority would be enhanced by such a move. Africa was very much the poor relation in that respect, and he recalled that resolution GC(XXV)/RES/389 had recognized that state of affairs and recommended remedying the situation. He therefore hoped that the ongoing consultations on that issue would reach a successful conclusion.

250. Though he appreciated the Agency's efforts to achieve better representation of the developing countries among its staff, no significant progress had been made in that regard and, for that reason, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had continued to press for the recruitment of more people from those countries to senior posts.

251. Mr. MINTY (South Africa) first of all welcomed Malta and Burkina Faso to the Agency which had been founded 40 years previously to promote the idea of "Atoms for Peace". With the help of the Agency, considerable developments had taken place in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy since that time, but the investments to date in that area had unfortunately been far outweighed by the resources invested in nuclear energy's destructive potential. It was true that in recent years there had been a slow shift towards the gradual abandonment of those destructive uses: some nuclear weapons had been dismantled by the nuclear-weapon States, and the weapons-grade material released had been placed under Agency safeguards - albeit different safeguards from those applied to most Member States. However, that was only a beginning and enormous destructive potential remained, especially since not all countries in possession of nuclear weapons had taken such measures. The total elimination of nuclear weapons was still a remote objective.

252. South Africa had been a founder member of the Agency, which occupied an outstanding place among the United Nations specialized agencies, and the part it had played in the organization had been remarkable. After playing an important and enthusiastic role during the Agency's early years, South Africa had been excluded from the General Conference and the Board of Governors owing to the policies of the apartheid regime and suspicion of its nuclear weapon ambitions. Then came a period of transition during which his Government had joined the NPT in 1991 and announced the dismantling of its nuclear arsenal in 1993. With the advent of the new democratic Government in 1994 the situation had begun to return to normal, and South Africa had been reintegrated into the United Nations system and the Agency. It now attached the very highest priority to the promotion of global disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, particularly in Africa. No longer outlawed by the international community, South Africa was able to join other countries in seeking solutions to global problems. He thanked the Agency and its Director General, Mr. Blix, who had helped his country during that transitional phase, and the Africa Group whose collective action over that period had culminated in the adoption of the Pelindaba Treaty. South Africa joined in the tributes which had been paid to Mr. Blix both in the Board of Governors and during the current session of the General Conference for the work he had done during the past 16 years.

253. The Agency had always played an important role in non-proliferation through its safeguards system and should be commended on the adoption in 1997 of the Additional Protocol to strengthen the safeguards system. The approval of those new measures showed the international community's determination to pay greater attention than ever to non-proliferation and highlighted the Agency's vital role in that effort. A sound balance had been struck between the Agency's promotional work and its safeguards activities, and he trusted that it would be maintained in the future.

254. The Agency's founders had intended that it should promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy as a contribution to universal peace, health and prosperity, an objective which the African countries found most appropriate. He commended the work the Agency had carried out in Africa in the past 40 years, especially the great expansion in technical co-operation activities in recent years. Under the wise guidance of Mr. Qian, the Department of Technical Co-operation had made extraordinary progress in terms of both organizational efficiency and project planning and implementation. In the context of that ongoing restructuring and improvement, South Africa was eager to contribute to the promotion of technical co-operation in developing countries, in particular in Africa. It had placed its nuclear infrastructure at the disposal of the Agency so as to help it achieve its objectives in a continent that had so much need of the international community's support. In that regard, he welcomed the fact that the Agency's new Director General was an African who well understood the situation in that region and would be particularly well qualified to assist it. Now that the international community and the United Nations were focusing their attention on Africa, it seemed an appropriate time for the Agency to re-evaluate all aspects of its relations with that continent. It was common knowledge that Africa was under-represented on the Board, and the Africa Group's position on that score was well known.

255. Apart from strengthened safeguards and the improvements which had been made in the Department of Technical Co-operation through the introduction of Model Projects, the Agency could pride itself on the adoption of new legal instruments which owed much to the influence of Mr. Blix, and which South Africa supported.

256. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones had been one of the most significant developments of the past 40 years. South Africa had been the only country to decide unilaterally to dismantle its nuclear arsenal, thereby demonstrating that - provided the political will was there - it should be possible to eliminate nuclear weapons from the world completely. South Africa's international and regional security was made more assured by total nuclear disarmament than by the possession of nuclear weapons. Once it had destroyed its nuclear weapons and joined the NPT, the way was paved for the ideal of the military denuclearization of Africa to become a reality.

257. Worrying indications had emerged regarding the Agency's technical co-operation programme. During the discussions of the Informal Working Group on the Financing of Technical Assistance held over the past year under the chairmanship of South Africa's Ambassador to Vienna, it had become very clear that implementation of the technical co-operation programme could be threatened if steps were not taken to ensure that the level of

resources in the TCF increased at a rate sufficient to enable the many very worthwhile projects in the technical co-operation programme to be funded. Now, apparently because of the financial problems countries were experiencing, the target levels traditionally attained by certain donor countries in recent decades might not be met in 1998. That would be very worrying, as a decline in the Fund would be a clear indication of lack of commitment to technical co-operation, which would be particularly unfortunate at a time when Member States had just reached agreement on issues such as the draft protocol for the strengthening of safeguards. He appealed to all Member States, particularly the major donors, to pay their contributions in full. For its part, South Africa would pay its full contribution for 1998, which was no easy matter given the very difficult situation in which it found itself. However, it was prepared to do all it could to meet its obligations as it attached great importance to the Agency's technical co-operation activities.

258. In conclusion, he said that the Agency was in good shape overall and well equipped to confront with vigour the problems of the next millennium. Its Member States should not lose sight of the intentions and ideals of the Agency's founders, nor the aspirations of the many developing countries which supported its work.

259. Mr. HASHIM (Malaysia) paid tribute to the Agency which for 40 years had adapted itself successfully to the many changes which had taken place in the world, and had worked unceasingly to achieve the objectives set forth in Article II of its Statute. After welcoming Malta and Burkina Faso to the Agency, he commended Mr. Blix for the work he had done in his 16 years at the head of the Agency and said that the appointment of Mr. ElBaradei constituted a historic step for the Agency's developing Member States.

260. The forty-first session of the General Conference coincided with the 25th anniversary of the Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA). The latter had facilitated, inter alia, the establishment of nuclear science and technology infrastructures, capacity building, and the development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology. Malaysia, which was one of the most active members of the RCA, had already agreed to its extension.

261. In order to take better advantage of the benefits for sustainable development of nuclear science and technology, co-operation with non-traditional or non-nuclear organizations should be increased. Almost all the national nuclear institutes in the Agency's Member States had links with one another through the Agency or in some other way, but they should make further efforts to co-operate with organizations not involved in nuclear energy.

262. Turning to the financing of technical assistance, and in particular the issue of eligibility for technical assistance, he drew attention to the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agreed upon at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and, in particular, the undertaking by the signatory Parties to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In addition, the States Party to the NPT were required to make every effort to provide the Agency with the financial and human resources it needed to fulfil its responsibilities, including those relating to technical co-operation.

263. In contrast to other organizations in the United Nations system, the Agency was responsible for other activities besides technical assistance and co-operation, for example safeguards. Although the UNDP's guidelines on the eligibility of projects for funding were relevant up to a point, the fact remained that technical assistance at the Agency also included co-operation and the promotion of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The responsibilities and obligations of UNDP and the Agency were therefore different.

264. He noted with concern that the TCF seemed likely to record a deficit of five million dollars in 1997. Malaysia had paid its full contribution to the Fund on time, in line with the negotiated and agreed IPF. It would continue to meet its financial obligations in 1998 and called upon other Member States to do likewise.

265. Malaysia welcomed the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, despite the unresolved problems that remained. One outstanding issue which directly concerned his country was prior notification of transit States of transboundary movements of spent fuel and radioactive waste, and the need to obtain those States' consent for such movements.

