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### RECORD OF THE FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

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on Tuesday, 28 September 1999, at 3.10 p.m.

President: Mr. KADRI (Algeria)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(43)/INF/15/Rev.3.

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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
ASSET	Analysis of Safety Significant Events Team
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
CANDU	Canada deuterium-uranium [reactor]
CEG	Contact Expert Group for International Radwaste Projects in the Russian Federation
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Early Notification Convention	Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
IRRT	International Regulatory Review Team
IRS	Incident Reporting System
Kyoto Conference	Third Conference of the Parties to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Kyoto Protocol	Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
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
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
R&D	Research and development
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)
SEAP	South East Asia and the Pacific
TC	Technical co-operation
TCDC	Technical co-operation among developing countries

Abbreviations used in this record

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TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
Trilateral Initiative	Trilateral Initiative launched by the Minister of the Russian Federation for Atomic Energy, the Secretary of Energy of the United States and the Agency's Director General on 17 September 1996 to consider practical measures for the application of IAEA verification to fissile material originating from nuclear weapons
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WWER	Water-cooled and -moderated reactor (former USSR)
Y2K	Year 2000

GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1998 (continued)  
(GC(43)/4)

1. Mr. NIEWODNICZANSKI (Poland), after welcoming Honduras and Angola to the Agency, associated himself with the statement which had been made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union. Recalling the ever more useful role which the Agency was playing, and in particular the numerous international instruments which had been negotiated under its auspices, he noted that Poland was on the point of completing the ratification process for the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and for the Additional Protocol to its safeguards agreement.
2. His country strongly supported the Agency in the fulfilment of its responsibilities in the field of nuclear safety and in the strengthening of the global non-proliferation regime instituted by the NPT. It also looked forward to the NPT Review Conference which was to be held in the year 2000.
3. He commended the Agency's efforts to combat illicit trafficking of nuclear material and ionizing radiation sources by helping States establish accounting and control systems, and thanked it for organizing, within the framework of the International Physical Protection Advisory Service, a mission to Poland which had made a major contribution to improving technical physical protection systems in the country. He also thanked the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom for the financial assistance they had provided in that connection.
4. Turning to technical co-operation and the constant financial problems in that area, he expressed support for the Secretariat's initiatives aimed at strengthening the efficiency of those activities. Partnership in Development was a key element in technical co-operation strategy which facilitated the combining of various sources of funding. His country shared the opinion that the effectiveness of the technical co-operation programme could be improved by careful management of the entire project cycle and better monitoring of all activities, whether funded from the TCF, the Regular Budget or extrabudgetary resources. In that connection, he announced that Poland would be paying its full share of the TCF.
5. After many difficulties, the Model Project which was being implemented by the Agency in Poland was reaching completion. Work on decommissioning of the research reactor was also progressing well. Moreover, a plasma physics centre was being set up in Warsaw with funding from UNESCO, the IAEA and the Government.
6. Poland supported all kinds of technical co-operation among countries in the region. In addition to activities carried out with the Agency, it was co-operating with neighbour countries in the field of nuclear safety and radiation protection through bilateral agreements.
7. With regard to the programme and budget for the next biennium, he commended the Secretariat's efforts to maintain a high level of efficiency and expressed support for the new idea of a medium-term strategy based on three pillars - technology, safety and verification - specifying the Agency's objectives for the period 2001-2005.

8. Mr. ARAMRATTANA (Thailand), after welcoming Angola and Honduras, informed the Conference that the Commission which had been instituted by the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone had met for the first time in Singapore in July and had directed its executive committee to take all necessary actions to ensure compliance with the Treaty and, in particular, to hold consultations with nuclear-weapon States and the Agency. In that connection, he welcomed the fact that China was considering signing the Protocol to the Treaty, to which all nuclear-weapon States would need to adhere in order to enhance security in the region.

9. Technical co-operation activities in Thailand had included the Model Project on extension of neonatal screening to rural areas, and the project on the establishment of a new nuclear research centre; Thailand had also contributed to technical co-operation among developing countries and to the Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific.

10. His country viewed the development of nuclear power as a possible option and was participating in a number of Agency activities in that area. In November 1998, a national public information seminar on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy had been organized by the Thai Government and the Agency with the co-operation of Japan. Public information activities on the advantages and risks of nuclear power would be continuing with the holding, in February 2000, of a regional public information seminar which Thailand would be hosting with the Agency.

11. Among ongoing activities, he urged the Agency to continue supporting the regional project on measuring the effectiveness of multinutrient supplementation (RAS/7/010), which showed great potential for identifying cases of malnutrition in mothers and children. He also applauded a new initiative on utilization of the vast database already in existence to reinforce knowledge in nuclear technology and engineering. The Agency's continuing support for public information programmes and waste management programmes was equally welcome. Finally, the Agency should extend its activities to involve non-profit-making organizations in order to enhance opportunities for technical co-operation and public information.

