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President: Mr. ZAIDE (Philippines)
Later: Mr. CODORNIÚ PUJALS (Cuba)

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Abbreviations used in this record

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Regional Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Early Notification Convention	Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
INES	International Nuclear Event Scale
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
KANUPP	Karachi nuclear power plant
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
Kyoto Conference	Third Conference of the Parties to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
LDC	Least developed country
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
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
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
PWR	Pressurized water reactor
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

Abbreviations used in this record

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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
SAGTAC	Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Co-operation
START	Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms
TCDC	Technical co-operation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Transport Regulations	Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
Vienna Convention	Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (May 1963)
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WWER	Water-cooled and -moderated reactor

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

1. Mr. STAHL (Germany) fully endorsed the statement made by the delegate of Austria on behalf of the European Union. Given the fact that the Agency would be called upon to play an even more important role at the threshold of the twenty-first century than in the 40 previous years, he welcomed the Director General's efforts to modernize the organization and to introduce the required effectiveness and efficiency, in particular in co-operation with the senior expert group, which had almost completed its consultations. It would be important not only to streamline the Agency, but also to preserve its objective character and hence its world reputation. The proposed World Nuclear Report fitted in well with the modernization efforts and could become a doubly effective guiding instrument, both as a reference document for delegations contributing to General Conference debates and as the basis for more objective discussion in the media and among the public.
2. As to the Agency's role in the coming decades, Germany considered that it should firstly be an action centre for the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy worldwide and for safeguards inspections, and secondly a forum for the exchange of opinions on non-proliferation and nuclear weapons reduction policies.
3. The first of those roles was particularly important in the field of nuclear safety and radioactive waste. In elaborating the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Agency had made a further contribution over the past two years to the development of what was now generally known as a nuclear safety culture, without which it was impossible to win or regain public confidence in nuclear energy.
4. Another related Agency function was to draw attention to the importance of nuclear power in terms of both the environment and energy provision. The anticipated increase in the world population over the coming decades would inevitably lead to greater energy demand, if future generations were to enjoy an appropriate standard of living. Energy-saving measures and the use of renewable resources, although important, would not be sufficient. The use of more fossil-fuel power plants would cause long-term damage to the world's climate by releasing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The nuclear facilities currently in service, which were constantly being improved, had demonstrated that the risks associated with them were controllable and that they made an appreciable contribution both to meeting energy demand and to protecting the climate. Faced with widespread problems of acceptance, the Agency had the difficult and constant task of drawing attention as objectively as possible to technical and legislative progress in the areas of safety, transport and the storage of nuclear waste.
5. In Germany, more stringent safety standards had been introduced at two new types of reactor: the European pressurized water reactor, developed by French and German nuclear engineers, and the boiling water reactor (SWR 1000), developed by German electricity supply companies and Siemens AG. Germany was confident that both types of reactor, which would come into service over the next 20 years, would open up new prospects for nuclear

technology. In addition, considerable progress had been made with the disposal of nuclear waste in the Gorleben salt dome - experts from all over the world were constantly monitoring progress there. Germany would be pleased to collaborate more closely with the Agency in that connection, and to participate in meetings of international experts for the purpose of reviewing the latest findings.

6. Finally, with regard to the international co-operation being implemented with Agency support to improve safety at Eastern European reactors, he said that a number of German companies were working closely with Eastern European operators to achieve greater information exchange.

7. The Agency's second role was as the centre of the international safeguards system. The existence of effective safeguards contributed significantly to maintaining public confidence in a credible non-proliferation regime. Germany welcomed the fact that the Agency had succeeded in improving and modernizing its safeguards system by approving the Model Additional Protocol. The priority now was to apply the new system on a universal basis as soon as possible, and to integrate it into the existing system in an efficient and cost-effective way. The new system could not become fully effective and efficient until all Member States were participating fully in it.

8. The Agency also served as a forum for the exchange of opinions on non-proliferation issues. The nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan had once again demonstrated that the spread of weapons of mass destruction was the greatest threat to security in the twenty-first century. It must be opposed with greater determination than ever. The main instruments for doing so were the NPT and the decisions taken by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. The NPT Review Conference to be held in the year 2000 and the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee in April 1999 should strengthen the NPT and the international nuclear non-proliferation regime based on it. The most important thing was to achieve universal validity for the NPT, an objective that remained a priority for his Government.

9. The signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by 150 countries was the expression of the desire of an overwhelming majority in the international community to eliminate nuclear testing once and for all. The events of May 1998 represented a serious setback in that regard. It was thus all the more important that all States which had not done so should sign and ratify the Treaty soon, thereby reaffirming their commitment to a universal and comprehensive ban on nuclear testing and making it possible for the CTBT to come into force. Germany had ratified the Treaty in August 1998. It would also do its utmost to support the future development of the CTBTO and its verification system.

10. Germany had a strong desire to see the DPRK and Iraq comply fully with their obligations and co-operate with the Agency, and it also expected the programme to combat illegal trafficking in radioactive substances to be continued with the appropriate emphasis.

11. No less important than the measures to prevent proliferation were the efforts in the area of nuclear-weapons reduction. The conclusion of an agreement banning the production of

fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices was the next logical step in the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The decision taken on 11 August by the Conference on Disarmament to set up an ad hoc committee to negotiate such a treaty brought the objective of banning the production of fissile material for military purposes much closer. The German Government would do all in its power to enable the committee to begin and successfully complete its work as soon as possible. Germany welcomed the progress which had been made, bilaterally, multilaterally and, in particular, with the Agency's involvement, towards the irrevocable withdrawal of weapons-grade nuclear material from the military sector, in particular plutonium, and placing it under international control.

12. The problems which he had outlined could only be resolved if the Agency and its Member States worked closely together. In order to achieve that, there would sometimes be an unavoidable need for world opinion, led by the United Nations and the Agency, to exert the necessary pressure on reluctant States. The future of the planet and of future generations could only be guaranteed if all States respected the necessarily strict rules in that context.

13. Mr. AHMAD (Pakistan), after welcoming Benin on its admission to the Agency, said that although the beginning of the 1990s had seen the end of the Cold War, the century was ending with dismal scenes that reflected supreme human folly. Massacres and genocide had been committed in Africa, Europe and Asia, while for Pakistan and its region the most regrettable incident had been the nuclear explosion carried out by India on 11 May. Pakistan had not reacted instantly or impulsively. It had looked to the major Powers to provide it with security guarantees in the light of that terrible event, which had had serious and immediate repercussions. Its hopes dashed, Pakistan had taken the difficult, but necessary, decision to conduct tests - purely as a defensive response, as it had no aggressive designs against anyone. The tests had simply served to restore the strategic balance in the region.

14. There could be no doubt that India was responsible for the nuclearization of South Asia. Pakistan, as a responsible member of the international community, had no intention of aggravating the situation. It had therefore adopted a position which took account of the goal of nuclear non-proliferation, as well as its national interests, and had announced a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, in accordance with the CTBT. It had also expressed its willingness to consider acceding to the CTBT. As was well known, Pakistan had played a constructive role during the finalization of the Treaty's text and had voted in its favour at the United Nations. Pakistan was also discussing with friendly countries means of stabilizing the situation in the region. However, Pakistan would not be coerced into acceding to the CTBT or any other treaty. As in every democratic country, the Government took account of public opinion and would not bow to external pressures. Pakistan continued to support total nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, both vertical and horizontal. It had pledged, at the highest level, not to transfer sensitive nuclear technology, and had kept scrupulously to that promise. That stance should be recognized by freer exchange of information and technology among responsible States.

15. The Agency was undoubtedly the most efficient and productive of all the United Nations technical organizations. Its focus should continue to be on technical promotional

activities. Unfortunately, for a number of years, political issues and debates had taken up an increasing proportion of the time and effort of the Secretariat and the policy-making organs. Certain matters discussed in Vienna were best left to New York and Geneva. There had also been an excessive shift in favour of the Agency's verification role. Although safeguards were clearly a basic Agency function, they provided only a legal framework for the organization's main objective, which was the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

16. There was now general agreement among governments and the main donor bodies that water and energy would be central to development problems in the coming decades. The Agency was well placed, from both the technical and institutional points of view, to make a vital contribution to solving those problems. The exploration and optimum utilization of fresh water resources ranked high among the development priorities of a large number of Member States. The important role of nuclear techniques in such activities was well recognized, and the scientific forum taking place in parallel with the General Conference was a commendable initiative. He also welcomed the fact that nuclear energy and sustainable development had been chosen as the topic for the 1999 scientific forum.

17. Of all the nuclear technologies, energy production had the greatest potential for achieving socio-economic impact. Regrettably, the growth of nuclear power, in both industrialized and developing countries, had slowed down over the past 20 years, partly for economic reasons, but mainly because of ill-informed decisions. On the positive side, some European countries seemed likely to review their decision to abandon nuclear power. A number of Asian countries had committed themselves to nuclear power or were keenly interested in doing so. The Agency should adopt a proactive role to strengthen the technical infrastructure of Member States interested in nuclear power and consideration could also be given to setting up a nuclear power fund.

18. Technical co-operation was the cornerstone of the Agency's promotional activities. Pakistan congratulated the Department of Technical Co-operation on having achieved a record implementation rate of 76.2% in 1997. That figure - especially as it had been achieved in the first year of a biennial cycle - was proof of the high quality of the Department's planning and management, and of its hard work. It was also clear that the overprogramming authorized by the Board had facilitated the effective utilization of technical co-operation resources. However, pledges to the TCF had fallen during the year to their lowest ever level - 70.2% of the target - resulting in a sharp decline in available resources as compared to 1995 and 1996. Despite serious financial difficulties, Pakistan had, as usual, paid its full contribution for 1998. It intended to pay its share of the 1999 target and urged all Member States to do likewise.

19. The increasing use of technical co-operation among developing countries was encouraging and efforts to identify appropriate centres of excellence in developing Member States should be pursued. Pakistan was willing to share with other developing countries its modest knowledge and experience in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It regularly offered places in its laboratories to Agency trainees in agriculture, medicine, industry and hydrology. Pakistan had also greatly benefited from its participation in RCA activities. It appreciated the work which had been done in drawing up the Guidelines and Operating Rules

for the RCA programme and in identifying the RCA's objectives for the first 25 years of the next century. He hoped that the parties to the RCA would do their utmost to translate those concepts into reality.

20. Turning to the activities of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) over the past year, he said that the two research reactors and the Karachi nuclear power plant had continued to operate safely. Pakistan was grateful to the Agency for its assistance in upgrading safety at the KANUPP reactor. Construction of the Chashma nuclear power plant was proceeding satisfactorily; it was due to be connected to the grid before the end of 1999. Officials from that plant had taken part in several OSART missions, and one at the plant itself was planned for the first quarter of 1999. He thanked the Agency for the valuable assistance it had provided at various stages of the plant's construction, and said that Pakistan looked forward to continued co-operation during the operational phase. Pakistan's main research institute, the Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology, was engaged in several Agency-funded projects.