266. He also welcomed the fact that the diplomatic conference had adopted a resolution urging all States which acceded to the Joint Convention to take full account of the Agency's Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material in connection with such transboundary movements, especially when formulating and implementing national laws and regulations. Given the multidimensional nature of the issues involved in transboundary movements, Malaysia also welcomed the decision to strengthen collaboration between the Agency, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

267. Prior to the entry into force of the Joint Convention, the transport of radioactive waste should comply fully with international safety standards and the Agency's guidelines on the export, transport and disposal of nuclear wastes, including low-level waste, as urged at the meeting of foreign ministers of European and Asian countries held in Singapore in February. That request had been echoed at the fourth meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum held in Kuala Lumpur in July.

268. Malaysia also took note of the adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and of the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. In that regard, it was regrettable that the concerns of non-nuclear States had not been met. The Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage required in effect that States which did not contribute to the risk of nuclear damage contribute to the compensation, which ran contrary to the "polluter pays" principle. His country believed that such an arrangement would create a dangerous precedent and might prompt the countries concerned to assign lower priority to the safety of industrial facilities within their territories. Liability costs for nuclear facilities should be fully taken into account at the planning stage by the States constructing such installations. Those States should be fully liable for accidents caused by their facilities, which should encourage them to promote a nuclear safety culture in their country.

269. His country remained fully committed to the objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons and supported all the international community's efforts to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation. It therefore welcomed the entry into force of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. It also noted with satisfaction the adoption of the text of the Model Additional Protocol to safeguards agreements between States and the Agency, and had begun familiarizing its relevant national agencies with the implications of the Protocol and the internal mechanisms which would have to be instituted to meet the obligations deriving from it. At the same time, Malaysia was conscious that legitimate international trade might be restricted by new export control measures.

270. Malaysia hoped that any further efforts to strengthen the international safeguards system, especially in connection with dual-use items, would be characterized by greater transparency. Serious consideration should be given to the concerns of States which had signed the NPT and other international instruments prohibiting the development, testing and acquisition of nuclear weapons, and which were at the same time becoming important players in legitimate international trade. In that context, his delegation welcomed the initiative taken by the Nuclear Suppliers Group in organizing an international seminar on the role of export controls in nuclear non-proliferation which was to be held in Vienna in the coming week. Though that Group and the Agency did have interests in common, his delegation was particularly concerned that any close co-operation between the two organizations should be transparent for the Agency's Member States.

271. Mr. SUBKI (Indonesia), having welcomed Malta and Burkina Faso as new members of the Agency, thanked Mr. Blix for his eloquent statement highlighting the results obtained by the Agency over the past year and emphasizing the need to continue improving the efficiency of its work. He also congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment as Director General and assured him of his Government's full support in the discharge of his onerous task. In addition, he paid tribute to Mr. Blix for the valuable work he had done over 16 years in which the Agency had had to face such serious challenges as the Chernobyl accident, and the implementation of the Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq and to the DPRK's nuclear programme.

272. Indonesia attached great importance to the safeguards system and felt that it should be strengthened in order to promote co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and prevent its use for other purposes which ran counter to the safeguards agreements concluded by States.

273. In parallel with the efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system, the South East Asian countries, including Indonesia, had concluded the Bangkok Treaty in 1995 establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South East Asia. That Treaty was important because it helped enhance peace and stability in the region and the world as a whole. His delegation hoped that the nuclear-weapon States would accede to the Protocol to the Treaty. He commended the Chairman of the Committee on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Improving the Efficiency of the Safeguards System for the work he had done in the past year. Furthermore, he noted with satisfaction finalization of the draft Model

Protocol, which instrument should promote the achievement of nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

274. With respect to measures to strengthen international co-operation in the safety field, significant progress had been made through the conclusion of new legal instruments relating to nuclear safety, the safety of spent fuel and waste management, liability and safeguards. The adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management should help strengthen the global nuclear safety culture and demonstrate to the public that governments were agreed on what methods to apply. Indonesia was therefore ready to sign that new instrument in due course.