12. Despite the economic and financial difficulties it was facing, Thailand remained committed to paying its full assessed contribution to the Regular Budget and the TCF for the year 2000. Like several other members of the Group of 77, it felt that the issue of funding of Agency verification of nuclear weapon control and reduction measures required thorough examination. The balance between the Agency's promotional and verification activities had to be maintained, both in financial and technical terms. Numerous points needed to be clarified before a decision could be taken, in particular funding by Member States and the "possessor pays" principle.

13. With reference to Article VI of the Statute, Thailand, as a member of the SEAP Group, stood ready in the interests of consensus to acquiesce in the proposals for a six-seat increase in the size of the Board. It was also prepared to accept an eight-seat increase, on condition that the distribution of those seats was acceptable to all regional groups including SEAP and

the Far East Group. All regional groups had the right to be consulted on an equal footing and it was not right that SEAP's interests had not been taken into account. He hoped that the consultations henceforth would be marked by greater transparency.

14. Mr. CHIDAMBARAM (India), after welcoming Angola and Honduras to the Agency, read out the following message from the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee:

“The forty-third General Conference of the Agency marks the end of an era. But as we know every end is also a beginning. A new millennium beckons us. And we, as responsible Member States, must rise to the occasion and ensure that we leave behind a legacy, not a liability, for future generations.

“We can best ensure this by returning to the fundamentals, shorn of all rhetoric and verbiage, and by acknowledging that the primary function of the Agency is to encourage and assist research, development and practical applications of atomic energy for peaceful purposes throughout the world. In developing countries, atomic energy, with its multifarious applications in power generation, improving health standards, enhancing the quality and quantity of agricultural yields, in controlling pests and in water resources management, is seen as the key to a better tomorrow. The International Atomic Energy Agency's role in the nuclear power area is particularly significant as this source, with the progressive depletion of fossil fuels, is an important option for satisfying the future energy needs of developing countries in the long term.

“I take this opportunity to wish the forty-third General Conference of the IAEA all success in its deliberations.”

15. The main conclusion of the Senior Expert Group which had been convened to review the Agency's programme had been that the Agency's “mission” was still to “accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world”, to use the language of Article II of the Statute. The most important of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy was power generation. While the decision to pursue the nuclear power option was of course a national one, the Agency's mandate to promote that option in an objective manner should not be eroded in favour of its nuclear safety and safeguards responsibilities. Increasingly, the Secretariat had become diffident on matters relating to nuclear power which, while it was stagnating in Europe and North America, was growing fast in Asia and other parts of the world where it was looked upon as an inevitable option to satisfy future energy needs.

16. From an environmental perspective, it was unfortunate that the Kyoto Conference had not explicitly mentioned nuclear power as one of the cleanest sources of energy, despite the Agency's efforts in recent years in connection with the Clean Development Mechanism provided for by the Kyoto Protocol. Recognizing the importance of the role of nuclear energy, India - with the Agency's assistance - had hosted an international seminar in Mumbai on the potential role of nuclear power in developing countries, and strategies for its deployment. It had also had the honour of receiving a visit from Mr. ElBaradei in February.

17. One of the yardsticks of the economic development of a country was the per capita electricity consumption. For the standard of living in India to reach a comparable level to that in the developed countries the per capita consumption would have to increase by a factor of eight to ten. Studies had indicated that nuclear power would account for an increasing share in the electricity mix and should reach the 20 000 MW level by 2020. India's efforts to accelerate its nuclear power programme had borne fruit, and the performance of its ten nuclear power plants had improved considerably over the past three years.

18. To ensure long-term energy security, India had chosen to follow a "closed fuel cycle" policy which called for the setting up of reprocessing plants and breeder reactors. The experience it had gained from the operation of its fast breeder test reactor at Kalpakkam had been put to good use in the development of a prototype reactor, construction of which was expected to begin in 2001. Moreover, it had always viewed spent fuel as a vital resource; reprocessing spent fuel had several advantages from the point of view of waste management.

19. Turning to the safety of nuclear installations, he noted that the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. was a member of the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO) which had conducted a peer review at the Kakrapar nuclear power plant in 1998; another was planned for the Narora plant in the year 2000. The Indian regulatory authority was also closely monitoring the safety of nuclear facilities in the country. With respect to the Y2K problem, an in-depth assessment had been carried out and detailed contingency plans prepared.

20. In addition, India was seriously considering adhering to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material; it had, in effect, been applying the physical protection standards prescribed under that convention for some time. In that context, he commended the Agency's efforts to prevent illicit trafficking of nuclear material. India had an unimpeachable record in that regard and export control mechanisms effectively prevented misuse of material, equipment or technology exported from India. Its commitment to global nuclear disarmament was undiluted.

