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### RECORD OF THE THIRD PLENARY MEETING

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President: Ms. LAJOUS VARGAS (Mexico)

Later: Mr. FÖRSTER (Netherlands)  
Mr. ZAIDE (Philippines)

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[\*] GC(42)/20.

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(42)/INF/13/Rev.3.  
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Abbreviations used in this record

AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
BWR	Boiling water reactor
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
Early Notification Convention	Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
FBR	Fast breeder reactor
IRRT	International Regulatory Review Team
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
LDC	Least developed country
LWR	Light-water reactor
MESA	Middle East and South Asia
MOX	Mixed oxide
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
Nuclear Safety Convention	Convention on Nuclear Safety
NWFZ	Nuclear-weapon-free zone
PHWR	Pressurized heavy water reactor
PTA	Preferential Trade Area
PTBT	Partial Test Ban Treaty (Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water)
R&D	Research and development
RBMK	High-power channel-type reactor (Soviet Union)
TCDC	Technical co-operation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
WWER	Water-cooled and -moderated reactor (former USSR)

GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1997 (continued)  
(GC(42)/5)

1. Mr. ADAMOV (Russian Federation) said that in the twenty-first century, he would like to see the Agency continue to be an international organization highly competent in the nuclear area, furthering the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to meet the needs of the international community, and continuing its verification activities - a key element of the non-proliferation regime. The concerns expressed by environmental protection movements were understandable - despite the efforts made, nuclear power still did not meet the requirements identified by Enrico Fermi at the very outset of its development, namely economy, reactor safety, safe radioactive waste management, and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; yet there was no alternative if mankind's increasing energy needs were to be met.
2. Research carried out in Russia had shown that it was possible to go some way towards satisfying those requirements, by developing a safe nuclear fuel cycle comprising inherently safe nuclear power plants and installations that manufactured fuel without plutonium extraction - an important aspect from the non-proliferation point of view. The burning of plutonium had been envisaged as part of that fuel cycle, as well as the transmutation of long-lived radioactive elements, leading to the return to the earth of a small quantity of radioactivity comparable to the amount extracted in the mining of uranium. Such a fuel cycle would be environmentally safe and at the same time would offer a final solution to the problem of radioactive waste. Russia was prepared to provide details of that technology during the round-table discussions on nuclear power development prospects to be held the following day.
3. Ideas of that sort could only be implemented at the international level, however, since industrial companies which had not yet made returns on their investments into conventional nuclear technology were not interested in investing in the development of new reactor technologies and related fuel cycles. The Agency, on the other hand, could play an important role in furthering co-operation on such matters, as had been shown convincingly by the ITER project, which had provided a framework for the resolution of complex problems of a legal, political, environmental and economic nature. The Agency's successfully completed extrabudgetary programme on WWER and RBMK plant safety was also a good example of co-operation to solve technical issues of great importance to nuclear power as a whole.
4. One of the most serious problems associated with nuclear power was what to do with fissile materials no longer required for defence purposes. While suitable technologies for uranium now existed, no final disposal option had been chosen with regard to plutonium. His country believed that nuclear material removed from nuclear weapons should be used primarily in nuclear power, and the intergovernmental agreement between Russia and the United States of America on scientific and technical co-operation in the management of plutonium from nuclear military programmes was an important step in that regard.
5. At the recent summit meeting in Moscow, the Presidents of Russia and the United States had confirmed their commitment to nuclear disarmament and co-operation in the field of weapons-origin nuclear material utilization. They had outlined a number of specific measures

for the development of environmentally safe and cost-effective technologies and the establishment of appropriate industrial enterprises, and they had recognized that such co-operation should be pursued on a broad international basis.

6. The Russian Federation supported the Agency's initiative to establish a special fund for nuclear disarmament. However, the additional resources should not be restricted to purposes relating to the transparency of nuclear disarmament only, but should also be devoted to the optimum use of plutonium removed from nuclear military programmes.

7. The nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan had not only exacerbated the tense situation in the region, but had also hindered the efforts of the Agency's Member States to strengthen the non-proliferation regime at the global and regional levels. Russia was severely disappointed in that regard and called upon both countries to cease any further testing and accede immediately to the CTBT and the NPT.

8. Taking a passive position regarding nuclear inspection activities would not by itself suffice to prevent further proliferation of nuclear weapons. The existing legal and verification mechanisms of the nuclear non-proliferation regime should therefore be supplemented by the development of advanced nuclear technologies which would ensure that energy could be generated without posing a threat to that regime.

9. The advantages, for example, of fuel cycle technologies which did not involve the accumulation of weapons-usable fissile materials were self-evident. Integration of the world economy and competition in the power market were resulting in the stagnation of nuclear power in a number of countries and a reduction in State support for research in areas associated with nuclear power and even safety. Steps should be taken to preserve the infrastructure and the scientific and technical expertise accumulated so far. Only if society learned from the knowledge and culture gained would it be possible to contemplate seriously establishing a large-scale nuclear power industry. The Agency should play an important role in disseminating that knowledge, using all the means at its disposal.

10. With regard to the Agency's activities to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in developing countries, he said that steps should be taken to ensure that those countries did not make the same mistakes as the developed countries. The Agency's work in the area of technical co-operation was important, and despite Russia's current economic difficulties, it was contributing to the technical co-operation programme by providing equipment, organizing and hosting training courses, and offering fellowship training for specialists from developing countries.

11. Finally, Russia endorsed the Annual Report for 1997 and thanked the Secretariat and the Director General for their good work.

12. Mr. MIAH (Bangladesh) welcomed the Republic of Benin to membership of the Agency. His country had long been committed to the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology in such fields as agriculture, industry and medicine to promote and sustain socio-economic development. It had achieved notable successes in a number of areas, including the

development of high-yield varieties of rice and other crops, post-harvest food preservation technology, sterilization of medical products and tissue grafts and membranes, radioisotope production for medical use, tracer technology, the extraction of heavy minerals from beach sands, and environmental monitoring. Those successes would not have been possible without the technical assistance of the Agency.