275. As a contribution to the global nuclear safety culture, his Government had enacted a law in 1997 containing various provisions on regulation, waste management and liability for nuclear damage. That law stipulated, inter alia, that no part of Indonesia could be used by another country as a radioactive waste repository and it provided for the establishment of an independent nuclear energy regulatory body. He welcomed the adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, which covered not only legal but also technical and economic aspects of nuclear liability.

276. Turning to the Agency's technical co-operation programme, he said that his delegation was grateful to the Director General for the comprehensive report contained in document GC(41)/INF/4. It supported the new initiatives adopted by the Agency to strengthen technical co-operation through the development of effective programmes aimed at improving the scientific and technical capabilities of developing countries in the peaceful application of nuclear energy. Along those lines, Indonesia had implemented research and development projects aimed in particular at accelerating human resources development. The Agency had made a significant contribution to economic development in Indonesia, and was continuing to do so through a Model Project on feed supplementation using urea molasses multinutrient blocks to increase livestock production.

277. With respect to the use of nuclear energy for power production, his country thanked the Agency for the valuable help it had given its National Atomic Energy Agency (BATAN), particularly with the reviewing of the feasibility study for the proposed first nuclear power plant. A group of experts had been recruited by the Agency and sent to Indonesia for that purpose. His delegation hoped that the Agency would continue to provide assistance and advice. Indonesia was committed to finalizing the feasibility study - especially the financial aspects, the geological research and the public information side - because it was convinced that nuclear power was one of the most promising energy options for the country in both the short and the long term.

278. Moreover, his delegation was following with interest the follow-up measures taken by the Agency to strengthen the technical co-operation programme and was ready to co-operate with it in the formulation of Country Programme Frameworks.

279. Turning to Article VI of the Statute, he said his country was dissatisfied that, after so many years of work, hardly any progress had been made. He hoped that, after its examination of the three proposals submitted by the Chairman of the Board of Governors, the Africa Group and Canada, the General Conference would finally arrive at a compromise solution acceptable to all.

280. During the past 25 years, RCA activities had brought significant benefit to the region and the individual countries in it. Indonesia would continue to participate actively in that programme which had helped it develop its manpower and technical capabilities, and enabled it to apply them to the promotion of industrial growth, health care, protection of the environment and agriculture. His delegation was therefore in favour of extending the Agreement.

281. In conclusion, he said that his Government would continue to support the Agency in implementing its programmes which promoted international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, in particular for the benefit of developing countries. He announced that Indonesia would pay $100 100 into the Technical Co-operation Fund for 1998, which was its full share of the target. It would continue to make available its facilities for the placement of fellowship-holders from other developing countries, and to organize regional or interregional training courses as additional contributions in kind.

282. Ms. MOSLEY (New Zealand) said that, for her country, the most important aspect of the Agency's activities was its safeguards work pursuant to Article III of the NPT: the Agency was a key organization in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament. The indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, which New Zealand had strongly supported, had confirmed the vital importance of Agency safeguards in underpinning the non-proliferation regime.

283. New Zealand welcomed the development of the Model Protocol additional to Agency safeguards agreements and looked forward to its formal adoption by the Conference. The new measures it provided for would greatly enhance the Agency's ability to detect undeclared nuclear activities. She encouraged all Member States - primarily those which had concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements, but also the nuclear-weapon States and those which had concluded INFCIRC/66-type agreements - to conclude a protocol as soon as possible. For its part, New Zealand had embarked on the preliminary domestic consultations required for the conclusion of a protocol to the INFCIRC/153-type agreement it had concluded with the Agency.

284. On the other hand, her Government was deeply concerned over the total lack of progress in the implementation of the safeguards agreement between the Agency and the DPRK. That agreement remained in force and was binding, and the DPRK was in breach of its legal obligations not only to the Agency but also to all its Member States. New Zealand strongly supported the Framework Agreement which was making a vital contribution to regional stability and security; it was making a financial contribution to KEDO, and the New Zealand Government had been represented at the ceremony marking the start of work on

the construction of a new light water reactor in the DPRK. That work was progressing satisfactorily and it was high time that the DPRK honoured its international obligations.