21. The agricultural centres of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission had successfully used mutation methods to achieve several improved varieties of food and cash crops. Five varieties of wheat, cotton, chickpea and rape had been approved for cultivation over the previous year. A number of training activities had been organized in Pakistan in the context of the interregional Model Project on the utilization of salt-affected land. Field trials were under way to evaluate several mutants resistant to cotton leaf curl virus which had been developed at PAEC centres through the application of nuclear and genetic techniques. The cotton variety NIAB-Karishma, developed in 1997, now covered about one third of the cotton growing area of Punjab province. Pakistan's National Institute for Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering had developed a biofertilizer which had greatly increased rice and legume yields. The ten medical centres of the PAEC were providing diagnostic and therapeutic treatment for almost 250 000 patients per year. Two more nuclear medicine centres would come into service at the end of the current year.

22. A well-developed safety culture was an essential component of any successful nuclear programme. In Pakistan, the regulatory body was gradually becoming more independent from the authority responsible for the operation of nuclear facilities. Thus, some of the powers of the PAEC had been delegated to a semi-autonomous body, the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Board, which formulated and applied national nuclear safety and radiation protection policies and also supervised the activities of the Directorate of Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection. A draft law had been submitted to parliament for approval. Pakistan had signed and ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and would be submitting its national report to the forthcoming meeting of the Contracting Parties. Pakistan called upon all countries with nuclear power programmes which had not yet done so to accede to that Convention and ratify it without delay in order to enhance nuclear safety worldwide.

23. He expressed appreciation for the many initiatives that the Director General had already taken, particularly the setting-up of the senior expert group and the revitalization of the internal review process. Consultations could be held in order to reconcile the various recommendations and implement the agreed measures. Finally, he noted that some progress

had been made towards resolving the issue of amending Article VI of the Statute, and urged the General Conference to strive to achieve the desired consensus.

24. Mr. KENIK (Belarus) said that his country greatly appreciated the work of the Agency, which since its inception had made great efforts to strengthen nuclear safety, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and to improve intergovernmental co-operation in the field of the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy.

25. Since its independence, Belarus had made the universal application of the principles of non-proliferation one of its main foreign policy priorities, and it attached great importance to the Agency's activities in that sphere. It had ratified START and, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, had acceded to the NPT and signed a safeguards agreement with the Agency. It had been one of the first Member States of the United Nations to sign the CTBT. In April 1992 it had commenced withdrawing tactical nuclear weapons from its territory, a task which was completed in 1997.

26. Having voluntarily renounced the possession of nuclear weapons, Belarus was very appreciative of the Agency's efforts to facilitate the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. It welcomed the conclusion of agreements to set up such zones in the southern hemisphere, and had consistently advocated that similar initiatives be taken in the northern hemisphere. Belarus was very concerned at the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan, and believed strongly that countries which committed themselves to a nuclear programme should take all necessary steps to avoid aggravating regional and global tension.

27. As the first State to propose the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe, Belarus firmly believed that before such a zone was set up, the nuclear-weapon States should provide assurances that they would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against other States which might wish to belong to such a zone, and that the countries concerned should commit themselves to binding legal and political undertakings, both unilaterally and on a reciprocal basis, thereby demonstrating their support for denuclearization objectives and helping to enhance nuclear security and confidence in Europe.

28. Belarus had no nuclear power plants, and attached the greatest importance to optimizing the radiation protection of its population, which was still suffering on a daily basis from the effects of the Chernobyl accident - the most serious radiological accident that had ever occurred. The main lesson to be drawn from that grim experience was that serious nuclear accidents had direct or indirect consequences far beyond the frontiers of the State where the accident occurred. That fact had led the Agency to embark on work aimed at broadening and strengthening international co-operation in a number of areas: improving the operational safety of RBMK reactors; planning complex medical and other countermeasures for application in different types of emergency; adopting criteria for dealing with the consequences of accidents and for co-ordinating protection measures; strengthening the legal and legislative framework for radiation protection; initiating scientific research into the behaviour and impact of radionuclides released into the environment - particularly research into the effects of low radiation doses on human health; mitigating the consequences of the

Chernobyl disaster as far as possible; rehabilitating the affected territories; and monitoring the health of the populations concerned.

29. Experts had calculated that the losses suffered by Belarus as a result of the Chernobyl accident amounted to US \$235 billion, which was 32 times the size of its national budget in 1986. The contaminated areas represented one quarter of the country's surface area, and over 150 000 people had had to be rehoused, thus involuntarily becoming environmental refugees. In order to mitigate the accident's consequences on its territory, the Belarus Government had launched a wide-ranging programme funded from the national budget, but it relied heavily on the support of the international community. He was deeply grateful to all those people of goodwill, States, international organizations and social welfare bodies which had responded to the United Nations appeal by providing assistance to Belarus.

30. The Agency too had committed itself actively to strengthening its co-operation with Belarus in the context of the interorganizational programme to provide international assistance to regions affected by the Chernobyl accident, particularly in the areas of strengthening radiation protection, radioactive waste management, rehabilitating agricultural and forest areas, and reducing the external dose commitment to the inhabitants of the contaminated areas. Belarus welcomed those initiatives and noted that its activities with the Agency under the Agency's technical assistance programme - one of its most dynamic programmes - were producing tangible results and exerting a positive impact on its development. The implementation in Belarus of a project for the production of lubricants from rapeseed grown on contaminated land was the first in a new generation of projects which were not only intended to decontaminate the land and solve other environmental problems, but also had a clear economic impact. Belarus was also satisfied with the implementation of the interregional Model Projects on "Upgrading Radiation Protection Infrastructure" and on "Upgrading Waste Management Infrastructure", which would add fresh momentum to the conclusion of bilateral agreements between States of the region.

31. One of the main tasks undertaken by Belarus after its independence had been to establish a legal framework governing radiation protection and nuclear safety. In January 1998, two extremely important laws had come into force, one on radiation protection of the population and the other on export controls. In addition, the Belarus Parliament was currently examining a draft law on nuclear energy utilization and radiation safety which specified the procedures to be followed in order to ensure the safe use of ionizing radiation sources.

32. The Belarus Government attached great importance to the elaboration of international legislation in the area of nuclear safety and radiation protection. In November 1997, the Belarus Parliament had ratified the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, which had entered into force for Belarus in May 1998. In September 1998, Belarus had signed the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention, which it believed fully satisfied the wish of States to establish a worldwide liability regime for nuclear damage and also strengthened and complemented the mechanism for compensation for nuclear damage provided for in the Paris and Vienna Conventions. Belarus had also decided to accede to the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

33. Belarus attached great importance to the strengthening of the international safeguards regime and to strict compliance with commitments undertaken for the protection of nuclear material. With the help of the Agency, the United States, Japan and Sweden, it had set up a State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material which met all the relevant international standards. The system enabled Belarus to play an active role in the Agency's programme to detect cases of illicit trafficking in nuclear material and radioactive sources and in its inspection activities, and allowed Belarus to exercise control over nuclear materials in transit through its territory.

34. On the basis of the experience it had gained within the framework of its international commitments under the NPT, its safeguards agreement and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, and since it had the necessary infrastructure and qualified personnel, Belarus proposed to set up a regional training centre for nuclear material accountancy, control and physical protection. It called on the Agency and all interested countries to support that initiative.

35. Despite its difficult economic situation, made worse by the need to deal with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, the Belarus Government had managed to contribute \$1.3 million to the Agency's Regular Budget for 1998. It had also made good its arrears of assessed programme costs for all previous years (1990-1997), had made a voluntary contribution to the TCF for 1998 of some \$100 000, and would do everything in its power to meet its financial obligations to the Agency. In conclusion, the Belarus Government was satisfied with the work the Agency had done in 1997 and could approve the Agency's Annual Report for 1997 and the Regular Budget for 1999.

36. Mr. RANA (Kenya) said that all Agency members had a duty to ensure that nuclear technology was used safely and peacefully for the purposes of sustainable development without compromising the well-being of future generations, and to address the new challenges arising from socio-economic and political developments that had an impact on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, on energy needs, particularly those of the developing countries, and on the environment. The Agency and its Member States should focus their efforts with even greater determination on the main areas of activity and endeavour to respond flexibly to the new challenges.

37. Kenya was grateful to the Agency for the technical assistance it provided. Full and mutually advantageous co-operation between Kenya and the Agency remained of paramount importance to the Government and people of Kenya in tackling social and economic challenges. Kenya particularly appreciated the technical co-operation achievements in agriculture, health and industry, which were fully in line with the objectives of the United Nations Special Initiatives on Africa and confirmed that the Agency, guided by its Member States, strongly supported the efforts of developing countries, especially in Africa, to expedite technology transfer in order to achieve sustainable development. Kenya also welcomed the Agency's efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of its technical co-operation activities through the implementation of various policies and management concepts, such as Partners in Development, Country Programme Frameworks, Thematic Planning and Model Projects. Those initiatives had improved the cost-effectiveness of the technical co-operation programme

in Kenya, and had helped ensure that projects were selected in accordance with the country's development needs.

38. The Agency was also to be commended for its well-designed programmes aimed at promoting regional co-operation to increase the pace of nuclear technology transfer. Its support for regional groups, in particular AFRA, clearly demonstrated the Agency's visionary efforts to promote and strengthen regional co-operation and to address regional challenges. That approach, which recognized the differences in level of technological development among developing countries, could bring mutual benefits if applied to the maximum. The AFRA programme had helped establish strong ties of friendship and co-operation between countries of the region, so that a number were now becoming partners in development. Kenya hoped that the programme would receive further support, since the activities already carried out had proved vital in dealing with regional nuclear energy issues taking account of unique regional problems. The AFRA programme looked set to become a major tool for the future implementation of the Agency's technical co-operation activities.

39. In the area of food and agriculture, nuclear techniques were being used to improve food security through mutation techniques, the maximization of plant productivity and preservation of the environment, with isotope and other nuclear techniques being used for water and soil management, to improve the diagnosis and control of livestock diseases, and to increase animal productivity. The Agency continued to contribute to the development of improved drought-resistant wheat varieties, and to the improvement of animal diets and animal health, all of which were important elements in the national food security programme. The Government was determined to eradicate the tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis from Kenya, and would give priority to the use of the sterile insect technique for tsetse fly control in areas where that technique showed promise.

40. Over the past year, Kenya had continued to extend the application of non-destructive testing in its manufacturing industry, both for quality control purposes and in order to establish acceptable standards for its industrial goods. The Kenya Bureau of Standards continued to work with the International Organization for Standardization and other parties to set up an integrated national qualification and certification system for staff engaged in non-destructive testing. Kenya was extremely grateful to the Agency for the assistance it had provided. The technology was currently being used to determine the structural integrity of buildings and other structures damaged by the terrorist bomb attack of August 1998. Kenya thanked the governments and institutions which had helped it deal with the consequences of the attack, and appealed to the Agency to provide it with additional support in order to help ensure the safety of the rehabilitated structures.

41. In order to ensure the sustainable and effective application of nuclear technology in Kenya, the Government intended to provide the Institute of Nuclear Science at the University of Nairobi with the support it needed for adapting modern instrumentation and analytical techniques. In addition to providing support to other institutions for the maintenance of scientific instruments, training and analytical work in various fields of research and development, the Institute would also be involved in the application of radiation technology

for environmental conservation purposes, including isotope applications for the monitoring of environmental pollution, radiotracer studies, and nuclear analytical techniques.

42. Under its technical co-operation programme, the Agency had also helped upgrade Kenya's national health service, particularly in the area of diagnostic radiology and radiography. National liaison centres for diagnostic radiology and radiography currently provided end-users in the national health care system with the scientific and technical training they needed. The centres planned to widen the application of such techniques under a national project aimed at improving the diagnosis and treatment of cervical cancer, which affected many young women in Kenya and thus represented a particular health problem with consequences for all sectors of the population. The project would greatly assist the national health system in dealing with that problem.