13. Bangladesh was fully aware of the need for international co-operation in order to guarantee the peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy and was a signatory to most of the relevant Agency-sponsored treaties and conventions, notably the NPT, the Early Notification and Assistance Conventions, the Nuclear Safety Convention and the CTBT. It was also actively considering signing the Joint Convention on safe fuel and waste management and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

14. Bangladesh had participated in formulating Basic Safety Standard BSS115 and had already incorporated most of its recommendations into its national rules. The Government had taken steps to strengthen the national regulatory body and had launched a project for the construction of a radioactive waste processing and storage facility at a cost of US \$1.5 million.

15. With the rapid growth of population and the depletion of fossil fuel reserves, the international community, and particularly the developing countries, would have to rely increasingly on nuclear power. Without adequate and assured electricity supplies, there could be no sustainable development. Although his Government had decided to expedite implementation of the Rooppur nuclear power project, progress was being hindered by constraints faced by the licensing authorities of supplier countries, cost escalation, and by the need to take into account safety and environmental considerations. However, following meetings with an Agency fact-finding mission in December 1997, an expert group had drawn up an action programme for implementing the project, which it had submitted to the Agency's Department of Technical Co-operation. Bangladesh would appreciate an early response from the Department regarding the proposed programme.

16. His Government hoped that the IAEA, in line with Article III of its Statute and with Article IV of the NPT, would make every effort to ensure that nuclear power technology was transferred from the developed world to such countries as Bangladesh, the largest of the LDCs, which was in need of increased electricity supplies to feed its fast-growing industries and take advantage of the favourable environment created by the globalization of trade.

17. Lastly, he reiterated his Government's firm commitment to implementing the Rooppur nuclear power project. Bangladesh had fulfilled all its international treaty obligations, and its research reactor had recently come under full-scope Agency safeguards. It was convinced that nuclear power should not be used for destructive purposes, but rather to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of mankind for a decent quality of life.

18. Mr. PORGES (Croatia), after welcoming Benin as a new Member State of the Agency, said that his country attached the greatest importance to the Agency's technical

co-operation programmes. Since becoming a member itself in 1992, Croatia had been involved in valuable projects that had contributed to its economic and social development in general, and in particular to the harmonization of its legislation with the Agency's standards and norms, the establishment of expertise in the fields of radiation protection and waste management and the improvement of the skills of its experts through their participation in various international conferences and seminars. Croatia had especially appreciated the opportunity to demonstrate, on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Agency, the advanced level of its expertise in the application of nuclear techniques in radiation protection and safety, radioactive waste management and nuclear medicine. It had gained valuable experience not merely as a recipient country but also as a donor country, and it hoped that that co-operation with the Agency could be extended. Croatia was deeply concerned, however, about the decrease in the expected level of new resources for the Technical Co-operation Fund. It was convinced that the Agency's credibility and effectiveness could be maintained and strengthened only as long as a satisfactory balance was achieved among its main activities.

19. At the current session of the General Conference he would be signing the Protocol Additional to the comprehensive safeguards agreement which Croatia had concluded with the Agency in 1994. His country had always strongly advocated a policy of non-proliferation and had accordingly become a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty by virtue of its succession in 1992. The Model Additional Protocol had been a major breakthrough in the endeavours to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system. The universality and reliability of safeguards was a priority issue today, as the world strove to cope effectively with the threat of proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. All Member States, both non-nuclear and nuclear, should contribute fully to the attainment of the goals of the strengthened safeguards system. In that context, he wished to express his country's deep regret about the recent deplorable decision of some governments to conduct nuclear tests. Croatia was profoundly concerned about the possible negative consequences of such actions with regard to regional and global stability and the overall non-proliferation regime. It strongly urged those governments to join the vast majority of States in their efforts to curb the spread of nuclear arms and to achieve a world free of the nuclear threat.

20. There had been important accomplishments in nuclear safety, particularly the legally binding nuclear safety regime built up under the Agency's auspices. A number of significant international conventions had been agreed upon, dealing with early notification of a nuclear accident, assistance in the case of a nuclear accident or radiological emergency, nuclear safety with respect to land-based nuclear power plants, the safety of spent fuel and radioactive waste management and revisions to the regime for international liability. However, Croatia agreed with the Director General that there were other areas of nuclear safety in need of binding norms and looked forward to co-operating fully with other Member States in that regard.

21. Of course, adopting binding norms and standards was not all that was required; it was equally important to ensure that they were also fully implemented. The experience to be gained from the first review meeting of Contracting Parties to the Nuclear Safety Convention would not only be essential in determining appropriate ways of ensuring that the goals

established by the Convention were achieved, but would also be indispensable for the implementation of other conventions that were part of the nuclear safety regime but were still not in force.

22. Croatia was a co-founder and co-owner of the Krško nuclear power plant built on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia. Together with its Slovenian colleagues, it took pride in the results achieved so far, particularly in terms of safety and reliability indicators. After the establishment of independent and sovereign republics in Slovenia and Croatia, there had been divergent views on the original agreement between the joint owners, and great efforts had been needed on both sides in order to continue the former successful co-operation. The current indicators of safe and reliable operation of the Krško nuclear power plant confirmed that those efforts had not been futile, and he wished to renew his Government's assurances that in all future efforts to find a joint approach to operating the Krško nuclear power plant, concern for safety would be a priority consideration, in accordance with the widely accepted basic international principles of nuclear safety.

23. In conclusion, he said that Croatia would do its part to contribute to the Agency's activities in pursuit of its important mandate as custodian of the peaceful uses of the atom for the sustainable advancement of the quality of life and global security for all.

24. Mr. ENE (Romania) said that since the last session of the General Conference his country had undergone further structural changes which had also had a major impact in the nuclear field. The process had started with changes in research and had continued in the field of regulation, licensing and control, and finally in the nuclear power sector.

25. The Ministry of Research and Technology had been selected as the guinea pig for public administration reform. That process had begun in 1997 with the establishment of a legislative framework satisfying the requirements and recommendations of the European Union. As of 1999, competition would be the essential criterion for the financing of both R&D and innovation, with projects and programmes being selected on the basis of invitations to tender. The Ministry's National Research and Development Plan for 1999-2002 had been approved by the Government. It aimed to meet Romania's medium- and long-term social and economic needs, as established in the Government's programme. The National Atomic Energy Agency, a department of the Ministry of Research and Technology, was responsible for conducting the national nuclear R&D programme, also called the "nuclear safety" programme. Based on IAEA and EURATOM recommendations, its main goals were: to develop and use advanced technologies in the nuclear field; to ensure the safe operation of nuclear facilities; and to assess the impact of radiation on the public and the environment. The programme was subdivided into six areas: nuclear reactors and the nuclear fuel cycle; radioactive waste and spent fuel management, including the decommissioning of nuclear facilities; nuclear safety, nuclear accident risk assessment and management; assessment of the impact of nuclear activities on the environment and restoration of the environment; application of nuclear techniques; and support activities, international co-operation, computerization, human resources development, installations of national importance. The National Plan was expected to stimulate scientific research, technology development and innovation.