285. On a more optimistic note, she pointed out that there had been a positive development in the South Pacific. For almost 40 years, New Zealanders and other people in the South Pacific had been worried about the environmental effects of nuclear testing in the region. Happily, those tests had come to an end. Her country welcomed the independent investigation which was being carried out by an International Advisory Committee of eminent scientists, under the auspices of the Agency, on the environmental impact of the nuclear testing at the Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls. New Zealand scientists were participating actively in that study and her country was looking forward to publication of the report in 1998.

286. Along with other South Pacific countries, New Zealand had welcomed the recent ratification by the United Kingdom of the Protocols to the Rarotonga Treaty. It urged the United States to ratify those Protocols as soon as possible.

287. The establishment of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization in Vienna in 1997, and the appointment of Mr. Hoffmann as Executive Secretary were also welcome developments. The CTBT had 47 signatories, had been ratified by seven States, and a start was being made on the setting up of the global monitoring system it provided for. Thus, its implementation seemed to be well under way. New Zealanders were very pleased that the era of nuclear testing was a thing of the past.

288. The Agency had played an important role over the years in promoting nuclear safety. The legal instruments adopted at the diplomatic conferences in September were further steps in that direction. However, everyone was aware of the problems both of those instruments posed to New Zealand. For example, it had fundamental reservations over several aspects of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. It felt that the compensation levels were too low, that damage should not be limited only to accidents where there was an emission of ionizing radiation and that, as a point of principle, countries which did not produce nuclear power and therefore did not create any risk should not be obliged to contribute to the fund.

289. Her Government thought that the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management fell well short of meeting the concerns of New Zealand and other coastal States as regards transboundary movements. As it had already stated in the Agency and other fora, New Zealand was uneasy about the shipping of radioactive waste through the Pacific. The recent South Pacific Forum meeting in Rarotonga had declared that shipments of radioactive waste and plutonium through the region were cause for continuing concern. New Zealand's disquiet about such shipments was well known and it was pressing for strengthening of the relevant international controls. It had a direct interest in ensuring not only that transboundary movements of nuclear waste by sea complied with international safety standards, but also that such standards reflected the highest safety levels and took full account of the concerns of coastal States and their populations. It

was therefore seeking significant enhancement of current international standards. At relevant international meetings, New Zealand had pressed for prior informed consent procedures for transboundary movements of spent fuel or radioactive waste for the coastal States which might be affected. Sufficient advance notice, full consultation and the consent of coastal States were essential transparency measures which would enable those States to protect their environment.

290. New Zealand understood and shared the concerns expressed by the Republic of Korea regarding the planned shipment of nuclear waste from Taiwan to the DPRK. As it had said in the Board of Governors in March, international transport of nuclear material demanded the greatest possible transparency and prior consultation. It urged those involved to heed the concerns of States which might be affected, like the Republic of Korea, and of the international community in general.

291. Of the issues before the General Conference, the review of Article VI of the Statute posed special problems. New Zealand felt strongly that all the issues should be resolved to the satisfaction of all Member States without exception, so that the Agency could concentrate on its core responsibilities. A formula for achieving that goal had in fact been found, namely the Canadian proposal. Of course, it required States to compromise on one issue or another about which they felt strongly, but it was only through such compromise that agreement could be reached. If that solution was not accepted at the current session of the General Conference, the only option would be to set those issues aside until the external factors which were beyond the control of the Agency and its Member States changed for the better.

292. For New Zealand, the Agency's main importance lay in its contribution to international security through its role in disarmament and non-proliferation. In contributing to the verification of further non-proliferation and disarmament measures and to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, the Agency would have to face new challenges. New Zealand hoped that the strengthened safeguards system would be in place in most countries by the time of the NPT Review Conference in the year 2000. It hoped that, by that time, negotiations would have begun on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for military purposes, and that consideration would have been given to further multilateral nuclear disarmament measures. In addition, it hoped to see further, more radical reductions in nuclear arsenals, including those of the three nuclear-weapon States not currently involved in the START process. All those steps would have significant implications for expansion of the safeguards system.