43. During the next programme cycle Kenya would be involved, in the framework of the AFRA programme, in a project on the application of isotope hydrology in the development and management of water resources. In terms of socio-economic development, it was expected to produce tangible results for a significant part of the population in the semi-arid north-eastern region of Kenya. Isotopes would be used to verify groundwater and aquifer dynamics through the use of numerical modelling procedures and calibrated models in order to establish a system on which to base decision-making for water resources management. Kenya was grateful to the Agency for including it in the project.

44. The elaboration of a set of radiation safety standards and provisions had made a crucial contribution to ensuring the safety of nuclear technology applications in Member States. In that context, the promotion of radiation safety by the Radiation Protection Board had played a very important role in the effective application of nuclear technology in Kenya by ensuring that radiation sources were maintained, stored and used in accordance with adequate health and safety standards. Kenya was determined to comply with the safety standards.

45. The Government's initiative to promote public awareness of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was well under way, with involvement of both the scientific community and public and private sector policy-makers. The objective of the campaign was to improve all the interested parties' understanding of the advantages of nuclear energy and its potential impact on national development. It was an important undertaking that would require close collaboration with the Agency. The Government therefore hoped to receive Agency support in obtaining financial and technical assistance.

46. The Agency's safeguards system had been strengthened significantly to provide credible assurances not only with respect to declared nuclear activities but also with respect to the absence of clandestine nuclear activities. For the Kenyan Government, nuclear security in tomorrow's world required that safeguards be implemented in a clear, fair and transparent manner and that strong measures be taken in the event of non-compliance. Moreover, all safeguards measures adopted at the international level should be implemented in strict compliance with the legal framework comprising the Agency's Statute and relevant treaties. It was extremely important that all States should compile an inventory of their nuclear material. In that regard, Kenya called upon the Agency to take full account of the latest technical

innovations in seeking to apply safeguards as effectively, efficiently and non-intrusively as possible.

47. The environment in which the Agency operated had changed and long-term reorientation was needed to enable the Agency to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century. It was vitally important to improve the mechanisms used in determining priorities among the various objectives and to strengthen activities using the available resources. In that connection, Kenya welcomed the initiatives that the Director General had taken since assuming office, particularly the internal management review, the external review of its operation and the review of the Agency's role in managing public information.

48. In conclusion, he thanked the Secretariat, in particular the Department of Technical Co-operation, for the work it had carried out. With regard to the staffing of the Secretariat, the Director General was to be commended on his efforts to increase the proportion of women professionals with a view to achieving the required balance. As to recruitment at the senior managerial and decision-making levels, due account should be taken of regional and subregional balance.

49. Mr. HEATHCOTE (United Kingdom) said that over the past year significant progress had been made in implementing the strengthened safeguards system. The Secretariat had submitted to the Board for approval additional protocols pertaining to 32 States - a number of them with significant nuclear activities - and one regional organization. The United Kingdom was among that number, together with all its European Union partners. He was pleased to have signed the additional protocol in accordance with the clear undertaking he had given on behalf of the United Kingdom at a special meeting of the Board the previous year. The next step was to bring the agreements into force as soon as possible. Although the domestic legislative schedule might prevent it from bringing its additional protocol into force as rapidly as it would wish, his Government was already working with the national nuclear industry, EURATOM and the Agency to see what measures could be applied on a voluntary basis. The United Kingdom called on all States to follow its example by negotiating and bringing into force additional protocols with the Agency and making every effort to help the Agency establish a strengthened safeguards system as soon as possible, which in turn would enable it to optimize safeguards through the integration of new and old measures.

50. In the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the past year had not, unfortunately, been one of entirely smooth progress. Nevertheless, as a depositary State, the United Kingdom welcomed Brazil's ratification of the NPT. In addition to negotiating its additional protocol, his country had also taken a number of other positive steps in that area. The United Kingdom and France had been the first nuclear-weapon States to ratify the CTBT on 6 April 1998 and, after completion of its strategic defence review, the United Kingdom had announced a reduction in the number of warheads to be carried by Trident submarines and a ceiling on the overall number of nuclear warheads. A further outcome of the same review - and one which was more directly relevant to the Agency's work - was that large quantities of nuclear material would be placed under EURATOM safeguards and therefore liable to Agency inspection. More detailed explanations on that matter and other related measures were being

made available to Member States as part of the United Kingdom's commitment to greater transparency.

51. Having thus made tangible contributions to multilateral efforts in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the United Kingdom had been particularly dismayed that India and Pakistan had chosen the opposite course in conducting their nuclear tests in May. The only effect of the tests had been to heighten tension and upset regional stability in South Asia, and they had rightly been widely condemned by the international community. The United Kingdom called on India and Pakistan to take the following measures as soon as possible: to sign and ratify the CTBT; to sign the NPT and submit their nuclear activities to Agency inspections; to undertake not to develop or deploy nuclear weapons or missiles capable of carrying such weapons; and to adopt national legislation on the control of nuclear exports and exports of missiles in line with the controls exercised by the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

52. The actions of India and Pakistan had once again highlighted the urgent need to conclude a fissile material cut-off treaty. The United Kingdom welcomed the fact that the two countries had joined in the international consensus which had led to the establishment of an ad hoc committee at the Conference on Disarmament, and called upon them to accept a moratorium on fissile material production in the meantime. The United Kingdom was committed to playing an active role in the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material, and the action it had taken as a result of its strategic defence review showed its willingness to undertake commitments and obligations of the kind that such a treaty would include.

53. The situation in Iraq and the DPRK continued to cause concern. Like its European Union partners, the United Kingdom commended the Agency on its vital work of investigating Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme. The United Kingdom condemned Iraq's decision of 5 August to suspend its co-operation with UNSCOM and the Agency. By taking that decision, Iraq had placed itself in breach of its obligations under various United Nations Security Council resolutions and the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the United Nations Secretary-General and Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister in February 1998. The United Kingdom called on Iraq to comply fully and immediately with all its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Memorandum of Understanding. The United Kingdom was also seriously concerned at the DPRK's continuing failure to co-operate with the Agency in implementing its safeguards agreement. It strongly urged the DPRK to respond to the repeated calls of the Agency's Member States by complying with its commitments under its safeguards agreement and co-operating as fully as possible with the Director General.

54. The United Kingdom continued to support the Agency's role in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and its efforts in the field of nuclear safety. It looked forward to participating in the first review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety scheduled for April 1999, and thanked the Secretariat for the efforts it had made in support of the preparations for that meeting.

55. The safety of some nuclear power plants in Eastern Europe remained a concern. The United Kingdom had been pleased - in the framework of a larger programme of bilateral support - to provide extrabudgetary funds for specific Agency technical co-operation projects in that area.

56. The United Kingdom continued to be a strong supporter of the Agency's technical co-operation activities as a whole. It was pleased to have been able to make an additional contribution to the TCF, which meant that it could once more say that it had paid 100% of its share of the target since the inception of the Fund. The Agency had made great efforts to improve the management of technical co-operation activities - for example, by introducing the technical co-operation strategy, Model Projects and Country Programme Frameworks - and all Member States should play their part by paying their contributions to the TCF and their share of assessed programme costs on time and in full. The United Kingdom strongly urged them to do so.

57. In conclusion, he thanked the Director General for the personal efforts he had made in his first year to improve the management of all the Agency's activities. The United Kingdom looked forward to the results of the work done by the senior expert group and of the internal review being carried out by senior managers in the Agency.

58. Mr. D'ESCATHA (France) welcomed Benin on its admission to the Agency and associated himself with the statement made by Austria on behalf of the European Union.

59. With the Board's approval in May 1997 of the second part of Programme 93+2, it was important to make good the political commitments undertaken during that process. France and its European Union partners had spared no effort in negotiating successfully the additional protocols to safeguards agreements concluded by Member States of the European Union, and it took satisfaction in being about to sign the additional protocol to its safeguards agreement. Programme 93+2 could only be fully effective if applied by the vast majority of States. France therefore urged all States with a safeguards agreement to conclude an additional protocol as soon as possible.

60. The outcome of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference in 2000 had been burdened by deadlock over the Middle East question. It would be absolutely essential to overcome that problem before the Committee's next session if the latter was to produce a more substantial result that demonstrated the vitality of the Treaty and a strengthening of the review process prior to the Review Conference in 2000. France still believed strongly that the NPT was, and should remain, the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, of which the Agency's safeguard system was the essential instrument. In that context, France welcomed Brazil's accession to the NPT and congratulated it on having made an important commitment which strengthened the Treaty's universal nature at a crucial time for the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

61. The NPT and the non-proliferation regime were not immune to crisis. The recent nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan had illustrated that fact. Very concerned at those developments, France, which had immediately

expressed its total disapproval, had nevertheless chosen to engage in a critical dialogue with the two countries in question - a dialogue that, in its view, should not lead to any weakening of the international non-proliferation regime. In that context, France welcomed the fact that India and Pakistan, as well as Israel, had agreed with the decision to establish, within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive devices. While acknowledging with satisfaction the moratorium on testing announced by India and Pakistan, France urged them to sign the CTBT without delay.

62. The events in South Asia were not the only example of the obstacles being encountered in pursuit of non-proliferation objectives. The situation in the DPRK continued to arouse serious concern in that regard. The difficulties currently confronting KEDO could not justify in any way the DPRK's threat to resume its military programme, or the continual obstructions it placed in the way of the Agency's efforts to ensure implementation of its safeguards agreement. Iraq was another subject for concern after its decision to suspend its co-operation with UNSCOM and the Agency and to restrict the scope of the international inspectors' activities. That decision was completely unacceptable. Moreover, it clearly did nothing to help Iraqi interests at a time when the latest report of the Agency's Action Team hinted at the possibility of moving to ongoing monitoring and verification with regard to nuclear inspections. France urged Iraq to resume its co-operation with UNSCOM and the Agency without delay and to comply fully with its obligations.

63. The CTBT, an instrument for monitoring non-proliferation which also contributed to nuclear disarmament, had been opened for signature two years previously. France had ratified it on 6 April 1998 at the same time as the United Kingdom, the two countries being the first of the five nuclear-weapon States to take that step. France was playing an active part in the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. It was making a very substantial contribution to the work of the Provisional Technical Secretariat responsible for setting up the Treaty's international verification system. No time should be wasted in advancing the entry into force of the CTBT and in making the international verification system operational. The positive statements of intent made by India and Pakistan concerning their accession to the CTBT should encourage the international community to sustain its efforts to achieve the Treaty's earliest possible entry into force.

64. France's closure and dismantling of its testing centre in the Pacific was a clear indication of its commitment to the objectives of the CTBT. He did not wish to dwell on the subject, except to mention the conclusions of the International Advisory Committee appointed by the Agency, at the request of the French Government, to assess the radiological situation on the Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls. France noted with satisfaction that those conclusions confirmed the French authorities' repeated assertions that the tests had been conducted with all the necessary precautions in order to ensure that there were no short-term or long-term radiological consequences for public health and the environment. France thanked the Chairman of the International Advisory Committee, Ms. Gail de Planque, the chairmen of the study groups, and all the experts from the participating countries and laboratories, for their contributions to the success of the study. It also thanked the Agency's Secretariat for having taken on the management of the project and the organization of the international scientific

conference which had discussed the Committee's conclusions. Finally, France was also grateful to Mr. Bobadilla Lopez, Chairman of the Chilean Atomic Energy Commission, for his skilful chairmanship of that conference.