26. Reforms in the nuclear field had also been promoted by the National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control. In 1998, the law on the safe implementation of nuclear activities had been modified and supplemented to comply with the requirements of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The main changes were: the designation as the national nuclear regulatory body of the National Commission for the Control of Nuclear Activities, now an independent body reporting directly to the Government; the transfer of responsibility for environmental radiation monitoring from the Ministry of Water, Forests and Environmental Protection to the regulatory body; increased funding for the regulatory body; and more far-reaching responsibilities for the regulatory body.

27. The new infrastructure and tasks of the regulatory body had been approved by the Government in May 1998. Its staff had been increased to 306, with 60% being involved in radiological monitoring of the environment. Conditions were thus in place for improving regulation, licensing and control activities, especially since there were also more specialists on nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities on the staff. Romania hoped that the Agency would continue to support the training of regulatory body staff. The technical assistance received under project ROM/9/007 on licensing of the Cernavoda nuclear power plant was much appreciated. That ongoing project, which had started in 1991, was providing important support particularly with regard to regulations, safety analysis, quality assurance, radiation protection and operator licensing.

28. On the basis of the recommendations of the IRRT mission carried out in 1992, the regulatory body had taken a number of measures to increase its efficiency. It was conducting a review of all its activities in order to bring them in line with the requirements of the 1996 law and with international recommendations and guidelines. The last IRRT mission, which had been conducted in 1998, had made useful recommendations for the development of future activities.

29. Earlier that year, the Government had adopted a decision regarding reorganization of the Electricity Authority RENEL. As a result, three new companies had been formed: two in the nuclear field - the State company "Nuclearoelectrica" and the Independent Nuclear Activities Corporation, and a third - the National Electricity Company - for conventional power. The main activity of "Nuclearoelectrica" was nuclear power generation, and it was both owner and operator of Unit 1 of the Cernavoda nuclear power plant and had been entrusted with the construction of Unit 2. The main tasks of the Independent Nuclear Activities Corporation were heavy water production for the Cernavoda nuclear power plant and nuclear facility construction and operation. All the contracts and agreements signed by the former RENEL remained in force. His Government was grateful for the Agency's support of nuclear power development in Romania, particularly with regard to training and expertise in the current technical co-operation cycle. Romania hoped that it could continue to count on Agency technical co-operation, and on supplies from the United States as a major donor in connection with the replacement of high-enriched by low-enriched uranium fuel for the TRIGA research reactor at the Pitesti Institute for Nuclear Power Research.

30. His country supported the Director General's initiatives to introduce management reforms in the Secretariat in order to increase the Agency's efficiency, and it looked forward

to the report which the Senior Expert Group would soon be submitting to the Director General and to subsequent discussions in the Board of Governors.

31. Romania hoped that the new measures contained in the Model Additional Protocol would be implemented by all Member States so as to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime and planned, for its part, to start negotiations with a view to concluding such a protocol towards the end of the year.

32. The Romanian Ministry of Research and Technology, in co-operation with the Agency, was organizing a national public information seminar which was to be held from 30 September to 2 October to explain to the Romanian public the impact of nuclear energy applications on the population and the environment. It would be of interest not only to specialists from research institutes and companies, but also to non-governmental organizations, the media and central- and local-administration civil servants. He was grateful to the Agency's Division of Public Information for the assistance it had provided to ensure successful organization of that seminar.

33. In conclusion, he welcomed the admission of Benin to the Agency.

34. Mr. CHIDAMBARAM (India), after also welcoming Benin, read out the following message to the General Conference from the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee:

“Right from the time of our independence in 1947, our leaders had realized that a nuclear-weapon-free world would enhance the security of all nations. That is why nuclear disarmament was and continues to be a major plank of our foreign policy. We had, therefore, called for a ban on nuclear testing in 1954, the aim of which was to prevent further development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. This was not accepted, with the result that two new nuclear-weapon States emerged between then and the elaboration of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968.

“We were among those countries that had participated in good faith in developing the concept of a non-proliferation agreement but found that the NPT text that emerged was discriminatory. It divided nations between those that were allowed to retain and develop nuclear weapons and those that were forbidden the same right. It was also unbalanced, and imposed virtually no obligations on nuclear-weapon States, and even these limited obligations were not honoured by them.

“The decades of the 80s and 90s had, meanwhile, witnessed the gradual deterioration of our security environment as a result of nuclear and missile proliferation. In our neighbourhood, nuclear weapons had increased and more sophisticated delivery systems inducted. In addition, India had also been the victim of externally aided and abetted terrorism and clandestine war. Under these circumstances, in the interest of national security, the Government of India had to take the decision of carrying out nuclear-weapon tests.

“India’s nuclear tests were not intended for offence but for self-defence. We have stated that we will not be the first to use nuclear weapons. We are willing to strengthen this unilateral commitment by entering into bilateral agreements on no-first-use or multilateral negotiations on global-no-first-use. Having stated that we shall not be the first to use nuclear weapons, there remains no basis for their use against countries that do not have nuclear weapons.

“We are a responsible nuclear-weapon State. We are also the largest democracy in the world. Our non-proliferation credentials are impeccable; no equipment, material or technology exported by us to any country has been misused. We have never violated any treaty obligation.

“I reiterate that we shall continue to work towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons from the world in a time-bound framework and we earnestly hope that a nuclear-weapon-free and peaceful world will one day be a reality. The recent Non-Aligned Summit at Durban has called for an international conference on the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within the framework of a time-bound, universal and non-discriminatory nuclear weapons convention.