21. In the context of the Agency's technical co-operation activities, India was pleased to announce that it would be paying its full share to the TCF on time. Once again, he called upon the Agency to identify centres of excellence for human resources development within the framework of technical co-operation among developing countries, and he reiterated India's offer to place its training facilities at the disposal of scientists from such countries.

22. India was strongly interested in fusion because of its potential for clean and safe power generation, and it had set up an experimental programme at the Institute for Plasma Research where a superconducting tokamak was currently being constructed which, it was hoped, would be the first in the world to generate 1000-second pulses.

23. Recalling the words of Homi Bhabha who, in 1956, had cautioned against the creation of a safeguards system which was unrelated to the realities of the world, he reiterated that the Agency's mission remained that of enlarging the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity. In some countries which had reached saturation point in electricity



generation nuclear power development was slowing, while others were pressing ahead. Nevertheless, it was clear that the introduction of simpler, safer and less costly innovative technologies should continue. In that connection, it was to be feared that co-operation arrangements involving a limited number of countries - and in particular those which had reached saturation point - were unlikely to serve the best interests of countries choosing the nuclear power option to satisfy their electricity requirements. The Agency owed it to its Member States to promote the widest possible international co-operation.

24. Mr. QUEIROZ DUARTE (Brazil), having welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency, said that his country attached great importance to nuclear safety which was crucial to public acceptance of promotion of the uses of nuclear energy. He therefore commended the progress made by the Agency in establishing a worldwide safety regime.

25. In the area of technical co-operation, Brazil had signed the Regional Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARCAL) in August 1999. Brazil had been participating in the ARCAL programme since its inception in 1984 and had been particularly active in the field of medical, environmental, agricultural and industrial applications of nuclear energy, as well as safety. On the occasion of its fifteenth anniversary, he commended the significant benefits the ARCAL programme had brought to countries in the region, and the Secretariat on its extremely competent management of that programme.

26. In the context of the Agency's technical co-operation programme, Brazil trusted that the Secretariat would continue to pay due attention to new challenges relating to nuclear power generation, management and disposal of radioactive waste, and radiation and isotope applications, particularly in the fields of the environment, water resource management and medicine. Continuous evaluation of the needs and interests of Member States was a welcome approach, since national development policies and priorities could change over time. It was important to continue to take due account of Member States' interests in the decision-making process for technical co-operation projects and activities. As both a receiver and donor under the technical co-operation programme, Brazil intended to keep abreast of the latest developments in nuclear technology and, at the same time, to continue offering its installations and expertise for training and other technical co-operation activities.

27. Turning to verification, he noted with satisfaction the arrangement approved by the Board of Governors in relation to the proliferation risk of neptunium and americium. It was highly desirable for all States, both nuclear and non-nuclear, whether or not they were party to comprehensive safeguards agreements, to allow the proposed monitoring of such of their facilities as had actual or potential capability for neptunium and americium separation, and to provide the relevant information. Universal application of that arrangement would certainly constitute a positive signal for non-proliferation and global nuclear disarmament.

28. Brazil was glad to note, with respect to strengthening of the safeguards system, that the Board of Governors had just approved the agreement by exchange of letters with the Agency confirming that the Quadripartite Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, ABACC and the IAEA for the application of safeguards

satisfied the requirements of Article III of the NPT. Also, at the most recent series of meetings of the Board of Governors, Brazil and Argentina had reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the safeguards regime by announcing that they were ready to begin consultations with the Secretariat with a view to concluding an Additional Protocol to the Quadripartite Agreement. They were confident that the unique and successful bilateral experience they had gained through ABACC would make a significant contribution to the ongoing process of strengthening of the safeguards system.

29. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and global disarmament were inseparable objectives. In June 1998, Brazil and seven other countries had signed a ministerial declaration entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", which had subsequently been reflected in General Assembly resolution A/RES/53/77Y and reintroduced at the current session of the General Assembly. The "new agenda" had also been supported by 32 countries at the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference. By pointing the way towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, all the countries that supported that initiative were underscoring their concern over the need to strengthen the universality of the international regime anchored in the NPT and to continue to honour commitments undertaken under Article VI of that Treaty. Brazil hoped that the "new agenda" would attract the widest possible support in order to advance the common objectives of non-proliferation and disarmament.

30. With regard to Article VI of the Statute, expansion of the Board of Governors would improve representation of the developing countries in that body. It was regrettable that, despite the Chairman's efforts, the Board of Governors had not reached final agreement on that issue at its preceding series of meetings. Whatever the formula adopted, certain factors ought to be taken into consideration, including the impeccable credentials of the Latin American and Caribbean region with regard to non-proliferation. Brazil endorsed the urgency the Board of Governors had assigned in its report (document GC(43)/12) to further consultations on the matter with a view to finding a final solution during the current session of the General Conference. That was possible, with the full participation of all countries and regional groups in a true spirit of compromise.