293. Over the past 40 years, the most impressive characteristic of the Agency had been the effective way in which it had responded to new challenges. All those who participated in its activities were aware of that unique flexibility and spirit of co-operation which, time and again, had enabled the Agency to deliver results. The next 40 years would also bring their share of challenges, but the Agency could build on its success. In that context, New Zealand paid tribute to the Agency's greatest strength, namely its dedicated and competent Secretariat. In particular, the international community was greatly indebted to Mr. Blix who had headed the

organization for 16 years and, with the appointment of Mr. ElBaradei as his successor, could look to the future with confidence.

294. Ms. PADILLA TERCERO (Nicaragua) thanked Mr. Blix on behalf of her Government for his 16 years devoted service to the Agency, paid tribute to the Agency on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary, and welcomed its two new members, Malta and Burkina Faso.

295. Nicaragua had made the necessary legal arrangements to ensure that it received the greatest possible benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear techniques; it was preparing to ratify the amendments to the Tlatelolco Treaty and to sign the Convention on Nuclear Safety. It also intended to accede to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, which had been approved at two recent diplomatic conferences. Likewise, the Nicaraguan Government was committed to supporting and strengthening the ARCAL programme.

296. It was more difficult to receive than to give. Those who requested assistance had to be accountable and remain forever grateful, whereas the donor derived a double advantage: firstly the feeling of usefulness, and secondly the opportunity to make use of his technology. Nicaragua was one of the countries with the difficult role to play, since it had need of others' assistance. The Agency's co-operation activities involved the implementation of various projects in fields such as medicine, agriculture, stockbreeding, hydrology, geothermal science, etc. That assistance had improved the socio-economic situation of the Nicaraguan population. Nicaragua therefore attached great importance to the further development of technical co-operation activities for the Latin American countries and hoped that its planned programmes would receive the necessary funding. The living conditions of people in the developing countries could only be improved with the co-operation of those who had had the good fortune to achieve better living standards.

297. In conclusion, she congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment to the post of Director General. She had no doubt that he would resolutely work towards the accomplishment of the Agency's mission, with the collaboration of all Member States.

298. Mr. BULA CAMACHO (Colombia), after welcoming Malta and Burkina Faso as new Member States, sincerely congratulated the Agency and its staff on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of its establishment on behalf of the President of Colombia, Mr. Samper, the Colombian Foreign Minister, Ms. Mejía, and himself.

299. During the 40 years it had been in existence, the Agency had fulfilled the purpose for which it had been established by the United Nations General Assembly, namely to "... seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world ...", while also ensuring that "... assistance provided by it or at its request or under its supervision or control is not used in such a way as to further any military purpose."

300. The Agency had promoted research and development in the peaceful use of nuclear energy by facilitating exchange of scientific and technical information, implementing safeguards to prevent the diversion of nuclear material for military purposes, and establishing standards to protect health and ensure safety in the utilization of nuclear energy.

301. Special mention should be made of the application of nuclear techniques in the food sector. Although an alarming number of people in the world were experiencing hunger and malnutrition, and the world demand for food was set to rise in the near future, the use of biotechnologies and nuclear techniques to promote more productive and sustainable agriculture in tropical environments was making a positive contribution towards tackling that worrying situation.

302. In the field of water resource management, the Agency's already notable efforts would need to be stepped up substantially. Scarcity of renewable water resources could become a critical problem in the next century, but nuclear science had developed a set of analytical tools - isotopic techniques - which, by providing vital information on those resources, facilitated their identification, development, protection and use.

303. Though it would be tedious to list all the activities the Agency carried out in fulfilling its mission in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, nevertheless some of the achievements of the past year deserved a mention, such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the strengthening of the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system through Programme 93+2, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Those successes showed that the Agency was heading in the right direction to achieve its objectives.