“We also hope that in such a world the “developing” countries will progress on the path to prosperity and become “developed”. For this to happen, nuclear energy will have to play its due role and the International Atomic Energy Agency should concentrate on this important scientific-technological task.

“I wish the forty-second General Conference of the IAEA success and hope that the discussions will be constructive and fruitful.”

35. India had worked for a nuclear-weapon-free world over the past five decades because nuclear weapons for none meant security for all. The nuclear-weapon States, as defined by the NPT, had ignored the provision in that Treaty which obliged them to work towards nuclear disarmament and had even been unwilling to include in the CTBT a provision for a time-bound framework for nuclear disarmament, as called for by India. With the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 the prospects for a nuclear-weapon-free world had dimmed alarmingly. Consequently, India had been compelled to redefine its security requirements. It hoped that the developing world had noticed that the most vehement critics of the recent tests had been either the nuclear-weapon States themselves, or other countries which enjoyed the security of the nuclear umbrella of a nuclear-weapon State or were not located in a hostile neighbourhood. Indeed, the political or geographical proximity of some of those countries to a friendly nuclear-weapon State was so obvious that they could perhaps be looked upon as surrogate nuclear-weapon States. None of them were developing countries, and their attitude smacked worryingly of a new kind of colonialism through technology control.

36. It was strange that India, which had never violated any treaty obligation, was being accused by some of violating the norms of the CTBT, a treaty which had not yet entered into force and to which it was not party. He recalled that India had been among the first to sign the PTBT prohibiting atmospheric tests, which had entered into force in 1963, and that India had

carried out its first underground test in 1974. Two States, one of which was China, had not signed the PTBT and had continued to carry out atmospheric tests long after its entry into force.

37. At the recent meeting of the NAM in Durban, the Indian Prime Minister had said that his country would be the first to join negotiations to abolish nuclear weapons provided the established nuclear-weapon States agreed to enter into such negotiations. The NAM Heads of State or Government had concluded that the present situation, in which nuclear-weapon States insisted that nuclear weapons provided unique security benefits and yet monopolized the right to own them, was highly discriminatory, unstable and unsustainable. With regard to the recent nuclear tests in South Asia, the Heads of State had viewed positively the commitment by the parties concerned in the region to exercise restraint in the interests of regional security. They had recalled that the 1995 NAM summit meeting held in Cartagena had urged the adoption of an action plan for the elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. Since most of NAM's 113 members were also Agency members those views could be expected to command a majority in the General Conference.

38. The developing countries felt that the Conference should concentrate on technical issues like nuclear power and not on extraneous political issues better dealt with by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Nuclear power development was forging ahead in Asia and would soon start to grow in Africa. Resolution GC(41)/RES/13 on strengthening of the Agency's technical co-operation activities had made special mention of enhancing the scientific and technological capabilities of developing countries in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. With that in mind, the Agency had decided to hold an international seminar on "Nuclear Power in Developing Countries: Its Potential Role and the Strategies for its Deployment" in India in October 1998. That was appropriate, since the developing countries had the greatest need for energy growth and were not allergic to nuclear power like some developed countries.

39. The Agency needed to find ways of preventing scientific co-operation from being inhibited by the commercial interests of vendors and of ensuring that safety-related equipment and R&D information were readily disseminated without hindrance from arbitrary and politically motivated export control regimes. Developing countries tended to hesitate before initiating a nuclear power programme because of their unfamiliarity with the steps required. In particular, a situation must be avoided where the leadership and public in developing countries shied away from introducing nuclear power because they expected safety and safeguards to raise daunting problems. The Agency had a key role to play in counteracting such inhibitions while, of course, ensuring safety as well as effective and economic implementation of its safeguards responsibilities.

40. In India, the four 220 MW(e) reactors being constructed near Kota in Rajasthan and at Kaiga in Karnataka were in advanced stages of construction and expected to go critical in 1999. Construction of the two Indian-designed 500 MW(e) PHWRs was expected to commence at Tarapur soon. Work on major critical nuclear components had already started. An intergovernmental agreement had been signed by India and the Russian Federation to augment the domestic PHWR programme through the construction of two 1000 MW(e)

WWER reactors to be built at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu. India was also discussing international co-operation with Russia on the evolution of the nuclear power and associated fuel cycle technologies best suited to addressing global energy needs in a safe and cost-effective manner.

41. Detailed internal reviews had recommended an installed nuclear power capacity for India of 20 000 MW(e) by the year 2020. India intended to attain that target by accelerating its construction of PHWRs and FBRs and procuring LWRs from friendly countries, followed by development of the LWR technology.

42. Since India had limited uranium and very large thorium resources, it was attracted by the idea of using the plutonium produced in the first-generation PHWRs to fuel FBRs and thereby make greater use of the thorium reserves. The test FBR at Kalpakkam had been synchronized and a power of 1 MW had been fed to the grid in October 1997. All sodium systems and steam generators had performed satisfactorily and the plutonium-uranium carbide fuel had been tested up to a burnup of 40 000 MW·d/t. After post-irradiation examination it had been cleared for a burnup of 50 000 MW·d/t. That facility was also being used for accelerated radiation damage tests on zirconium-niobium pressure tube material. In Kalpakkam, design and technology development of the 500 MW(e) Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) was progressing well. At the same site, the 30 kW Kamini experimental reactor fuelled with uranium-233 had achieved full power in September 1997.

43. To support the power programme and fuel cycle activities a broad base for fundamental applied and engineering research had been established. The development of MOX fuel was progressing well and both the BWRs at Tarapur had been loaded with such assemblies. India's Atomic Energy Regulatory Board was totally committed to all aspects of safety - design and engineering safety, operational safety and regulatory safety. It was currently focusing on enhanced involvement in safety research projects of relevance to regulatory decision-making and was also establishing a Safety Research Institute.

44. A great deal of R&D work was devoted to health, safety and environmental problems. Many training and retraining programmes had been organized, including the interregional group training programme on radiation protection and safety in medicine, organized jointly with the Agency in February under an Agency model project. The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre was organizing an eight-week course entitled "IAEA Regional Basic Professional Training Course on Radiation Protection" starting in October, and it was hoped that such courses would become an annual feature that would help the countries of the region to develop qualified radiation protection personnel.