31. In 1999, Brazil had made further major progress in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Work on the Angra II nuclear power plant had advanced significantly and it was expected to go into operation in 2000. Implementation of the nuclear fuel cycle on an industrial scale had been completed. In the field of nuclear applications, there had been a significant increase in the production of radioisotopes for medical, industrial and scientific purposes. In addition, the Brazilian Government had taken steps to ensure that the national nuclear programme benefited society as a whole. Consistent investment in nuclear medicine in recent years had resulted in a remarkable increase and improvement in radiopharmaceutical production, bringing important benefits to the population. The high standard of quality had been acknowledged through the awarding of the ISO 9002 certificate.

32. The Brazilian nuclear programme was therefore in line with the ambitious national objective - recently reaffirmed by President Cardoso - of accelerating economic growth while at the same time attaching priority to the well-being of the people.

33. Mr. WØHLK (Denmark), having first of all welcomed Angola and Honduras to the Agency, associated himself fully with the statement which had been made by the Finnish Minister for Trade and Industry on behalf of the European Union. Denmark considered the NPT to be the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and essential to nuclear disarmament. The Treaty was close to global coverage, making non-proliferation an almost universally accepted principle. Denmark called on those countries which had not yet done so to accede unconditionally to the NPT as soon as possible. It fully supported the important decisions taken at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference on the indefinite extension of the Treaty, the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and strengthening of the Treaty review process. Those decisions should be further consolidated at the 2000 Review Conference.

34. Agency safeguards were an important element of the international non-proliferation regime and indispensable to ensuring implementation of the NPT. Once implemented, the measures foreseen in the Model Additional Protocol to existing safeguards agreements would lead to substantial strengthening of the safeguards system of the Agency, which would then be in a better position to detect any clandestine nuclear activities in non-nuclear-weapon States.

35. Denmark was party to the Additional Protocol concluded by the Agency, EURATOM and the non-nuclear-weapon States of the European Union in September 1998, and was doing its best to meet its new obligations before the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

36. It was still cause for concern that more than 50 non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT had not yet signed a safeguards agreement pursuant to the Treaty. Although the pending agreements related to States with no significant nuclear activities, it was nevertheless important for the universality and the credibility of the NPT and of the safeguards system that all States complied with their obligations under the Treaty.

37. Ever since international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy had begun, supplier countries had accepted responsibility for ensuring that such co-operation did not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. That principle, which was enshrined in the NPT, was reflected in the system of multilateral consultations on nuclear export controls established after the Treaty's entry into force in 1970. Fulfilment of the NPT commitment concerning co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy depended on effective export control.

38. The Nuclear Suppliers Group played a particularly important role and had made a considerable contribution to the cause of nuclear non-proliferation. Denmark appreciated the commitment undertaken at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference to promote transparency in nuclear-related export controls within the framework of dialogue and co-operation among all interested States party to the NPT. The two seminars on export control organized in October 1997 and April 1999 under the auspices of the Nuclear Suppliers Group had led to a deeper understanding of the issue by all involved.

39. Turning to the area of nuclear safety, to which Denmark attached the utmost importance, he recalled that in 1985, one year before the Chernobyl accident, his country had decided not to include nuclear power in its energy planning. It had taken that decision because it felt that, although nuclear power had been known and utilized for a long time, the problems of safety and waste storage remained unresolved. That situation had not changed. The safety levels at many operating nuclear power plants were unacceptable and management of nuclear waste was still unsatisfactory.

40. His country supported the endeavours aimed at further strengthening safety activities and ensuring consistency between the Agency's nuclear, radiation and radioactive waste safety activities. The assistance provided by the Agency in that area to the States of Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States was extremely important. Nevertheless, Denmark remained of the opinion that the only defensible solution was to shut down certain reactors in those States as soon as possible.

41. Denmark supported the creation of a comprehensive and legally binding nuclear safety regime based primarily on the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. The first meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety in April had allowed for a useful exchange of views on safety issues. It was to be hoped that more States would accede to the Convention before the next review meeting took place in 2002.

42. The need to strengthen the nuclear liability regime was a matter of concern for the entire nuclear community. The adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage was a step in the right direction.

43. In view of the fact that no permanent solution to the problems of nuclear safety and waste storage had as yet been found, Denmark found it disturbing that so much effort was being made worldwide to develop nuclear power and felt that the Agency's technical co-operation programme should not be used for that purpose. The programme should be demand-driven and should contribute to ensuring that the highest possible safety standards were in place in those countries which had chosen the nuclear option. That was particularly applicable to the least developed Member States. It was on that understanding that Denmark had accepted the TCF target of US \$73 million for the year 2000 and had pledged its full share of that target.