65. France welcomed the start of negotiations on a treaty for the prohibition of fissile material for explosive devices as it had worked hard to that end. The treaty would have to be universal, non-discriminatory, and verifiable on an effective international basis. For its part, France had taken the unilateral decision to halt its production of fissile material for explosive devices, in 1993 in the case of plutonium, and in June 1996 in the case of highly enriched uranium. France welcomed the fact that other nuclear-weapon States had taken similar decisions and, for its part, had decided to go one step further by dismantling its facilities for producing such material - a process that was already under way.

66. The promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was inseparable from non-proliferation and, like the latter, an essential objective of the Agency's activities. The Kyoto Conference had highlighted the difficulty, in the context of sustainable development, of reconciling growth in energy demand with limitations on greenhouse gas emissions. France believed strongly that nuclear energy could and should contribute to economic development and the well-being of mankind while also respecting the environment.

67. Safety enhancement was an objective shared by all States. In April 1999, the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety would be holding their first review meeting. France was preparing actively for that meeting, which should take initiatives to promote a safety culture with greater worldwide acceptance. However, that should only be the first stage. The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, which had been adopted in September 1997 and was an indispensable complement to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, had not yet entered into force. The international community must spare no effort in bringing it into force at the earliest opportunity.

68. The Contracting Parties to the Paris Convention had decided to review the Convention in order to bring some of its provisions into line with the Vienna Convention. France placed great value on a broadening of the nuclear civil liability system as a means of ensuring both the protection of potential victims and the legal security of French industrialists operating in that field. France called on all States to sign and ratify the revised Vienna Convention.

69. Despite the Agency's increased responsibilities, resulting in greater costs, the draft budget proposed by the Board for 1999 showed a slight decrease in real growth. While it shared the concern for strict budgetary control, the French delegation believed that zero growth constituted neither a principle nor a dogma, and that the Agency should be given a budget that allowed it to accomplish its essential missions effectively. In that regard, it was as well to be aware of the perverse effect induced by the constraint of zero growth. It forced the Agency increasingly to seek extrabudgetary funding, an expedient which undermined Member States' powers of control and made the Agency overdependent on resources that came from the donors with strings attached. The French delegation continued to think that, in the light of the great efforts made to improve management and effectiveness, it was now time to make a

deliberate move towards a policy of rational programme selection. He looked forward with interest to the recommendations of the group of experts convened by the Director General.

70. Those comments also applied to the Agency's technical assistance and co-operation activities. France commended the Secretariat on its efforts to improve their implementation. However, it was concerned about the discrepancy which had been noted for a number of years between the target set for the TCF - perhaps an overambitious one - and the level of voluntary contributions actually paid. In the absence of any rational selection, overprogramming beyond the normal limit appropriate to cover implementation uncertainties was an easy way out that penalized States like France which paid their share of the Fund in full. The practice should therefore be discontinued.

71. Among the more significant events which had taken place in France over the past year, the total capacity of France's 57 PWRs had reached 61 GW(e) at the end of December 1997, representing 78% of national electricity production. The availability of the 54 PWRs of the 900 and 1300 MW(e) types remained satisfactory (around 83%). Reactor safety in 1997 had also remained at a satisfactory level. The first three units of the 1450 MW(e) series (Chooz B1 and B2, Civaux 1) had been connected to the grid, and the startup of the last one (Civaux 2) was scheduled for 1999. An incident classified at level 2 on the INES scale had occurred at Civaux 1 in May. The cause had been thermal fatigue affecting part of the shutdown reactor cooling system. The incident had led to the shutdown for repair of the three units.

72. On 2 February 1998 the French Government had outlined France's overall energy policy. The nuclear option had been retained, with greater emphasis being placed on efficient energy management and the use of renewable energy sources. The objective of the policy was to keep the nuclear option open until the year 2010, which would see the end of the expected lifetime of the oldest power plants. In addition, particular attention would be paid to quality control and transparency in the nuclear industry, and to the independence and diversity of expertise in the area of safety and radiation protection. The abandonment of the Superphénix reactor did not call into question research on fast neutrons, particularly the work on transmutation provided for under the law of 30 December 1991 concerning the management of long-lived waste. That work was continuing, with the Phénix reactor, which had resumed power operation in late May 1998, being used as the main irradiation facility. International co-operation was also playing a part.

73. With regard to the front end of the nuclear fuel cycle, at the end of 1997 research had demonstrated the technical feasibility of the laser uranium isotope separation process (SILVA) and an initial economic assessment of the process had also been produced. The MELOX MOX fuel fabrication plant had reached its rated capacity of 115 tonnes per year in 1997. With regard to reprocessing, the La Hague plant had operated at full capacity (over 1600 tonnes per year). The management of high-level long-lived waste was one of the major issues affecting the future of nuclear power. Accordingly, France had stepped up its research efforts in the three areas specified under the Law of 30 December 1991: separation and transmutation of long-lived radionuclides, investigations into storage in deep geological

formations, and study of long-term conditioning and storage processes in surface or subsurface facilities.

74. In conclusion, he was convinced that in the decades to come nuclear energy would play a vital role in meeting world energy demand. When well managed, nuclear power satisfied all the requirements with regard to safety, supply and cost-effectiveness, and was environmentally friendly. France's contribution to the Agency's activities was based on those concerns, and it reiterated its support for the Agency's objectives and its intention to continue participating actively in the Agency's activities.

75. Mr. KO (Myanmar), after welcoming Benin, said that the Agency performed a vital role in areas such as non-proliferation, safeguards, radiation safety, and especially the various nuclear technical applications which advanced the well-being of mankind.

76. As a result of the Agency's technical co-operation programme, Myanmar now had access to the benefits of nuclear medicine and radiotherapy, as well as nuclear techniques used in medical research. The Agency's assistance, especially in terms of equipment and the training of specialists, was still vitally important in ensuring that such advanced services continued to operate under satisfactory conditions. The technical co-operation programme also extended to other areas such as agriculture, radiation protection, nuclear analytical techniques and nuclear applications in industry. In particular, the use of radiation sources in industry had made great strides during 1997 and 1998 - an indication of the progress Myanmar had made. The licensing and inspection of radiation sources required a suitable radiation protection infrastructure, and in that connection Myanmar was receiving Agency assistance through the interregional Model Projects on upgrading radiation protection and on waste management infrastructure.

77. Myanmar was highly committed to the development of science and technology, and placed particular emphasis on training young people. It had opened additional technological institutes and universities, and was trying to improve the level of the education provided for engineers and scientists - thus, in 1997 courses at master's and doctorate level had been set up in a large number of subjects. Nuclear science and technology were well represented, thanks to the Agency's programme of human resources development and nuclear technology support.

78. Nevertheless, as a developing country, Myanmar still had only limited scientific and technological resources, and there were a number of areas - such as radiosterilization, isotope production and the use of nuclear techniques in hydrology - in which nothing could be achieved without the Agency's assistance. He was well aware that his country was not the only one in need of such assistance and the Secretariat and the Director General should examine the particular needs of developing Member States and seek ways and means of assisting them. The Agency's technical assistance programme should give particular priority to projects intended for the least developed countries.

79. Myanmar had signed the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. It would like to see not only its region, but the whole world, rid itself entirely of nuclear weapons, and it would continue to participate actively in the international community's efforts

to achieve that objective. Lastly, he thanked the new Director General for his endeavours and expressed the hope that the Agency would be able to continue working successfully in the interests of worldwide peace, health and prosperity.

80. Mr. MARTIN (Holy See) recalled that one of the main reasons why the Holy See had become an Agency member was to encourage initiatives aimed at the biblical vision of “turning swords into ploughshares” and to work with all men and women of goodwill who aspired to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. It called upon all Heads of State to put an end to nuclear tests and arms production, to reduce stocks, and to transfer the resulting nuclear material to peaceful activities so as to rule out any further risk of a nuclear arms race. Although some progress had been made in that direction, the NPT having been extended indefinitely and the large majority of States having signed the CTBT, there was an urgent need for all States to ratify those treaties immediately and unconditionally, and for nuclear-weapon States to work harder at reducing their nuclear arsenals, with the aim of eliminating them in accordance with Article VI of the NPT. The banning of tests, disarmament and non-proliferation were closely linked and should be implemented as soon as possible under effective international controls.

81. Experience had shown that there were those who were tempted to turn ploughshares into swords, and it was therefore necessary to strengthen political will by means of effective verification devices and to reject firmly and universally everything that might encourage a renewed threat of nuclear war, as Pope John Paul II had emphasized at the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1995. As an indication of its political commitment, the Holy See was about to sign an additional protocol, with the aim of contributing to greater transparency. A more efficient verification system would allow States to demonstrate the peaceful nature of their nuclear activities and to feel more confident about the loyalty of other States. That in turn would facilitate initiatives to reduce the number of nuclear weapons or to eliminate them.

82. One of the Agency’s main tasks was to ensure that nuclear energy was used peacefully and safely. Without doubt, safety remained one of the greatest challenges and, appreciating the need to achieve harmonized minimum safety standards in every country, the Holy See welcomed and followed with interest the Agency’s initiatives to establish a worldwide safety culture through the conclusion of binding international agreements, the adoption of non-binding safety standards and the provision of safety services. In that regard, considerable progress had been made in recent years with the adoption of the Conventions on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, on Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, on Nuclear Safety, and the Joint Conventions on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and with the revision of the international civil liability regime. Standards still had to be established in other areas such as the transport of nuclear material, radiation protection and illicit trafficking in nuclear material. However, the paramount consideration was to ensure that those standards and guidelines were implemented.

83. The exchange of experience in a large number of areas, ranging from power plant design and operation to decommissioning and radioactive waste management, was a precious

learning resource. Close and urgent attention should be given to the study of techniques and methods for storing nuclear waste in ways that protected present and future generations. Nuclear energy was mankind's common inheritance, and the risks involved in its peaceful utilization should encourage the international community to ensure that it was properly controlled and managed and to promote co-operation aimed at securing the highest international safety standards.

84. With regard to development issues, the international community continued to express its concern about environmental degradation and to advocate the need for truly sustainable development. There were certainly many applications of nuclear techniques which could help, especially in developing countries, to facilitate or promote sustainable development through research programmes and projects in areas such as nutrition, the preservation of soil fertility, pest control, and the provision of potable water. In the case of commercial energy production, impartial and objective evaluation was still required in order to strike a balance between nuclear energy's potential contribution to the rapid and consistent reduction of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and the long-term risks it presented.

85. The Holy See did not feel competent to propose or pronounce on particular technical solutions, but it did believe that scientific and technical progress should be placed at the service of all peoples and all countries, especially the less privileged. The fact that all regions of the world were moving closer together in economic terms should not lead to the globalization of poverty, but to a globalization of solidarity. In that regard, sharing of the technology needed for human and social development had a very important role to play. In conclusion, he thanked the Director General and the Secretariat whose competence and perseverance contributed to the progress, safety and peace of mankind.