45. In that context, the Agency should identify centres of excellence for human resource development under its TCDC programme, given that developing countries found it easier to learn from each other in high technology fields because of their cultural and economic similarities. India had for over 40 years been offering a one-year orientation course in nuclear technology which was open to scientists and engineers from developing countries.

46. In conclusion, he stressed the importance of restoring the original scientific and technical character of the Agency. It must not be allowed to degenerate into a shadow political forum merely duplicating the debates in the General Assembly. The vast scientific and technical knowledge accumulated by the Agency should be disseminated in an unbiased fashion to meet the objectives of its Statute, namely to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. The Agency could do much to encourage a nuclear safety culture and to ensure that safeguards did not inhibit technology development in the area of nuclear power. In that way, the Agency had a major role to play in ushering in a new and prosperous age for all humanity.

47. Mr. EL-FEKI (Egypt) said that his country was committed to worldwide nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. There was a particularly urgent need for progress in those areas in the Middle East because Israel's nuclear weapons programme and its obsolete doctrine of deterrence posed a threat to peace and stability in the entire region. Accordingly, Egypt had been working since 1974 for the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East and on 8 April 1990 President Mubarak had called for the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the region as a logical extension of that principle. In the Agency, Egypt had advocated the application of full-scope safeguards to all nuclear installations in the Middle East as a vital step towards achieving regional and international nuclear non-proliferation. Egypt had also proposed that the Agency develop a model agreement concerning safeguards and verification of compliance with the legal obligations associated with the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

48. In response to a request by Egypt, multilateral negotiations on disarmament and regional security in the Middle East had been initiated following the 1991 Madrid Middle East Peace Conference. Clearly, genuine peace and stability were unattainable in a region where there was military imbalance. The resolution on the Middle East adopted by the participants in the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, including the three depositary States (NPT/CONF.1995/32/RES/1), had reaffirmed the importance the international community attached to nuclear disarmament in the region. All those who had supported the resolution, particularly the depositary States, had a responsibility to ensure that its provisions were implemented.

49. All the Arab States without exception had acceded to the NPT and placed their nuclear facilities under full-scope Agency safeguards. Israel was therefore the only State in the region that had not acceded to the Treaty, nor had it declared its intention to do so. It continued to pursue a policy of nuclear provocation vis-à-vis its neighbours and refused to place its installations under Agency safeguards. The lack of any serious inclination on Israel's part to address one of the most complex regional and international security issues had led not only to renewed stagnation in regional disarmament efforts but also to a general worsening of the political and security situation in the Middle East, since it coincided with an unprecedented and extremely worrying deadlock in the peace process that was propelling the region towards disaster. Recent events in southern Asia should not distract the world's attention from the dangerous situation in the Middle East. The international community had a duty to promote the establishment of an NWFZ as a means of redressing the imbalance and thereby

strengthening international peace and security. Egypt would work with unabated enthusiasm towards that goal and towards promoting the application of full-scope Agency safeguards in the Middle East. It would continue to foster dialogue among the parties in the region and to encourage the Agency to take preliminary steps to establish an appropriate framework for any regional arrangements that might be agreed. He welcomed in that connection the workshop on safeguards held in May 1998 in response to a request by Egypt at the previous session of the General Conference. However, the fact that the workshop had concentrated on technical and general aspects rather than aspects specific to the Middle East region had detracted from the impact and success of the event, which had been intended to contribute towards the implementation of resolution GC(41)/RES/25 on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East.

50. President Mubarak had announced during the current year a new initiative to promote a world free of weapons of mass destruction and had advocated the holding of an international conference to achieve that goal within a fixed period of time. Egypt was convinced that the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East would serve the interests of all peoples and promote good neighbourliness. In that connection, Egypt and seven other States had issued a joint ministerial declaration on 9 June 1998 entitled "Towards a Nuclear Weapons Free World: The Need for a New Agenda".

51. Alongside non-proliferation, Egypt viewed technical co-operation as a key component of the Agency's programme and an integral part of its work to promote the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. It was therefore concerned at the steady decline in the financial resources contributed to the TCF in recent years. During the current year, the Secretariat had been forced to draw up contingency plans to deal with a crisis in the TCF and both donor and beneficiary countries had found themselves in a very difficult position. The situation had improved somewhat in recent months following the payment by some donors of arrears of contributions, but a considerable number of States were still dilatory in honouring their pledges to the Fund. While some States could reasonably attribute non-payment to difficult political and economic circumstances, others seemed to consider that the "voluntary" nature of contributions to the TCF conferred some measure of legitimacy on their failure to pay. Contributions to the Fund should really be viewed as morally mandatory since all States participated in the negotiations to fix the target for the TCF.

52. A great deal of time and energy had been wasted in the Board of Governors on the attempt to negotiate an amendment of Article VI of the Statute. Egypt had repeatedly stressed the urgent need to expand the Board so that it reflected the increase in the Agency's membership. Such an expansion would enhance the Board's moral and political authority and the acceptability of its decisions in the international community. General Conference resolution GC(XXV)/RES/389, adopted by consensus at the twenty-fifth regular session, had recognized that the areas of Africa and of the Middle East and South Asia were under-represented in the Board, and the need to remedy that situation had been reaffirmed in the meantime by numerous resolutions, the most recent being resolution GC(41)/RES/20. The continuing reluctance to provide Africa with an additional seat violated the right of the Agency's largest regional group to equitable representation and was inconsistent with the

spirit of the Conference's resolutions. An expanded Board would ensure wider participation by all States, particularly the developing countries, in the Agency's activities. It was high time to work out a solution that would allow the matter to be closed.

53. Egypt's second research reactor, with a capacity of 22 MW, had gone critical on 27 November 1997 and had been officially inaugurated by President Mubarak and President Menem of Argentina (which had assisted in implementing the project) on 4 February 1998. The reactor would help the country take a major step forward in the development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology. Egypt's Atomic Energy Commission had actively participated in the project and local industries had manufactured basic components. Strict nuclear safety standards had been observed at all stages of the project.

54. Other areas in which Egypt was pursuing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy included radioisotope production facilities in the pharmaceutical sector, the nuclear fuel cycle in the context of the second nuclear power reactor and its associated fuel plant, and a heavy water pilot plant which was due to come into service in early 1999. A 20 MeV pilot accelerator project was being completed in co-operation with the Agency and was also scheduled to come into operation in early 1999. The accelerator was an advanced tool for short-lived radioisotope production, neutron therapy, nuclear physics research and materials science.