44. In spite of the budgetary constraints the Agency was facing, high-priority activities such as safeguards should continue to be funded from the core budget. Since no real growth in the Regular Budget was anticipated in the coming years, it was imperative that the Agency start setting priorities among and within the three pillars of its activities (safety, verification and technology). In other words, it should not only make savings but should also choose between activities, however painful that might be. Previous balances between programmes did not necessarily need be maintained. The report by the Senior Expert Group had been the first cautious step. To assist that process, no new activity or project should be approved unless its

funding was assured, and no project should be implemented without prior planning as to when and how it would be concluded.

45. Finally, he paid tribute to the competent and devoted work of the Director General and the highly qualified staff of the Agency.

46. Mr. KURDI (Saudi Arabia), having welcomed Angola and Honduras to the Agency, recalled the message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the General Conference regretting the lack of progress in implementing commitments pursuant to the NPT and in achieving its universality, and urged the States concerned to redouble their efforts with a view to making the next NPT Review Conference a success.

47. At the current session, the General Conference was being called upon to take decisions that would help the Agency meet the challenges of the transition to the third millennium, including the Y2K problem which the Agency would certainly solve with respect to its own activities. The Agency had made commendable efforts to adapt to developments in the international arena, in particular in the field of global strengthening of nuclear safety, and to the increase in the demand for environmentally friendly methods of generating electricity and the intensification of international efforts to consolidate the non-proliferation regime.

48. Saudi Arabia had always supported the Agency and, as usual, would be paying its contributions in full; however, it was concerned that some States were not doing the same, which had detrimental effects on Agency activities that addressed essential needs, such as the supply of potable water or the fight against disease. It had always been greatly appreciative of the Agency's role in the area of control and verification and approved of the strengthening of the safeguards system and the Agency's efforts to control illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radioactive sources. While it understood the position of those countries which felt that the recent strengthening of controls could only increase the Agency's effectiveness in those fields, and thus its role in maintaining peace and security at the regional and international level, Saudi Arabia, like other countries, feared that the Agency's constantly expanding verification activities, coupled with the tasks which might be entrusted to it in connection with the control of special fissile material and monitoring international transfers of certain types of material such as neptunium and americium, could constitute a heavy burden and slow down or hinder the Agency's activities in the development field.

49. With regard to Israeli nuclear capabilities and the nuclear threat in the Middle East caused by Israel's obstinate refusal to accede to the NPT, Saudi Arabia hoped that the Agency, as part of its verification responsibilities, would be able to alleviate its concerns and those of neighbouring countries regarding the threat of undeclared nuclear capabilities in the region, in accordance with the spirit of the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

50. Over the years, the technical co-operation programme had proved its effectiveness and, through it, the Agency had been able to respond in large measure to the legitimate expectations of developing Member States and meet their needs, in line with the objective for which it had been set up. The effectiveness of technical co-operation strategy was founded on

regional programmes supported by thematic planning and Model Projects aimed at meeting the long-term socio-economic needs of the developing countries. However, technical co-operation activities could not be implemented without sufficient funding and, for that reason, his delegation had always requested that those activities be funded from the Regular Budget of the Agency. The idea of sharing the costs of technical assistance activities between the Agency and recipient States was excellent, and it would be equally useful to share the costs of verification missions as that would allow the Agency to develop its activities without putting a strain on its budget.

51. Saudi Arabia had studied carefully the Director General's report on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (document GC(43)/17, Add.1, Add.1/Corr.1, Add.1/Mod.1 and Add.2). Its position on the issue took due account of the concerns of the Arab countries over the risks associated with the presence of nuclear weapons in the region, its assessment of the current situation and probable developments, and the mediation efforts. It was based on the following considerations:

1. Saudi Arabia approved the establishment in the Middle East, as in other regions, of a zone free from nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction;
2. It attached great importance to the accession of States in the region to the NPT and to their commitment to apply comprehensive safeguards, though most had never undertaken nuclear activities requiring the application of safeguards and could only gain access to the material required for their nuclear programme after concluding a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency. Israel was the only State in the region which had not acceded to the NPT;
3. It objected to Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT and submit its nuclear installations to the Agency control, since that country was carrying out nuclear activities for peaceful and non-peaceful purposes;
4. It appealed to all States in a position to do so to persuade Israel at least to accept comprehensive safeguards, even if it did not accede to the NPT or similar treaties or instruments, and urged the Agency to develop a mechanism for that purpose;
5. It proposed that a denuclearized zone be declared in the Middle East - through the medium of the Agency - enabling States in the region to confirm their good intentions. In that connection, Saudi Arabia felt that the fact that the region had not been clearly defined in United Nations documents and General Assembly resolutions should not prevent it from being declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone;
6. It was convinced that any progress depended on the wishes of the parties concerned. Saudi Arabia hoped that the pressure exerted by some States on Israel would persuade that country to comply with the General Conference resolutions on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East, and to end its procrastination and arrive at a peaceful and lasting settlement with neighbouring countries which would facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone

in the Middle East. The efforts of the Director General to that end were particularly useful.