304. Turning to technical co-operation with Colombia, he drew attention to the upgrading of the IAN-R1 reactor. That reactor had been in service since 1965 and much of its control and safety equipment and its nuclear fuel had reached the end of their useful life. It had therefore become necessary to evaluate various possibilities for extending its operation. After presenting those possibilities, Colombia had received assistance from the Agency which had enabled it to replace and modify the most important parts of the reactor, and arrange for theoretical and practical training abroad for Colombian specialists. The upgrading work had assured the reactor's safe use for the next 30 years. The instrumentation, peripheral equipment and fuel provided had made it one of the safest reactors anywhere. It was being operated in accordance with the highest safety standards and did not present any hazard.

305. With regard to technical co-operation activities in Colombia in the field of nuclear medicine over the past five years, the project to improve the use of brachytherapy for the treatment of cervical cancer deserved special mention. Under that project, the National Cancer Institute in Bogotá had been provided with new modern equipment, specialists and technicians had been trained and co-ordinated research programmes conducted.

306. His country reaffirmed its support for the ARCAL programme whose high implementation rates demonstrated its worth. His delegation hoped that the implementation of an intergovernmental agreement aimed at increasing participation by the Agency and Member States would give fresh impetus to the programme.

307. Lastly on the subject of technical co-operation, Colombia was concerned over the limitations or restrictions that might be imposed on certain Member States because of their debts. Other solutions should be considered which would avoid such measures. It was not appropriate in the United Nations to adopt methods of paying contributions which varied according to a State's power and influence. At the most recent session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the President of Colombia had stated that: "We do not want a United Nations divided between rich and poor, with Members having first- or second-class status according to their economic contributions. The United Nations is not a private company, but the forum of solidarity in which all the countries of the world come together."

308. His Government was troubled by the fact that the amendment of Article VI of the Statute had been on the agenda for 20 years without any decision being taken. He urged Member States to make efforts to reconcile the various points of view and arrive at an equitable solution.

309. Colombia found it disquieting that the NPT was not being properly complied with, that important States had not ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, that there seemed to be no interest in proceeding further with negotiations on basic agreements to restrict the market in conventional weapons, which was being managed by those who supplied the tools of war, and that in recent years the financial resources allocated within the United Nations system to military operations had been 17 times greater than those allocated to social programmes.

310. It was time to tackle the arms build-up which needlessly devoured resources that could be given over to socio-economic development, and constituted a permanent threat to world peace and security.

311. In the next century, the level of development of nuclear energy and its applications would constitute one of the key differences between developed and developing countries. In order to prevent that difference from becoming another unacceptable instrument of domination, and avoid it ever being used for military ends, a powerful International Atomic Energy Agency was required which was capable of making the benefits of technological development available to all and preventing the occurrence of a new disaster of global proportions.

312. The successful transfer to Vienna of all the preparatory activities for the implementation of the CTBT provided another effective means of achieving that goal. The Non-aligned Movement, which Colombia currently had the honour to chair, had submitted to the United Nations General Assembly a number of topics of interest and concern in that regard.

313. Likewise, the President of Colombia had appealed for a clear and cogent strategy to deal with the serious problem of the arms race which would bring results. If multilateral organizations became malleable instruments in the hands of one or a number of States, the safety of the planet would be seriously threatened.

314. Finally, he commended the outgoing Chairman of the Agency's Board of Governors, Mr. Walker, on his work. He also expressed his delegation's deep appreciation to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Blix, and conveyed its best wishes to him for the future. It was to Mr. Blix's skill in directing the Agency for 16 years, and his perceptiveness and determination that the Agency owed its leading position on the world scene and within the United Nations system. In addition, he welcomed the new Director General, Mr. ElBaradei, who was taking on a heavy responsibility as a new chapter opened in the Agency's history. Colombia offered him its congratulations and unconditional support.

315. Mr. FEU ALVIM (Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials) paid tribute to Mr. Blix who, as Director General of the Agency, had made a significant contribution to improving the safeguards system, strengthening nuclear safety and raising the acceptance of nuclear energy in the world. Brazil and Argentina's adherence to the comprehensive safeguards system through the Quadripartite Agreement - to which ABACC was party - was one of Mr. Blix's many achievements. He also congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment as Director General and said he felt sure that his qualities and abilities would enable him to contribute to the promotion of the exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which was one of the objectives of the Agency and ABACC.