55. Egypt was committed to developing regional and international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, especially under the numerous joint programmes that were being undertaken in collaboration with the Agency, the Arab Atomic Energy Agency and the Middle Eastern Regional Radioisotope Centre for the Arab Countries; it trusted that the Agency would increase its support for such national and regional technical co-operation projects.

56. In conclusion, he commended the Director General on his efficient management of the Agency's activities, which would undoubtedly enhance its influence in promoting the use of nuclear power and other peaceful applications of nuclear technology.

#### ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONFERENCE

- (a) ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ALLOCATION OF ITEMS FOR INITIAL DISCUSSION  
(GC(42)/2, Corr.1 and Add.1-2)

57. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee recommended that the agenda for the current session should consist of all the items on the provisional agenda set forth in document GC(42)/2, as well as the supplementary item contained in document GC(42)/2/Add.1 and the additional item contained in document GC(42)/2/Add.2.

58. Mr. TIWARI (India) said that his delegation did not agree with the inclusion of the item on nuclear testing in the agenda as requested by Australia, Canada, Japan and New Zealand. At the June meetings of the Board of Governors, it had been made abundantly clear that the Agency was not the correct forum for discussions on the subject of nuclear



testing, and he was surprised and pained to see that the entire debate was to be reopened yet again, taking up the valuable time of the General Conference. It was especially inappropriate for the Agency to be discussing the issue when other forums existed where the issue of nuclear testing was of direct relevance. The Conference on Disarmament, for example, had the authority to address all matters relating to disarmament and could therefore discuss nuclear testing, not in the limited, artificial view of the nuclear-weapon States, but rather in the context of global nuclear disarmament, as the developing countries and non-aligned States had been wishing for the past five decades.

59. Having recalled the Agency's functions as set out in Article III of its Statute, he said that the Agency had no technical or political competence that could facilitate discussion or resolution of the nuclear testing issue. Furthermore, the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO, which did have the technical competence and would also have the legal authority to address the issue once the CTBT had been ratified and had entered into force, had already met twice to discuss nuclear testing.

60. At the thirty-ninth regular session of the General Conference, in 1995, a number of Member States had expressed similar views. The representative of the United Kingdom had said that the Agency, fundamentally a technical organization, was not the correct forum for consideration of the nuclear testing issue, that there were other bodies where the issue was already receiving active consideration, and that it was for those bodies to pronounce on what was essentially a political question<sup>1</sup>. He had further stated that his delegation did not wish to see the Agency become a vehicle for ad hoc national or regional protests on political issues, which was incompatible with the Agency's responsibilities and activities as provided for in its Statute.<sup>2</sup> The representative of China, for his part, had said that the issue of nuclear testing did not lie within the Agency's competence and that the issue was being considered in the United Nations General Assembly and its First Committee, in the United Nations Disarmament Commission and in the Conference on Disarmament. He had also noted that raising the issue in the General Conference could interfere with the normal functioning of the Agency, which already had a heavy workload, and that the Agency should focus its attention and resources on tackling the issues which lay within its competence as effectively as possible.<sup>3</sup> As for the representative of the United States of America, he had said that political issues such as nuclear testing should be addressed in more appropriate international fora and that raising the issue of nuclear testing in an organization concerned with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was unnecessary and even inappropriate.<sup>4</sup>

61. Following the debate at the 1995 session of the General Conference, two countries had continued to test in 1996, but it was interesting that the Board and the General Conference had chosen to remain silent at that time.

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<sup>1</sup> See document GC(39)/OR.10, para. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See document GC(39)/OR.10, para. 16.

<sup>3</sup> See document GC(39)/OR.10, para. 18.

<sup>4</sup> See document GC(39)/OR.10, para. 25.

62. Some countries were now preaching against nuclear testing while making every effort not only to preserve and secure the nuclear weaponry that a few States currently possessed, but also to refine and improve them through various national scientific programmes in order to consolidate a discriminatory nuclear world order. The nuclear-weapon States had not made a single multilateral nuclear disarmament initiative, let alone reached any agreement on the issue of nuclear disarmament.

63. The security of the four countries that had requested inclusion of the agenda item was guaranteed, in one way or another, by the nuclear umbrella, and it should come as no surprise that they had chosen not to say anything during the 1995 discussion from which he had quoted. He wondered whether their attitude was evidence of a mentality that selectively sought to criticize activities in developing countries which, when pursued by members of their own club, did not attract criticism.

64. Mr. UMER (Pakistan) recalled that, when the issue of nuclear testing had been discussed at the June meetings of the Board, one of the main reasons why no concrete results had been achieved had been the view of some delegations that the Agency was not the appropriate forum for the discussion of such issues. His delegation was therefore extremely disappointed to see that the item had been included in the agenda for the present session of the General Conference. There might have been some justification for including the issue of nuclear testing in the agenda for the thirty-ninth session of the General Conference, in 1995, but now that an organization which was competent to address nuclear testing issues existed, he wondered what purpose would be served by discussing the matter further in a specialized technical agency such as the IAEA.

65. Turning to the explanatory memorandum submitted by Australia, Canada, Japan and New Zealand, which described the tests conducted by Pakistan as a challenge to the integrity of the NPT, he recalled that his country had supported the adoption of the NPT by the General Assembly in 1968 and had, for 25 years, tried to keep nuclear weapons out of South Asia. Pakistan had tabled several proposals promoting the universality of the Treaty and yet no country, including the four that had submitted the explanatory memorandum, had paid anything but lip service to its efforts. The Agency was not the Secretariat of the NPT, and was involved with the Treaty only to the extent of its safeguards activities. The threat to the non-proliferation regime arose out of the stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the disregard of Article VI of the NPT, not the nuclear tests, a fact that the four countries submitting the memorandum had conveniently chosen to ignore. As to the statement that the tests were a challenge to the CTBT, he recalled that Pakistan had supported the CTBT at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and at the General Assembly and had participated actively in the negotiating process. Furthermore, Pakistan had not initiated the tests; they had been conducted in self-defence to restore the strategic balance in the region.