52. With regard to efforts to intensify international co-operation with a view to strengthening nuclear, radiation and waste safety, he commended the activities of the working groups and specialized technical committees which had assisted with the preparation of standards documents in that area. He also congratulated the Agency on its work on defining safety requirements, regulations and standards, and safe practices for quality assurance at various stages of operation, storage and final disposal of waste, decommissioning of facilities, protection of human health and the environment, and determination of the responsibilities of operators and control services.

53. Although a consensus had been reached on the sincere desire to arrive at a final solution to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, differences still existed on the three aspects of the issue, namely expansion of the Board, the criteria for designation, and the composition of regional groups. Given the complexity of the issue, whatever time was needed to find an appropriate solution should be taken. Saudi Arabia's position on the issue, which had not changed, was based on the following three principles:

1. Any expansion of the Board should ensure representation which reflected the realities of the international situation and the situation in the regional groups;
2. The number of seats held on the Board should be proportional to the size and the role of the different regional groups;
3. Any Member State had the right to join a regional group; to do so, it should hold consultations with the members of the group in question. However, no State could be imposed on a group; that principle was important to ensuring the cohesion of the group in question and a favourable working atmosphere within the group, and to enabling it to contribute more effectively to the work of the Board.

54. Mr. GARCIA III (Philippines), after welcoming Honduras and Angola, thanked the Director General for the Annual Report for 1998 and his opening statement on the previous day and said that the Agency's efforts to revise the existing safety standards and prepare new ones were praiseworthy. Four documents in the "Safety Requirements" category had been finalized and approved over the preceding year, and several others were in preparation.

55. The Philippine Government recognized the importance of safety of nuclear applications and was making efforts to improve the country's legal, administrative and technical infrastructure in that area. The Philippines would be participating in a regional project on legislation for safe and peaceful nuclear applications with a view to improving its domestic laws. The country was in the process of acquiring the necessary resources to respond to radiological emergencies, in line with the national radiological emergency preparedness and response plan approved by the National Disaster Co-ordinating Council. That comprehensive plan covered possible emergency situations both within the country and abroad, insofar as they could affect the Philippines.

56. With regard to the Y2K problem, preventive and corrective measures had been taken in various facilities, spearheaded by the National Y2K Commission. In that connection, the Philippines was grateful to the Agency for its timely and useful advice on safety measures to address the Y2K issue.

57. He welcomed the Secretariat's endeavours to strengthen its activities in the area of technical co-operation, as detailed in document GC(43)/INF/3. The Agency's TC strategy remained very relevant, and the progress with regard to the quality and implementation of projects should therefore be sustained. 1999 had been a dynamic year in the Philippines with the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute forging new collaborative ties with foreign national agencies and domestic private sector firms. The ultimate objective of efforts to promote applications of nuclear technology was to bring benefits to end-users. Projects were being implemented actively within the framework of the Agency's technical co-operation programme, as were RCA projects of regional import. A Philippine initiative in 1996 had given rise to the RCA project on "red tide", a phenomenon affecting the fisheries of many coastal countries. In the broader context of the management of marine coastal pollution, a wealth of information on radionuclides in water, sediment and biota had now been gathered.

58. In the oil industry, the use of gamma scanning to resolve problems affecting distillation columns had been demonstrated at refineries and that technique was being promoted. In other sectors, the Philippines would shortly be hosting two regional activities as part of TCDC, namely a course on techniques for reservoir management and a seminar on mutation techniques and molecular genetics for tropical and sub-tropical plant improvement in the Asia and Pacific region. The Philippines was proud to be recognized increasingly as a centre of excellence in areas such as geothermal hydrology, nutrition and agriculture. In that connection, it appreciated the technical assistance the Agency had given it, and the latter's valuable contribution to development objectives. The next biennial technical co-operation programme was being eagerly awaited, with proposals beginning to pour in from the health, food, environment and industry sectors.

59. Since the preceding session of the General Conference, two comprehensive safeguards agreements and 13 Additional Protocols had been approved by the Board of Governors, and the Philippines was pleased to note that they would be concluded shortly. Drawing attention to document GC(43)/22, he called upon States Party to the NPT which had not yet done so to conclude the safeguards agreement required by the Treaty. In addition, he once again urged those States that had concluded safeguards agreements to take the next step, since universal adherence to the Model Additional Protocol was essential for the establishment of an integrated and cost-effective safeguards system. The Philippines remained firmly committed to the NPT and to the broader objective of nuclear disarmament and looked forward to the next NPT Review Conference.