86. Mr. SUBKI (Indonesia), welcoming Benin on its admission to the Agency, said that in his opening remarks the Director General had rightly emphasized the progress that had been made by the Agency over the past year and the need to achieve even greater efficiency. The Agency was increasing its contribution at the heart of the United Nations in the quest for sustainable development, and had succeeded in further strengthening the international legal framework for ensuring that nuclear energy was used safely and for solely peaceful purposes.

87. Another reason for satisfaction over the past year had been the adoption of the rules of procedure, financial regulations and guidelines for the preparation of national reports ahead of the first meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety to be held in 1999. The Agency had also organized diplomatic conferences to adopt 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, and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage.

88. The Agency's technical co-operation activities were comprehensively described in document GC(42)/INF/4. Indonesia supported the initiatives taken by the Agency to strengthen its technical co-operation programmes through restructuring and management reorganization. As a result, there would be a broader operational base for activities, so that the Department of Technical Co-operation, in the context of a new partnership, would be able

to plan and prioritize more accurately. The new approach would ensure improved management continuity and programme follow-up, and better use of human resources.

89. In response to the severe economic and monetary crisis confronting Indonesia, the National Atomic Energy Agency (BATAN) had launched an emergency programme aimed at solving attendant technical problems, especially in food production in some parts of the country, by means of accelerated application of nuclear technology. Co-operating closely with universities and various public institutions and with the Agency's unfailing support, BATAN had set up a project in which urea molasses multinutrient blocks were used as feed supplements to increase meat production and had introduced RIA techniques, as part of an effort to overcome Indonesia's shortage of basic food products. Subsequently, the Government had given 2400 head of improved breeds of cattle to participating farmers. Lastly, BATAN had introduced a new mutant rice variety known as "Cilosari".

90. His Government was still convinced that nuclear power was one of the most promising energy alternatives in the medium and long term, and BATAN would continue to prepare the planning and decision-making structures for Indonesia's nuclear power programme. At the same time, Indonesia was following with interest the progress of high-temperature reactor technology for application in industry and in potable water production. Indonesia invited all Member States and the Agency to continue their co-operation on the development of that technology.

91. Strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the Agency's safeguards system was in keeping with worldwide nuclear non-proliferation objectives. His Government therefore welcomed the Board's approval in 1997 of the Model Additional Protocol. It was ready to sign such a protocol as a complement to its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency. The existence of the Model Protocol was of the utmost importance, as it would not only strengthen the safeguards system, but also provide the Agency with a legal tool which would enhance its ability to detect undeclared nuclear material and activities. In that context, he thanked the Agency for the considerable efforts it had made to provide Indonesia with the equipment and technology it needed for the application of safeguards.

92. The Agency's efforts to strengthen the international nuclear safety regime were of great importance. Major progress had been achieved through the adoption of a series of instruments for improving nuclear and radiation safety and the safety of waste management, namely 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, and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, all of which the Indonesian Government had signed. Moreover, as a contribution to the safety culture which needed to be implemented worldwide, his Government had recently enacted a law on nuclear safety that covered, inter alia, the establishment of a regulatory body, the Nuclear Energy Control Board. Set up in May 1998, the Board exercised powers of regulation, licensing and control for all nuclear energy applications. Lastly, co-operation among ASEAN countries in the areas of nuclear safety and waste management was now under way. Among the main concerns would be the prevention of illicit trafficking in nuclear material, planning for regional emergencies, and research and development in nuclear safety.

93. His delegation regretted the fact that after so many years of discussion and negotiation the Board had not yet managed to reach agreement on the amendment of Article VI of the Statute. However, he thanked the outgoing Chairman of the Board, Ambassador Ikeda, for the painstaking effort and dedication he had shown over the past year in guiding the discussions on that delicate issue. Despite the difficulties which had prevented a consensus being reached on the outstanding issues concerning Board expansion and the composition of regional groups, the Indonesian delegation strongly hoped that the General Conference would arrive at a compromise that would facilitate the discussions to come and would enable a solution to be reached in the near future that was acceptable to all.

94. Indonesia had benefited from the wide spectrum of programmes implemented under the auspices of the RCA since its inception. Those programmes, together with the bilateral technical co-operation activities carried out by the Agency, had made a great contribution to manpower training and scientific and technological development, which had been instrumental in solving a number of problems in agriculture, health, industrial development and environmental protection. Indonesia was keen to promote technical co-operation among developing countries, and would continue to be a party to the RCA for the next five years. In 1997, on the occasion of the Agreement's twenty-fifth anniversary, the Indonesian delegation had submitted a paper on the RCA's prospects for the next 25 years, describing the main steps to be taken to achieve the Agreement's objectives. The time had come to assess the RCA's performance and to consider new directions so that it would continue to respond appropriately to the increasingly complex socio-economic and technological demands of the region of Asia and the Pacific. In conclusion, he reiterated his Government's commitment to the Agency's programmes, particularly those which benefited the developing countries.

Mr. Codorniú Pujals (Cuba) took the Chair.

95. Mr. DUBOIS (Canada), having welcomed Benin's admission to the Agency, noted with satisfaction that, in order to facilitate the review of the Agency's future activities in a world that was rapidly changing, the Director General had taken the initiative of establishing a senior expert group to review the future directions of the Agency's programme and its overall priorities. He looked forward to receiving the expert group's conclusions and recommendations. With other States, Canada was ready to ensure that the Agency remained a highly efficient international organization in a good position to meet future challenges.

96. The Agency was continuing its work in the key sectors of non-proliferation, nuclear safety and technical co-operation in order to increase the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. However, 1998 had been marked by several events which ran counter to the efforts that were being made to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It was likely that public opinion, particularly with regard to nuclear non-proliferation, safety and radioactive waste management, would continue to influence the future use of nuclear energy. Since the Agency was the main instrument for the elaboration of international law and the main guide in those key areas, the public should be kept regularly informed about its activities. In that respect, the ongoing review by the Agency of the role and management of public information was particularly useful, as well as the development of its Internet site and the production of the film entitled "The Nuclear Age". The Director

General's suggestion to set up an expanded programme of public information seminars was also extremely interesting.

97. In playing its crucial role in the fight against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the Agency's main objective had always been to verify, through its safeguards system, the compliance by States with the commitments they had made to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. During the present session, Canada would sign an additional protocol to the safeguards agreement which it had concluded with the Agency and he was pleased to see that several other States intended to do likewise. All Member States should conclude and implement such protocols as soon as possible. In applying the strengthened safeguards system, the Agency should first try to make it more effective and more efficient by integrating the traditional measures and the new measures. It should also establish priorities and concentrate its efforts on the most important aspects of the prevention of proliferation. In addition, national statements on the Agency's safeguards activities in the country concerned should be prepared in a systematic and transparent manner.

98. During the past few years, the Agency had been asked to consider stepping up its verification activities in areas such as illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radioactive sources, weapons-grade fissile material deemed to be surplus to requirements in nuclear-weapon States, and the possible signature of agreements prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear-weapons purposes. Member States should consider how the Agency could tackle those activities and how they could be financed.

99. The nuclear-weapons tests which India and then Pakistan had carried out in violation of international regulations had cast a shadow over the progress that had been achieved and the efforts made by the whole international community. Moreover, the lack of progress in the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference was also a source of concern. Canada urged all Member States to abide by the general principles of nuclear non-proliferation and to ratify unconditionally the NPT and the CTBT. It also encouraged them to participate actively in the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for the production of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices within the framework of the United Nations Conference on Disarmament.

100. The Agency was also called upon to play a vital role in the area of nuclear safety. He was pleased to see that a large number of Member States had ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety and were in the process of transmitting their national reports on the measures taken by them to fulfil their obligations under that Convention; Canada had just completed the preparation of its report. The first review meeting, which would take place in April 1999, would be a landmark for the promotion of nuclear safety and he was sure that all the Contracting Parties would participate in the meeting in a constructive manner. Canada hoped that all countries, particularly those which had nuclear power programmes, would become parties to the Convention.

101. In May 1998, Canada had ratified the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and hoped that all Member States would soon do the same. It was participating actively in the implementation of that

Convention, particularly in the preparation of the first meeting of the States Parties in 1999. At the same time, work was progressing on the safe transport of radioactive material; Canada had participated from the outset in the preparation and improvement of the Agency's Transport Regulations and had, on its own initiative, conformed to them by promulgating national regulations: it hoped that all Member States would do the same.

102. Canada regarded the nuclear power option as a safe, environmentally sound and cost-effective source of energy and an attractive option for inclusion in the energy strategies of many States. Seven Canadian nuclear reactors had been temporarily shut down in order to facilitate the necessary work to improve the operator's management of the overall nuclear programme. Canada recognized the importance of effective management of all aspects of operational safety. That was one of the issues which had been addressed during the recent International Conference on Topical Issues in Nuclear, Radiation and Radioactive Waste Safety. The Agency should take the recommendations of that conference into account and provide, on a priority basis, guidance in the area of safety management.

103. Some States required technical information and data in order to compare the costs and benefits of different energy sources so as to improve the overall effectiveness of their national energy programmes. Such a comparison was a complex issue which required expertise beyond the Agency's purview. It would be useful for the Agency to provide information within its field of expertise, but organizations dealing with broader energy problems should play a greater role in conducting comparative studies. Canada particularly appreciated and attached priority to the activities of the International Working Group on Heavy-Water Reactors and expected to continue to participate in, and benefit from, the work of that group for many years to come. The Agency's activities related to new uses of nuclear power for cogeneration and heat applications, including nuclear desalination of sea water, were of great interest to Canada, which fully supported the establishment of the International Working Group on Nuclear Fuel Cycle Options.

104. Technical co-operation activities which assisted Member States, and particularly developing Member States, to master the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were very useful and should be continued. In particular, Canada endorsed the Agency's recent initiatives with regard to the concept of Partners in Development, performance-based management and country planning. Furthermore, it contributed regularly to the TCF, had a tradition of hosting interregional courses on nuclear safety, provided fellowship training and made available the services of Canadian experts. The Agency excelled in the transfer of nuclear applications, but it could benefit even more from closer co-operation, if not formal partnerships, with international organizations that had development experience in the field in order to ensure the sustainability of projects. The Agency had apparently established ties with the UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, WHO and other international organizations or financial institutions; it should work increasingly closely with such organizations. Inter-agency co-operation could promote financing possibilities for the Agency's technical co-operation programme and enhance programming effectiveness. It would also be desirable to see a broader base of donors to the TCF.

105. Canada welcomed the review of internal management which was being carried out by the Agency and, in particular, supported the establishment of the new Programme Co-ordination Committee responsible for harmonizing all programmes and resources and focusing on sectors that were identified as priorities. Canada regarded the establishment of priorities as essential and continued to advocate zero nominal growth for the budgets of all international organizations. Programmes should be conducted in the most effective and efficient way possible and he noted with satisfaction that others, also within the Agency, were adopting that position too. The knowledge that resources were not increasing should encourage the objective evaluation of programmes and efforts to ensure that sufficient resources were allocated to programmes that reflected the interests of the majority of Member States. The Agency was seeking ways of improving effectiveness and of making savings and should continue to remain vigilant in that respect. At the same time, Canada recognized that the Agency was being called upon to undertake additional tasks, particularly in the area of verification, and that some of those activities were currently financed by extrabudgetary resources. Member States should carefully assess the budgetary and programme implications of any proposed additional activities.