66. With reference to the last paragraph of the explanatory memorandum, he asked himself how Pakistan could have violated the objective of seeking to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world with its tests. It had also done nothing to subvert peace and international co-operation. As to the objective of furthering the establishment of safeguarded worldwide disarmament, tens of

thousands of nuclear weapons had been developed since the Agency's inception, making him wonder how great a role the Agency had actually played in promoting worldwide nuclear disarmament. In any case, Pakistan had not violated any of the agreements to which it was a party, and had fulfilled all its obligations under its safeguards agreements with the Agency.

67. In conclusion, he observed that in his delegation's view, the supplementary item requested by Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Japan did not strictly meet the requirements laid down in the Statute for matters to be discussed by the General Conference.

68. The PRESIDENT asked whether the Conference, having duly noted the statements made by the delegations of India and Pakistan, could agree to the inclusion in its agenda of all the items recommended by the General Committee.

69. It was so decided.

70. The PRESIDENT said that, as regarded the allocation of items for initial discussion, the General Committee recommended that all the items listed in document GC(42)/2 be taken up for discussion as indicated in that document. It further recommended that the supplementary item entitled "Nuclear testing" and the additional item entitled "Participation of Palestine in the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency" be taken up directly in the Plenary.

71. It was so decided.

72. The PRESIDENT, turning to the order of items, said that the General Committee recommended that the supplementary item entitled "Nuclear testing" be taken up immediately after item 19 of the provisional agenda, thus becoming item 20, that the order of the items "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East", and "Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat" be reversed, with the former remaining item 21 and the latter becoming item 22, and that the additional item, "Participation of Palestine in the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency", be taken up immediately after "Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat", thus becoming item 23, with the remaining items being renumbered accordingly. It was understood that that order could be modified, in the light of progress, as long as due notice was given.

73. Mr. AMIR (Israel), referring to the General Committee's recommendation to reverse the order of items 20 and 21 of the provisional agenda, said that the item on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East had in the past been the subject of a consensus resolution, whereas the item on Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat was an obvious attempt at political harassment that would inevitably disrupt confidence and co-operation. Israel would be compelled to examine the outcome of the discussions on Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat before formulating its position on any resolution regarding the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East. If the order of the items was reversed as recommended by the General Committee, Israel would not be able to support any resolution under the item "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East", not even a consensus resolution like that adopted the previous year.

74. Mr. RITCH (United States of America) said that his delegation did not intend to block any consensus, but wished to point out that the issue raised by Israel had serious implications. The two items in question should be considered in an order conducive to compromise and consensus, and he was concerned that taking the items in the order suggested by the General Committee might not be the most productive course to take.

75. Mr. KAREM (Egypt) wondered how it would be possible to take up the agenda items in an order conducive to compromise and consensus when one item was being held hostage to the other.

76. The PRESIDENT asked the Conference whether it wished to adopt the General Committee's recommendation as to the order of items.

77. It was so decided.

78. The PRESIDENT noted that since the Conference had decided to accept the General Committee's recommendation to include the additional item entitled "Participation of Palestine in the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency" in the agenda, it would be necessary, if the item was to be taken up during the current week, to waive that part of Rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure which stated that an additional item could not be considered within seven days of its being placed on the agenda unless a two-thirds majority decided otherwise. She asked the Conference whether it was prepared to do so without a vote.

79. It was so decided.

(b) CLOSING DATE OF THE SESSION AND OPENING DATE OF THE NEXT SESSION

80. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee recommended that the General Conference set Friday, 25 September, as the closing date of the forty-second regular session; it further recommended that the forty-third regular session should open on Monday, 27 September 1999, in Vienna.

81. The Committee's recommendations were adopted.

Mr. Förster (Netherlands) took the Chair.

#### REQUESTS FOR THE RESTORATION OF VOTING RIGHTS

82. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had had before it requests for the restoration of voting rights under Article XIX.A of the Statute from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Kenya.

83. With some reservations, the Committee had recommended that Belarus's right to vote during the present session be restored. The request from Kazakhstan had been rejected on the basis of the information currently available, but the Committee was willing to reconsider Kazakhstan's request at its next meeting if additional information was received. With regard

to Afghanistan and Kenya, the Committee had recommended that their right to vote during the present session be restored.

Ms. Lajous Vargas (Mexico) resumed the Chair.

84. The PRESIDENT, having thanked Ambassador Förster for conducting the Conference's discussions on restoration of voting rights, said she took it that the General Conference agreed to approve the General Committee's recommendation to restore the voting rights of Belarus, Afghanistan and Kenya and consider Kazakhstan's request further once more information had been received.

85. It was so decided.

86. Mr. BENMOUSSA (Morocco) said that it had been his understanding that the criteria or guidelines for consideration of requests for the restoration of voting rights contained in document GC(42)/10 were to have been considered and adopted by the Plenary before the General Committee's recommendations on the restoration of voting rights were accepted.

87. The PRESIDENT said that the criteria or guidelines for consideration of requests for the restoration of voting rights would be taken up once a recommendation on the subject had been made by the Committee of the Whole.

GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1997 (resumed)  
(GC(42)/5)

88. Mr. AGHAZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), having welcomed Benin as a new member of the Agency, said that the international community expected the Agency to uphold nuclear safety and enforce international treaties designed to protect life and the environment against the potential threats associated with the applications of nuclear energy. The NPT should be complied with fully and without prejudice by all its signatory States. The nuclear-weapon States, the main proponents of the NPT, bore a particular responsibility towards the world population for reconciling the Treaty's objectives with the realities of its implementation and for reconciling the rights and obligations of the signatories, which was essential if the Review Conference in the year 2000 was to achieve its objectives and confidence in the NPT maintained.

89. The recent test explosions by India and Pakistan were a cause of grave concern among the NPT signatories in South Asia and the Middle East. With the actual number of nuclear-weapon States increasing, the real objective of the NPT was being undermined and the fear of an unwanted regional arms race was growing. He appealed to India and Pakistan, whose respective founding fathers had been strong proponents of peace, to accede to the NPT to avert the dangerous consequences of such a race. Their accession to the NPT as well as the CTBT would help strengthen the non-proliferation regime and enhance regional security and world peace.