60. Considerable progress had been made in the negotiations to amend Article VI of the Statute, and several proposals had been put forward at the Board's last series of meetings with a view to reconciling divergent opinions. A final solution to the problem seemed closer than ever, and he thanked the Chairman of the Board and all those who had contributed positively to the discussions. His delegation shared the widely held view that any expansion of the



Board should rectify the under-representation of the developing countries and prevent any decrease or cut-back in the number of such countries eligible for election to the Board in the future. It supported the current efforts to obtain an increase of eight seats distributed in an acceptable manner.

61. Mr. TAVZES (Slovenia), having welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency, associated himself fully with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union. The Agency's role in building a global nuclear safety culture had expanded in recent years. It had also been playing a major role in the consolidation of the non-proliferation regime and in increasing the contribution of nuclear science and technology to achieving Member States' development goals. Since the inception of its nuclear programme, Slovenia had taken advantage of all the expert missions offered to it by the Agency; in 1999, it had received a Transport Safety Appraisal Service mission, and an International Regulatory Review Team mission would be conducted by the end of the year.

62. A precondition for the peaceful use of nuclear energy was a well established international safety framework which included the legally binding instruments developed recently. The openness and transparency shown by the Contracting Parties in their reports, and at the first review meeting for the Convention on Nuclear Safety held in Vienna in April 1999, had strengthened the safety culture in the international nuclear community. That was the only meeting where all the Contracting Parties had been able to address the safety issues posed by nuclear power plants both at home and abroad.

63. Now that the foundations of a legally binding international radioactive waste safety regime had been laid, it was time to put it into force. Slovenia had ratified the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management at the beginning of 1999.

64. Since joining the Agency in 1992 as an independent State, Slovenia had opted for unshielded safeguards status, showing its strong commitment to zero proliferation. In that same context, it welcomed the measures adopted recently by the Board with respect to neptunium and americium. In 1999, Slovenia had adopted new import and export regulations, including a new trigger list, and had applied for membership of the Zangger Committee. Moreover, the Slovenian Parliament was examining a draft law on dual use and, once it had been adopted, his country would apply for membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

65. The development of integrated safeguards was a high priority issue, the objective being to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency by optimizing the use of all measures available to the Agency under safeguards agreements and Additional Protocols, which were essential for the global peaceful use of nuclear energy. Slovenia had already signed an Additional Protocol to its safeguards agreement and anticipated ratifying it by the end of the year. It urged all States which had not yet done so to sign safeguards agreements and Additional Protocols before the next NPT Review Conference. Slovenia welcomed the Trilateral Initiative entered into by the IAEA, the United States of America and the Russian Federation; it was also among those Member States which had expressed support for the

principle of mandatory funding with regard to Agency verification of nuclear arms control and reduction measures.

66. His delegation supported all the Agency's efforts to implement safeguards in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the activities the Agency was carrying out in Iraq at the request of the Security Council.

67. He underlined the importance of the International Physical Protection Advisory Service mission to Slovenia, and took note of the initiative taken by some States party to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material in holding a meeting in 1999 to discuss whether there was a need to revise that Convention. If sufficient States wished to address the issues relating to the scope of the Convention, Slovenia was prepared to play an active part in the revision process.

68. Slovenia had been working on the Y2K problem since the middle of 1998 and, inter alia, had taken steps to ensure the safety of its nuclear facilities. An Agency mission was due to visit the country in October 1999 to review the measures taken, including the contingency planning.

69. With regard to the technical co-operation programme, he recalled that his country had benefited greatly from Agency co-operation in the past. In recent years it had been able to play a more active role in the organization of training courses and workshops, had hosted an average of six meetings a year, provided job training, and made its experts available. That reflected in practical terms a change of status: it would soon be a donor rather than a recipient. Slovenia had always pledged and paid its share of the target for the TCF in full and paid its assessed programme costs. Also worthy of mention were the Country Programme Framework approach, which would be applied to all Member States during preparation of the 1999-2000 technical co-operation programme, and the Model Project concept, which focused on the end-user and took account of cost-effectiveness and impact. Technical co-operation was most effective when it was fully integrated into national development plans.

70. Finally, when Slovenia had held the Chair of the Board it had put forward two proposals for amendments to the Agency's Statute. Its proposal for the amendment of Article XIV of the Statute took account of the wish expressed by many members of the Board of Governors, during the examination of the Agency's budget for 2000, for the introduction of "biennial programming". The modification Slovenia had suggested to paragraph K of Article VI took into account the proposal put forward by Japan. Slovenia strongly believed that the proposed formula could satisfy all the views expressed by the Member States over past years.