106. Canada looked forward to co-operating with the Secretariat and other Member States in examining the Agency's priorities at the present crucial point in its history. It would continue to participate actively in the efforts made under the auspices of the Agency to make the nuclear power option available to Member States which considered that that technology was suitable for their energy or sustainable development programmes. It was clear that the main priority was to ensure that nuclear energy was used safely for peaceful purposes. Canada was firmly convinced that the proliferation of nuclear weapons could serve no country's security. The international community should always work in a spirit of co-operation to ensure that the Agency could continue to contribute to the international regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and work towards the more distant objective of nuclear disarmament.

107. Mr. HÖGBERG (Sweden), having welcomed Benin to the Agency, associated himself with the statement made by Austria on behalf of the European Union and said that he would only highlight a few areas of special importance to his country.

108. In May, India and Pakistan had blatantly shown their nuclear ambitions by conducting several nuclear tests. Those tests constituted a grave threat to international peace and security and to peace and stability in the region. Furthermore, they undermined efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in general. His delegation therefore urged India and Pakistan, and all other States that had not yet done so, to accede without delay and without conditions to the NPT and CTBT. It was essential to give new impetus to international efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs and her counterparts from Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia and South Africa had issued a joint ministerial declaration on 9 June 1998 entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda". In that declaration, the Ministers urged nuclear-weapon States and the three States with nuclear weapons capability which had not acceded to the NPT to take the fundamental and requisite step of making a clear commitment to the speedy, final and total elimination of their nuclear weapons and

nuclear-weapons capability. They stressed the need to draw up a new international agenda to establish a nuclear-weapon-free world through a series of complementary activities undertaken in parallel by nuclear-weapon States among themselves and by those States together with non-nuclear-weapon States to move towards that objective. The eight signatory States of that declaration intended to submit a draft resolution to the United Nations General Assembly based on that declaration and he hoped that it would be adopted by an overwhelming majority.

109. The Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management were cornerstones of an international nuclear safety regime. Sweden therefore urged all Member States, particularly those with operating nuclear power plants, to accede as soon as possible to the two Conventions in order to make them truly universal.

110. Sweden was looking forward to the first review meeting in 1999 under the Convention on Nuclear Safety. It hoped that the review process would be frank and constructive, in line with the spirit of the Convention, and that it would lead to a firm commitment from each Contracting Party to work on safety improvements wherever necessary. Sweden also believed that public confidence in nuclear safety would be improved if each Contracting Party published its national report together with the conclusions about its national safety programme drawn from the outcome of the review process. In that context, Sweden was convinced that the Agency had a vital role to play in the areas of nuclear safety and radioactive waste safety. Through its various safety programmes and initiatives, the Agency could exert an indirect, but nevertheless important, influence on the development of the international safety regime under the framework of the two conventions. Sweden had noted with satisfaction that the Agency's International Conference on Topical Issues in Nuclear, Radiation and Radioactive Waste Safety had provided valuable guidance on future Agency activities in important areas such as the management of operational safety, the problems posed by ageing nuclear power plants and options for the disposal of spent fuel and high-level waste.

111. In view of the importance it attached to the Agency's technical co-operation activities, he was pleased to announce that Sweden had pledged its full share of the target of the TCF for 1999. Sweden supported and appreciated the Agency's efforts to co-ordinate its activities with bilateral co-operation in areas of mutual interest such as nuclear safety, radiation protection and national nuclear material accounting and control systems.

112. Mr. GREGORIČ (Slovenia), having welcomed Benin as a new member of the Agency, said that he fully supported the statement made on behalf of the European Union by the delegate of Austria.

113. Slovenia attached particular importance to the implementation stage of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and had submitted its national report to the Secretariat during the present session of the General Conference. It noted with satisfaction that the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management was gradually moving towards entry into force. As far as Slovenia was concerned, the ratification process was expected to be completed before the end of the year.

114. Turning to the issue of nuclear non-proliferation, he noted that the NPT and the Agency's safeguards agreements continued to be of paramount importance for the international community. Slovenia highly appreciated and supported the Agency's work to strengthen its safeguards system through the adoption of additional protocols to safeguards agreements concluded pursuant to the NPT and firmly believed that such protocols could help to increase the Agency's capability to detect undeclared nuclear activities. His Government had decided to sign an additional protocol to the safeguards agreement concluded with the Agency and the protocol would be considered by the Slovenian Parliament before the end of 1998. Slovenia welcomed the substantial progress made with respect to the CTBT, which it would like to see enter into force as soon as possible. Furthermore, it encouraged the elaboration, within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear-weapon purposes. Effective plans and strategies should also be established to deal with illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources - an area in which Slovenia intended to continue its co-operation with the Agency's Secretariat.

115. Slovenia could only condemn and deplore the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan and it remained firmly convinced that world peace and security called for determined and rapid preparation for the post-nuclear era.

116. His delegation had carefully studied the Annual Report for 1997 and was pleased with the level of work done during that period in the various fields of Agency activity. It welcomed in particular the progress made in 1997 in implementing initiatives to improve the effectiveness of the technical co-operation programme. It commended the Secretariat, and in particular the Department of Technical Co-operation, on the implementation rate achieved. The experience gained during the two-year programming cycles confirmed the usefulness of the concept of Model Projects and the increased emphasis on end-users. Slovenia attached great importance to the technical co-operation programme, of which it was not only a beneficiary, but to which it also contributed through the organization of various regional and interregional courses and workshops and by hosting fellowships and scientific visits. It intended to expand and increase its activities in that area so that the Jozef Stefan Institute could serve as a centre of excellence. Slovenia also believed that the Agency's work in the area of nuclear, radiation and waste safety was essential and should be further enhanced in the future.

117. All Member States should bear in mind that further efforts needed to be made to achieve additional savings without affecting the Agency's ability to meet its programme objectives. The Agency had already demonstrated transparency in that area and he was sure that the Director General would continue to move in the same direction. Member States should take part in those efforts. Prompt payment of assessed contributions would help to improve the Agency's financial situation and ensure a greater degree of implementation. Slovenia was in the process of effecting budgetary reforms in order to improve its financial situation. In the light of the importance that it attached to the Agency and despite Slovenia's strict budgetary constraints, Slovenia would continue to support co-operation with the Agency.

118. Mr. PUCCIO HUIDOBRO (Chile), having hailed the election of a woman as President of the General Conference and commended Mexico's efforts in promoting the Tlatelolco Treaty, extended a warm welcome to Benin.

119. Chile accorded particular importance to nuclear safety, radiation safety and radioactive waste safety. Apart from the elaboration of legal instruments, the establishment of a safety culture called for solidarity at the national and international levels, transparency, matching of deeds to words and, above all, a responsible approach, which was essential for achieving safety, peace and development.

120. The Chilean delegation attached great value to safety regulations and standards, in particular to the Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material, the latest revised version of which had been approved by the Board of Governors in September 1996 and on which Chile had based its own regulations. Chile supported the Agency's efforts to ensure that countries applied those regulations and standards effectively. The transport of radioactive material was a matter of constant concern for Chile, as demonstrated by the various declarations it had made and the regional and subregional agreements it had entered into and in particular by its constant endeavours to collaborate in that area with all countries.

121. With regard to nuclear tests, Chile hoped that the efforts of the French Government which had enabled the Agency to study the present and future radiological situation on the Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls would serve as an example to other countries. Despite the reassuring results of that study, Chile strongly condemned all nuclear tests by whatever country and in whatever region, and it deprecated once again the recent tests conducted by India and Pakistan.

122. Chile had vigorously supported the strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system, because it was sure that that system would bring greater transparency to the nuclear activities of countries. It hoped to be able to enter shortly into consultations with the Agency with a view to signing an additional protocol.

123. Technical co-operation, a statutory function of the Agency essential for all countries, and technology transfer did not only benefit the recipient countries, for development was synonymous with peace, and co-operation was the mainstay of the battle against poverty. If it were not backed up by an unreserved commitment to the development of all regions of the world, any talk about safety and safeguards would be marked by ignorance and cynicism. Promoting development and technical co-operation was indeed the best way of creating a more balanced and safer world. That was why Chile welcomed the Agency's new technical co-operation strategy based on the Partners in Development concept, which was already starting to bear fruit, since the recipient countries had been able to adapt projects to real national priorities and hence to participate more in their implementation. He was sure that SAGTAC had contributed considerably to that process of renewal.

124. Chile had always attached great value to horizontal co-operation, which ensured that technology transfer had maximum impact, particularly in Latin America, where development in nuclear energy varied from one country to another. By way of example of TCDC, he

highlighted the co-operation with Peru and Argentina on eradication of the fruit fly, as well as the use of Chilean facilities for radioactive waste treatment and storage as a demonstration centre for Latin America. It was convinced that the ARCAL programme, transformed into an intergovernmental agreement recently approved by the Board of Governors, would, thanks to its obligatory character, further enhance regional co-operation in the field of nuclear energy. The Chilean Government had decided to sign that agreement in the near future. Moreover, Chile had pledged and paid the whole of its target share of the Technical Co-operation Fund and appealed to the donor countries to meet in full their commitments in aid of development.

125. In conclusion, he stressed the importance which the Chilean Government attached to the measures described by the Director General aimed at strengthening the internal management of the Agency and creating a "single Agency" culture. Those measures were aimed at raising the levels of efficiency and effectiveness in all the Agency's activities through the adoption of a medium-term strategy. For that to succeed, it would need to be accompanied by a re-evaluation in Member States themselves of the Agency's role with regard to decision-making, financing and implementation of activities and, in particular, as regarded its perception by the public. In that connection, the measures adopted by the Secretariat to strengthen its public information programmes in order to heighten awareness of the true extent to which nuclear energy could contribute to development were extremely pertinent and would promote interaction among Member States and between them and the Agency. Chile had been working towards that objective for more than 15 years and was putting its experience at the disposal of the Agency and the other Member States. It now appealed to them all to join in that endeavour because only by working together could success be attained.

126. Mr. KIENER (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of the Liechtenstein delegation, said that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were two crucial factors determining international security. As long as disparities existed in the world nuclear order and the danger of nuclear proliferation had not been totally averted, the international community should not spare any effort in that area. The NPT remained the principal tool in the service of international peace and stability, but its objectives in respect of nuclear disarmament had not yet been achieved despite the fact that the great majority of States, having renounced nuclear weapons, had lent their full support to international measures for control of their nuclear facilities through the application of comprehensive safeguards agreements. Certain Member States had taken a step further by concluding an additional protocol to their safeguards agreement, without however receiving any real return in terms of global nuclear disarmament.

127. Switzerland wished to contribute to the strengthening of the international safeguards system as long as the implementation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime was not a source of discrimination and the system was operated on an equitable basis. The Swiss Government was currently engaged in consultations with the groups likely to be affected by the application of an additional protocol and it should be ready to commence discussions on that subject with the Agency during the coming winter.

128. Switzerland welcomed the fact that the Conference on Disarmament had finally reached a consensus in August 1998 on the elaboration of a fissile material cut-off treaty and that the

negotiations on the subject had commenced in Geneva. To achieve its objective, the treaty would have to be non-discriminatory and verifiable by the international community. The opening of negotiations was an important step in the application of Article VI of the NPT in line with the principles and objectives adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

129. Switzerland had joined in condemning the double series of nuclear tests performed by India and Pakistan which had occurred at the time when 150 States had acceded to the CTBT and were preparing the technical conditions for its verification. It appealed to all States which had not already done so to sign the CTBT, and to India and Pakistan to refrain from any further military nuclear testing.