316. ABACC had been applying regional safeguards in Brazil and Argentina for five years within the framework of the Agreement for the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy which had been signed by both countries in Guadalajara (Mexico) on 18 July 1991 and had been in force since 12 December of the same year. ABACC's bilateral safeguards had been applied to all nuclear material in all the nuclear facilities in Argentina and Brazil since July 1992, when ABACC had started operations.

317. In March 1994, ABACC had started applying comprehensive safeguards together with the International Atomic Energy Agency, in accordance with the Quadripartite Agreement concluded between Argentina, Brazil, the IAEA and ABACC. Since its entry into force, that Agreement had been viewed as the safeguards agreement with the Agency foreseen in the Tlatelolco Treaty. In that connection, ABACC submitted a declaration to the Brazilian and Argentine Governments every six months indicating whether there had been any diversion of nuclear material for non-peaceful purposes under the terms of the Tlatelolco Treaty.

318. Since February 1995, within the framework of the Quadripartite Agreement, ABACC had also been participating in the application of comprehensive safeguards in Argentina pursuant to the NPT. In fact, the safeguards established by the Quadripartite Agreement were the same as those foreseen in INFCIRC/153 for NPT safeguards agreements. Following the announcement by the Brazilian Government of its intention to join the NPT, both Argentina and Brazil would fully integrate the existing non-proliferation agreements, thereby reaffirming their traditional position that nuclear energy should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

With regard to the new Protocol additional to the Quadripartite Agreement, ABACC would follow the initiatives taken by Brazil and Argentina in that regard.

319. During the five years it had been applying safeguards, ABACC had consolidated its technical and organizational capacity. That had only been possible because of the support it had received from the Governments of Brazil and Argentina, despite the serious economic difficulties both those countries were facing. Support had been given on many occasions during that period. Both countries had made it possible for the ABACC Secretariat to recruit a small but well trained technical staff, and to have recourse to a group of inspectors with knowledge of the different nuclear facilities. ABACC had also been able to count on the support of Brazilian and Argentine experts and laboratories when faced with difficult technical problems.

320. The technical co-operation support provided by the Agency had also been important. ABACC welcomed the decision of the Board of Governors to submit to the General Conference for its approval an agreement which would formalize and strengthen that co-operation. Technical co-operation between ABACC and third countries, such as the United States of America (Department of Energy) or France (Commissariat à l'énergie atomique), had also been significant. Co-operation with EURATOM had increased and should be formalized through an agreement in the near future. Moreover, ABACC was confident of the results of the co-operative efforts it had recently initiated with other countries, in particular Japan and the Republic of Korea.

321. The experience gained by ABACC in the application of regional safeguards had been used as a reference source for regions of the world where there were tensions which could lead to nuclear conflict. ABACC had been invited to talk about its experience at several regional and international meetings, including one organized under the auspices of the Agency.

322. Regional safeguards were an efficient means of increasing trust among neighbouring countries. The integration of regional safeguards into the international safeguards system could also reinforce international confidence in the peaceful intentions of countries which adopted that type of safeguards. Proliferation scenarios varied from region to region and it was easier for a regional organization to understand the problem.

323. The application of regional safeguards, in addition to international safeguards, should be seen as a way of enhancing trust among the countries of a region, and of boosting the international community's confidence in the countries in question. To be more widely adopted, regional safeguards had to be applied with greater efficiency and effectiveness, and that had economic ramifications. That issue would be discussed by Argentine and Brazilian representatives, as well as by members of the international community and ABACC's technical staff, at a seminar organized to celebrate ABACC's fifth anniversary on 10 October 1997 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

324. Although the benefits of peace were not easy to quantify, by avoiding a possible nuclear arms race, Brazil and Argentina had made considerable savings in human and economic resources compared with which the ABACC operating budget was minuscule. However, the financing of ABACC required a considerable effort from Brazil and Argentina and it therefore had to produce concrete returns. Those results were already apparent.

The meeting rose at 9.15 p.m.