90. Regrettably, Israel continued to refuse to accede to the NPT and was supported in so doing by some nuclear-weapon States. That, coupled with Israel's silence with regard to the production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, was the main stumbling block to the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East. If the nuclear-weapon States were sincere in their non-proliferation commitments, they should welcome the initiatives of the Middle East NPT signatories aimed at the formation of such a zone. A vital step towards achieving that objective was to place all the nuclear installations in the region under Agency safeguards inspections.

91. The role of the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology in raising standards of living and developing industry, agriculture and medicine was irrefutable, and would be crucial in the decades to come. Considerations such as the increasing world population and the growing demand for primary energy sources, particularly electricity, limited fossil fuel and water resources, and the need for better waste management, improved safety and advanced technologies would make the use of nuclear technology for energy production inevitable. The same was true of the application of radioisotopes, radioactive materials and irradiation devices.

92. Accordingly, the Agency's efforts to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in Member States, and to encourage co-operation between Member States in that regard deserved commendation. However, political constraints to which the nuclear industry was subject, and especially the severe restrictions imposed by some industrial States on the transfer of nuclear technology to the developing countries, had caused numerous difficulties for the latter. Peace and development were inalienable rights of the signatories to the NPT under Article IV of which special consideration was to be given to the developing areas of the world. Globalization of nuclear technology was essential, and biased approaches and restrictive regimes in the field of technology transfer were totally unjustifiable.

93. He welcomed the notable results achieved over the past few years by the Agency with respect to nuclear safety, radiation protection and the disposal of radioactive waste. While the conclusion of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management was of particular significance, what was ultimately needed was all-encompassing international co-operation in those areas without the restrictive policies of the industrialized States. Given that inadequate nuclear safety in one country could have adverse transboundary consequences, any refusal to co-operate for political, or other, reasons was unacceptable, and the Agency must be allowed full scope to provide assistance and co-operation.

94. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Agency's Statute, and in particular the question of expansion of the Board, he said that the number of seats allocated to the MESA and the Africa areas should be increased in order to achieve the parity between the regional groups long sought under previous General Conference resolutions. Decisions concerning the composition of each regional group were the responsibility of the group itself. Close co-operation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which comprised more than 50 member countries, could help the Agency solve its problems in that regard, and

indeed he would suggest that a permanent seat on the Board be given to the Member State providing the presidency of that Organization.

Mr. Zaide (Philippines) took the Chair.

95. Mr. HASSAN (Sudan) praised the Director General's achievements during his first year in office, particularly his initiatives aimed at reforming the Agency, for which he could count on Sudan's full support.

96. The Agency had endeavoured since its establishment to harness the potential of nuclear energy for the advancement of humankind and to prevent its use for purposes that threatened human life and the environment by establishing and consolidating the safeguards system. Sudan thanked the Agency for its legal and technical assistance in promoting the safe use of radioactive materials, which had permitted the development of a comprehensive legal framework for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

97. Sudan attached great importance to the Agency's role in promoting forms of international co-operation which gave developing countries and especially LDCs access to the benefits of advanced nuclear technology, particularly in the areas of health, agriculture and environmental protection. Such co-operation included prospecting for and quantitative and qualitative assessment of groundwater, occupational radiation safety, environmental and food protection, national and regional training courses, and the provision of materials and equipment.

98. Sudan had endeavoured to honour its obligations to the TCF in 1998 and would make every effort to do so again in 1999.

99. Noting that AFRA had had a positive impact on co-operation and development in the African States over the past ten years, he urged donor countries to continue supporting its programmes, especially in the areas of food safety, medicine, water supply and industry.

100. He stressed the need to strike a balance between the Agency's technical assistance and its safeguards programmes at a time when the developing countries, especially the LDCs, as exporters of raw materials and importers of manufactured goods, were faced with unfair competition as a result of globalization and deregulation of markets and could expect nothing but further impoverishment and marginalization in the future. There could be no justice or equity in international relations until the developing countries were provided through the United Nations system with the technical assistance they needed to raise their productive capacity to competitive levels. Sudan hoped that the Agency under its current leadership would work for an increase in technical assistance to foster the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for sustainable development.

101. The greatest threat facing the international community was the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which made no distinction between *developing and developed* countries. The recent nuclear tests had come as no surprise and they would certainly not be the last. The problem had its roots in the imbalance in international relations and would not be solved by

imposing sanctions on the States concerned, a step that would merely exacerbate the situation. Double standards were being used in dealing with States that violated international law; the outstanding example was Israel, which ignored the injunctions of the international community with impunity, while the people of Iraq were subjected to hunger and disease on the pretext of ensuring the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. With a view to solving the problem of nuclear weapons once and for all, Sudan welcomed the idea of holding a conference of foreign ministers to prepare a summit meeting that would set a timetable for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

102. The issue of fair representation of the developing countries in the Board of Governors had been on the Conference's agenda for many years. As the Agency's membership grew, the areas of Africa and of the Middle East and South Asia were increasingly under-represented. Resolution GC(XXV)/RES/389 had called on the Agency to remedy the situation, which would necessitate amending Article VI of the Statute. His country supported the African proposal whereby the membership of the Board would be increased by seven seats, and opposed the linkage of the expanded membership with the issue of the composition of geographical groups. It was for the groups themselves to determine their membership and no State should be imposed on a group against its will.

103. Recalling General Assembly resolution 52/250 on the participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations, he urged the General Conference during its current session to upgrade the status of Palestine in the Agency as well.

104. Sudan had recently been the victim of an unjustifiable air attack launched by the United States of America on a factory in Khartoum on the pretext that it was producing chemical weapons. It had in fact been manufacturing drugs for medical and veterinary purposes. The attack had destroyed the plant, injured a number of its employees and terrified the people living in the surrounding area. The factory was a private enterprise financed by Sudanese investors and the PTA Bank, an institution operated by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). A number of foreign officials and ambassadors accredited to the Sudan had visited the factory, which was viewed as a model regional investment and funding project. It had met over 50% of the country's demand for medicines, especially life-saving drugs, and exported some of its products to neighbouring countries. The export of its medical products to Iraq under the "oil-for-food" programme had been approved by UNSCOM. The destruction of the factory would leave Sudanese children and women exposed to such life-threatening diseases as malaria, tuberculosis and bilharziasis. The Sudanese authorities would welcome any expert mission to investigate the facts of the case and the impact of the air strike.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.