130. The Agency's study on the radiological situation of the Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls had shown that the fears expressed on the subject had been unfounded. France had demonstrated transparency in requesting the Agency to conduct a study of the test site and Switzerland hoped that other States with such sites would do likewise.

131. In Switzerland, the dialogue aimed at formulating a long-term energy policy had served to define certain priorities which were concerned principally with energy savings, energy efficiency and the promotion of renewable energy sources. There had been no agreement, however, on the future utilization of nuclear energy. The question of the storage of radioactive waste had given rise to differences of opinion between, on the one hand, the opponents of nuclear energy and the ecological organizations and, on the other hand, the bodies responsible for the electrical energy sector. The discussions were very difficult and it was by no means certain that there would be any positive outcome.

132. The Ministry of Energy was in the process of revising the law on atomic energy, which would lay down the conditions determining the answer to such questions as the construction of new reactors, the reprocessing of spent fuel and the service life of nuclear power plants. That revision would relaunch the debate on nuclear energy. Various anti-nuclear organizations were seeking to mobilize public opinion in favour of instituting a fresh moratorium on the development of nuclear energy or even renouncing it forever. Swiss citizens could be called upon again to give their judgement on nuclear energy in their country.

133. The construction of the interim storage centre for radioactive waste at Würenlingen was progressing and the centre should enter into service in 1999 as scheduled. In addition, an exploratory boring was being performed in the North-East of Switzerland to verify whether the argillaceous formations there were suitable for the burial of high-level waste. The Commission charged with giving its opinion on the project for the storage of low- and intermediate-level waste had stated that the Wellenberg site was suitable. If the Ministry of Energy confirmed that choice, the population of the canton would have to decide on the construction of an exploratory tunnel. Furthermore, a legal provision designed to provide cover for the costs likely to be associated with the disposal of radioactive waste was in preparation.

134. The transport of nuclear fuel had given rise to vigorous protests in the spring of 1998 in several European countries, including Switzerland. Even if there was no danger for the

population and those involved in the transport, the existing rules and measures should be applied more widely in future.

135. The majority of Agency Member States were studying ways of reducing their expenditures. Switzerland was of the opinion that for 1999, as for 1998, the Agency's budget should be at zero real growth, but for the years to follow it would prefer a nominal-zero-growth budget. In conclusion, he praised the essential role which the Agency was playing in the promotion of international co-operation and security and reiterated Switzerland's support for the Agency's tasks, as well as its continued desire to participate in those activities.

136. Ms. HERNES (Norway) welcomed Benin as a new member of the Agency and endorsed the statement made by Austria on behalf of the European Union.

137. Norway attached great importance to the Agency's efforts to enhance nuclear non-proliferation by improving the effectiveness of the comprehensive safeguards system. It commended the Agency on the early conclusion of additional protocols with a number of countries. In 1997, Norway had begun its internal process of preparation for the conclusion of an additional protocol and had started consultations with the Secretariat.

138. Norway had been the first country to ratify, in January 1998, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. It urged all other countries to accede to it in order to secure its entry into force as soon as possible. The preparatory work for the implementation of the Joint Convention should start as soon as possible and Norway was happy to note that the Agency had already initiated that process. As to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, Norway had already submitted its national report to the Agency.

139. A permanent ban on all nuclear tests was of paramount importance. The underground tests carried out by India and Pakistan were in clear defiance of international norms and constituted a serious threat to global nuclear non-proliferation, as well as to peace and stability in the entire region. Those tests underlined the crucial importance of the NPT and the CTBT for international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to ensure nuclear disarmament. Norway urged India and Pakistan to become parties to those two Treaties without delay and without conditions. Furthermore, Norway was disappointed that some countries were conducting subcritical nuclear tests which, although they did not constitute a direct violation of the CTBT, were contrary to its spirit.

140. While the new Joint Convention provided a legal and regulatory framework for dealing with the management of nuclear waste and spent fuel, practical measures were still essential and engineering and management skills, political commitment and financial resources, as well as, in many cases, joint international initiatives were required. In May 1998, Norway and the Russian Federation had signed a framework agreement on co-operation in the field of nuclear safety in north-west Russia governing the assistance that Norway would provide to Russia with regard to the handling of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste stored under dangerous conditions in that region and with regard to the safety of nuclear installations. Russia and

Norway had managed to agree on the difficult question of liability in case of a nuclear accident.

141. An initial strategy for nuclear cleanup activities, together with a list of priority projects, had been established with the Russian authorities within the Contact Expert Group under the auspices of the Agency. The experts would soon be meeting to agree on a common framework covering legal and organizational measures to strengthen international co-operation with respect to the nuclear wastes in the North-West of Russia. Norway appreciated the close co-operation that had been established in that field with the European Union, the United States and other Western countries. Several projects financed by Norway and other Western donors were under way. It was important that Russia should ratify the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage in order to facilitate international involvement in such projects.

142. Norway had been participating since 1992 in a programme to enhance safety at the Kola nuclear power plant and to reduce the risks of accidental releases until reactors which did not have a satisfactory safety level could be shut down in order to protect human health and the environment. Alternative energy sources with fewer environmental risks should be considered while bearing in mind that greater efficiency was one way of avoiding increased energy production. The first part of the Norwegian-Russian report on radioactive contamination from the nuclear installations at Mayak in the southern Urals had been completed. It concluded that the release of radionuclides into the river systems had had very little effect on the marine environment in the North. The second part would study possible accident scenarios and their impact on the population and environment in the northern areas.

143. Norway attached great importance to the development of a coherent up-to-date legislative and regulatory framework governing nuclear activities. It supported national assistance programmes for newly independent States in their efforts to develop their nuclear legislation and urged other countries and the Agency to continue supporting such efforts.

144. Illicit trafficking in nuclear material was an international problem and Norway was participating actively in various projects to strengthen systems for prevention and detection. It appreciated the initiatives taken by the Agency in that area and recommended that efforts be stepped up, including efforts to assist various countries in establishing legal frameworks and systems of transparency to improve detection and law enforcement. Fanatical terrorist groups were becoming more and more cynical in the methods they used to promote their causes. Their use of nuclear or radioactive material in future actions could not be ruled out. In order to avoid such scenarios, it was essential to give high priority to safeguards, physical protection, illicit trafficking and legal frameworks.

145. The Agency had an important role to play with regard to early warning of a nuclear accident or radiological emergency, particularly through the 1986 Early Notification Convention. Norway supported the Agency's efforts to help develop emergency warning and notification procedures in certain regions such as the Baltic States.

146. Norway was taking an active part in the second stage of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme and was heading, together with Russia, the work on radioactive contamination. Future work would focus on environmental monitoring and on gathering new information on the impact of radioactive contamination on human health and the environment. The first report confirmed that radioactive discharges from European reprocessing facilities could be detected in the Arctic environment. Increased concentrations of technetium-99 caused by discharges from the Sellafield reprocessing plant in the United Kingdom had been detected along the Norwegian coast.

147. Norway welcomed the agreement reached under the framework of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic aimed at reducing discharges of radionuclides into the ocean, the goal being to reduce the levels of artificial nuclides resulting from releases to almost zero by the year 2020. The Agency could perhaps participate in the establishment of criteria for the protection of the marine environment against the effects of radioactive contamination.

148. The new conventions that had been adopted and applied should give new impetus to international co-operation, particularly targeted technical co-operation with countries engaged in reforms and developing countries. Norway strongly supported the Agency's technical co-operation programme and had already pledged its contribution to the TCF for 1999.

149. Mr. CHAABANE (Tunisia), having welcomed Benin as a new member of the Agency, said that his country had acceded to all the international conventions in the nuclear field, because it was convinced that that was the only way of ensuring that nuclear technology was used safely for economic and social development. Tunisia had taken steps to strengthen international co-operation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to establish with the Agency and certain friendly countries special relationships which had led to the implementation of several projects in the fields of medicine, agriculture and industry. In that connection, he welcomed the establishment, with the assistance of France and the Agency, of a semi-industrial pilot food irradiation plant - a project which would be completed by the end of 1998.

150. At regional level, Tunisia was making every effort to strengthen its co-operation with the other African countries within the framework of AFRA. In November 1998, it would host the fourth Arab congress on nuclear sciences. The Headquarters of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency was in Tunisia and it was an organization which had similar objectives to those of the Agency, which should strengthen its co-operation with that regional organization.

151. Tunisia, which regularly paid its assessed contribution to the Regular Budget, had paid the voluntary contributions which it had announced the previous years and pledged to pay its share of the target for the TCF for 1999.

152. Tunisia was very interested in small and medium-sized reactors which could be used for the production of electricity and potable water, and it had been one of the first countries to participate in the work of the expert group on the desalination of sea water.

153. Having acceded to all international instruments aimed at ensuring non-proliferation and the banning of nuclear testing, such as the Pelindaba Treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, Tunisia was ready to start consultations with the Agency in order to conclude an additional protocol to its comprehensive safeguards agreement. The objective was to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and Tunisia could only deplore the continuation of nuclear tests and express its wholehearted support for the Final Act adopted at the end of the NAM Summit held in Durban at the beginning of the month.

154. Tunisia was also extremely concerned about Israel's persistent refusal to accede to the NPT and to place its installations under Agency safeguards within the framework of a safeguards agreement to be concluded for that purpose. Furthermore, Israel continued to strengthen its nuclear arsenal thus posing a threat to international peace and no international pressure was exerted to dissuade it from doing so. Tunisia therefore reiterated its call for the establishment in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone to complement the Pelindaba Treaty and urged all Member States to make every effort to force Israel to show moderation and to submit to international demands so that the nuclear threat could be eliminated and the universality of the NPT ensured. He endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Arab Group, stressing that the situation in the Middle East was a reminder of the need to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region in order to improve the prospects for a lasting, just and global peace.

155. Tunisia, located as it was on the edge of a particularly sensitive sea route, was, like Turkey, Morocco and Egypt, concerned about the danger posed by the maritime transport of nuclear waste. It therefore supported the draft resolution submitted by Turkey on the control of such transport.

156. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, Tunisia reiterated its support for the African position with respect to the number of additional seats. It also supported the Arab position on the composition of the MESA Group, particularly since a minimum level of understanding and cohesion between the members of any group was a prerequisite for political co-ordination.

157. Mr. WOHLK (Denmark), having fully endorsed the statement made by Austria on behalf of the European Union, called on India and Pakistan to refrain from engaging in a nuclear arms race in South Asia, to show the greatest restraint and to avoid any action likely to aggravate the situation still further. He also urged them to accede without delay and without conditions to the CTBT and the NPT. The NPT was the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and an essential element in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. He welcomed the fact that the Treaty had become almost universal and strongly supported the important decisions made at the 1995 NPT Review Conference on the subject of the Treaty's indefinite extension, the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and the strengthening of the Treaty's review process.

158. With respect to safeguards, one of the major results achieved by the Agency during the past few years had been the adoption in May 1997 of the Model Additional Protocol to

existing safeguards agreements which, once it had entered into force, would lead to a significant strengthening of effectiveness and a clear improvement in the efficiency of the Agency's safeguards system. The Agency would also be in a much better position to detect undeclared nuclear activities conducted in non-nuclear-weapon States. Denmark was a party to the additional protocol which had just been signed between the Agency, EURATOM and the 13 non-nuclear-weapon States of the European Union. It hoped that it would be in a position to fulfil its new obligations without delay and urged other countries to conclude similar protocols with the Agency to increase as much as possible the scope of the strengthened safeguards system. It was regrettable that more than 50 non-nuclear-weapon States that were Parties to the NPT had not yet concluded the safeguards agreements foreseen under the Treaty. Although those States did not have substantial nuclear activities, it was essential for the credibility of the NPT and the safeguards system that all States should honour their obligations under Article III.

159. From the outset, supplier countries had recognized that they had a responsibility to ensure that nuclear co-operation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy did not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. That principle had been enshrined in the NPT and during the multilateral consultations on the control of nuclear exports which had taken place after the entry into force of the NPT in 1970. The establishment of effective control was a prerequisite for compliance with the co-operation commitments set out in the NPT. Denmark believed that nuclear suppliers played a particularly important role and had made a major positive contribution to the cause of nuclear non-proliferation. He recalled the commitment made at the time of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference to promote transparency with respect to nuclear-related export controls through dialogue and co-operation among the interested States Party to the NPT. The seminar organized the previous year by the Nuclear Suppliers Group had been a major event which had led to a better understanding of the issues at stake.

160. Turning to nuclear safety, he recalled that Denmark had decided in 1985 to exclude nuclear power as an energy option because it felt that the problems of safety and waste storage had not been resolved. Noting that they had still not been solved, he welcomed the efforts made to strengthen the safety programme and to co-ordinate the activities carried out by the Agency in the fields of nuclear safety, radiation safety and radioactive waste safety. The assistance provided by the Agency to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and to the newly independent States was extremely important. Denmark nevertheless remained convinced that shutdown was the only defensible solution in the case of certain reactors operating in those countries.

161. Denmark supported the establishment of a comprehensive, legally binding safety regime of which the two main elements would be the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Strengthening of the nuclear liability regime was a matter of concern for the whole international community. The adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention and of the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage were steps in the right direction.

162. Denmark attached great importance to the technical co-operation programme, which continued to expand. The activities undertaken should contribute to the sustainable development of developing countries, particularly the LDCs. The target of \$73 million approved for the TCF for 1999 was acceptable and Denmark had already pledged its full share of that target.

163. Mr. ŠTULLER (Czech Republic) welcomed Benin to the Agency and associated himself with the statement which had been made by Austria on behalf of the European Union.

164. The Agency's principal mission remained unchanged: to promote the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity, and to ensure that it was not used for military purposes. The nuclear tests carried out in South Asia underlined the relevance of that mandate. The international community should not relax its efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. He appealed to those States which had not yet done so, and in particular to those with nuclear capabilities, to accede swiftly and unconditionally to the NPT and the CTBT. He also called upon the States concerned to stop their military programmes and place all their nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards.

165. The Czech Republic remained deeply committed to the principles of the NPT and made every effort to comply with its obligations under the Treaty and the relevant nuclear material control regimes. In compliance with its new safeguards agreement with the Agency, which had entered into force at the end of 1997, his country had successfully completed the verification of its initial report on its inventory of nuclear material.

166. He was concerned about the growing threat from organized gangs trafficking in nuclear material which were using his country for their activities. The most effective protection against such trafficking lay in the application of strict measures in the country of origin under its national nuclear material accounting and control system. Co-operation between the Agency and Member States also played an important role. He welcomed the Agency's programme to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radioactive sources and, in particular, the setting up of a database on cases of seizure, which would prove a valuable tool for communication and notification. One example of fruitful co-operation between Member States and the Agency was the regional courses on physical protection of nuclear material which had been organized in his country since 1995 under the aegis of the Agency and the Governments of the Czech Republic and the United States of America.

167. The Czech Republic attached great importance to the safety of nuclear installations. It was in the process of finalizing the national report required by the Convention on Nuclear Safety. That report contained detailed information on the existing legal framework, and a case study for the Dukovany and Temelin plants. In accordance with its obligations under the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Government of the Czech Republic monitored compliance with nuclear safety and radiation protection standards by nuclear installations in the country - both those which were in operation and those under construction. In the preceding year, the national nuclear safety authority had carried out a complete re-evaluation of the safety of the four units of the Dukovany plant, following which it had authorized continued unrestricted operation. The construction of the Temelin plant was continuing and commissioning of the

first unit was planned for the summer of the year 2000. The Czech Government had decided to set up an independent commission of experts to produce an objective assessment of the economic aspects of the investment, including possible financial risks.

168. In accordance with its long-term policy in the field of safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, the Czech Republic had signed the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, to which it attached great importance and which it considered a legally binding instrument introducing the highest safety standards in a particularly sensitive area. He called upon States which had not yet done so to sign and ratify the Joint Convention in order to facilitate its early entry into force.

169. Turning to technical assistance and co-operation, he said that, to fulfil its mandate, the Agency had to carry out effective, results-oriented and cost-efficient activities, and have predictable financial resources available. Member States should be aware of the fact that whether or not the target for the TCF was met depended upon them, and they should therefore pay their contributions in full and on time.

170. His country recognized the importance of technical co-operation projects for recipient countries which had sometimes no other means of resolving a particular problem. It was gradually increasing its involvement in Agency technical co-operation activities in other countries, with which it was sharing its knowledge and experience. Thus, it had participated in missions to Armenia to improve nuclear safety and radiation protection, and to Ukraine to exchange experience on licensing procedures for instrumentation and control systems and to improve regulatory capabilities in the field of safety. It had also assisted with the preparation of the technical co-operation project on improvement of in-service monitoring of WWER reactor pressure vessels in Ukraine and was prepared to contribute to that project's funding. In addition, it was accepting more Agency trainees from developing countries and the countries of the former Soviet Union. In the preceding year, 28 trainees had taken part in courses given by the national nuclear safety authority, the Nuclear Research Institute, the Faculty of Nuclear Engineering and by medical institutions. It had approved ten applications and registered an additional 15 requests for the period September-December 1998.

171. Ms. DORAN (Ireland), after associating herself with the statement which had been made by Austria on behalf of the European Union, paid tribute to the work of the Agency and its staff. The Agency had played a crucial role in promoting nuclear safety and strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the international safeguards system. Like many other States, Ireland had rejected the nuclear power option because it believed that the risks of nuclear power outweighed significantly its alleged benefits. The risk of a major nuclear accident, combined with understandable public concerns about the effects of discharges of nuclear material on the environment and about the disposal of spent fuel and radioactive waste, had led Ireland to the firm conclusion that the case for nuclear power was unsound. It was for that reason that Ireland's priorities were the Agency's nuclear safety and radiation protection activities, and the contribution it made to an enhanced nuclear safety culture worldwide.

172. It was essential that the Agency should continue to foster international co-operation in the field of nuclear safety, despite the prevailing economic and political instability in many regions of the world. The recent international conventions and the Agency's technical co-operation activities were of major importance in promoting higher safety standards. Ireland looked forward with interest to the first meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, to be held in spring 1999, and hoped that the "peer review" process provided for under the Convention would prove effective in achieving improved safety standards worldwide. It also hoped that the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, which represented a further potential advance in radiation protection and in achieving uniformity in standards of regulation, would enter into force speedily.

173. One of the main concerns of successive Irish Governments had been the risk to the Irish population posed by the nuclear industry of the United Kingdom and, in particular, the Sellafield plant. Her country was opposed to the continuation of hazardous nuclear activities such as reprocessing, on-site storage of high-level liquid waste and the operation of Magnox reactors beyond their design life. It had also stated its opposition to the expansion of operations envisaged in the proposed MOX plant and the continuing radioactive discharges from Sellafield into the Irish Sea. The Irish Government would continue to make known its views that the operations at Sellafield were unacceptable to Ireland, and it strongly urged that reprocessing and all forms of nuclear energy production at the Sellafield site should cease.

174. Turning to the question of radioactive discharges, she drew attention to the agreement reached by the Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, and welcomed the fact that they had committed themselves to reducing radioactive discharges into the marine environment to almost zero by the year 2020. That was an important decision which would allay the legitimate concerns over the impact of radioactive discharges on the health of existing and future generations, and which would help preserve maritime resources.

175. With regard to nuclear liability, Ireland welcomed the adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention and of the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Though that would certainly improve the compensation regime for the victims of nuclear accidents, her country was not convinced that the compensation levels were adequate. Ultimately, the success of the new regime would depend on early adherence to those new instruments by the main nuclear power producers.

176. The nuclear non-proliferation regime enshrined in the NPT remained the cornerstone of international efforts to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, as well as the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament. One of the Agency's most important achievements in recent years had been the adoption by the Board of Governors of the Model Additional Protocol aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system. That very day, Ireland had signed the additional protocol to its safeguards agreement and it would, in close co-operation with its partners from the European Union, EURATOM and the Agency, play its part in ensuring its effective implementation.

177. With the NPT vision in mind, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, together with his counterparts of seven other countries, had launched a declaration on 9 June 1998 entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda" (reproduced in document INFCIRC/565). That agenda was not a replacement for the NPT, but it did set out the logical final steps required to achieve the objectives of that Treaty while respecting the sovereign equality of States, and to rid the world of nuclear weapons for all time.

178. Mr. PALACIOS (Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials) said that, thanks to the unfailing support of Argentina and Brazil, ABACC had extended its regional safeguards system to all nuclear facilities in both countries, and had improved it by incorporating new concepts and technologies so that it was now able to cover effectively all envisageable divergence scenarios for the uranium enrichment facilities subject to its control, and was able to yield conclusive inspection results.

179. Under the Quadripartite Agreement between Argentina, Brazil, the IAEA and ABACC, co-ordination and co-operation between ABACC and the Agency had progressed satisfactorily, as was illustrated by the results achieved during the past year. Two facility attachments had been approved for Argentina and five for Brazil, all of which had entered into force. Working procedures had been adopted by ABACC and the Agency for the sharing of equipment and others were being finalized. The aim was to avoid duplication of effort while preserving the independence of the two organizations. With respect to co-ordination of activities with the Agency, ABACC had been able to increase the efficiency of safeguards, in particular in the case of nuclear power plants. It had signed a technical co-operation agreement with the Agency which would enable it to make the existing links official and to extend them, in particular with regard to the adoption of the new techniques envisaged in the additional protocol to safeguards agreements, such as remote monitoring and environmental sampling.

180. There had also been fruitful co-operation between ABACC and the United States Department of Energy in the nuclear non-proliferation field. During the past year, ABACC's network of laboratories and the New Brunswick Laboratory had completed a second intercomparison exercise, a remote monitoring system had been installed at the Embalse nuclear power plant - with the collaboration of the Agency and the Argentine authority, and a data receiving system had been installed at ABACC headquarters in Rio de Janeiro. At the same time, ABACC was strengthening its links with EURATOM and was exchanging experience with it and co-operating with it in various areas of common interest.

181. With regard to the role of regional systems in the strengthening of safeguards, the Argentine and Brazilian Governments were currently studying the role that ABACC would be called upon to play in the future. Nevertheless, a regional system could not be efficient unless it was properly integrated into the international system. For that to occur, the resources of both systems had to be optimized by swiftly applying new work concepts and incorporating methods which would reinforce trust between the bodies responsible for the application of safeguards.

The meeting rose at 7.20 p.m.