71. With regard to the financial situation, it was clear that the Agency could not be asked to take on greater responsibilities while its resources were frozen. Furthermore, the Agency's Secretariat had exercised financial discipline and embarked on a modernization process with a view to better identifying Member States' needs and priorities. Other ways of making savings could surely be found, but equally, in the long run, further reductions in resources could only be achieved by reducing the programme, especially with continued reliance on extrabudgetary

funding and no improvement in discipline among Agency Member States as regards prompt payment of their contributions to the Regular Budget and the TCF.

72. Ms. HERNES (Norway), after welcoming Honduras and Angola, associated herself with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the European Union.

73. Norway attached great importance to the Agency's efforts to enhance nuclear non-proliferation by strengthening the effectiveness of the comprehensive safeguards system. It commended the Agency on having concluded Additional Protocols with a number of countries. Norway would be signing an Additional Protocol during the current session of the General Conference which would probably enter into force early the following year. She expressed the hope that States which had not yet done so would sign such Protocols as soon as possible in order to make the strengthened safeguards system as universal as possible.

74. Norway was pleased to note that the first review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety had been held earlier that year and that the Agency had already started preparing for the review process foreseen under the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

75. In the following week, the first conference was to be held pursuant to Article XIV of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in order to facilitate the Treaty's entry into force. Norway had deposited its instrument of ratification of the Treaty on 15 July 1999, and it called on all countries which had not yet done so, and in particular those whose instrument of ratification was required for the Treaty to enter into force, to sign and ratify it without delay.

76. The Agency had a key role to play in relation to early warning and response in the event of a nuclear accident, and Norway strongly supported the work the Agency was doing to develop and implement practical procedures within the framework of the Early Notification Convention and the Assistance Convention. Also, recognizing that the Agency's increased efforts to co-ordinate international response would strengthen Member States' capabilities in that area and make the system more cost-effective, she emphasized the importance of allocating sufficient financial and human resources to carry out those tasks.

77. Norway, which attached great importance to the development of coherent and up-to-date legislative and regulatory frameworks for nuclear activities, supported the assistance programmes for the Newly Independent States which were endeavouring to develop their nuclear legislation and urged other countries and the Agency to continue supporting those efforts.

78. Illicit trafficking in nuclear material was a cause for international concern. Norway was actively involved in various projects to strengthen prevention and detection systems and had hosted a seminar on the topic in 1999. It appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the Agency in that sphere and recommended that efforts be intensified, in particular to help various countries establish legal frameworks and transparent systems which would enhance detection and law enforcement. As the use of nuclear or radioactive material by terrorist groups in the future could not be ruled out, it was essential that safeguards, physical protection, illicit trafficking and legal frameworks be given a high priority.

79. Norway welcomed the activities which were being carried out in anticipation of the submission of weapons-origin fissile material from the United States and Russia to Agency safeguards; those activities were fundamental to non-proliferation. It therefore approved the Secretariat's plans to establish, in collaboration with those two States, technical measures, legal instruments and cost estimates for Agency verification of that material.

80. Her country also welcomed the activities which were being undertaken by the Agency to resolve Y2K computer problems both at the Agency and in Member States and had itself taken account of the Agency's recommendations.

81. Turning to the Medium Term Strategy, she said that the Agency, while maintaining an appropriate balance between the separate pillars of its mandate, should always give top priority to nuclear safety. Nuclear energy had no future without nuclear safety and, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, safety and security issues should take precedence over the expansion of nuclear power and nuclear technologies.

82. In the nuclear safety field, Norway was participating in various projects in north-western Russia relating, inter alia, to the development of government structures, purchase of equipment, preparation of regulatory documents, and the application of accountancy systems and physical protection measures. A number of projects had already been implemented, or were being implemented, under the framework agreement signed by both countries the previous year on the assistance Norway proposed giving Russia with the handling of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste stored under hazardous conditions in the region, and with the safety of the nuclear installations on the Kola Peninsula.

83. A nuclear clean-up strategy, with a list of priority projects, had been established in co-operation with the Russian authorities within the CEG under the auspices of the Agency. On the basis of the priorities and principles defined in the framework agreement, Norway, the United States, the European Commission and various European Union countries were working on establishing a multilateral legal framework for provision of assistance to nuclear safety projects through the Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian Federation.

84. Since 1992, Norway had been participating in a programme to enhance the safety of the Kola nuclear power plant and reduce the risk of accidental releases until the reactors could be shut down. Reactors where a satisfactory safety level could not be achieved should be shut down as soon as possible to protect human health and the environment. Alternative energy sources posing fewer risks to the environment should be considered, and it should not be forgotten that improving efficiency was one way of not having to increase energy production.

85. Norway was also participating in the second phase of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme and, together with Russia, was heading the work on radioactive contamination. Future activities would focus on environmental monitoring and acquisition of new information on the impact of radioactive contamination on human health and the environment. The first report under that programme confirmed that radioactive discharges from European reprocessing facilities had been detected in the Arctic marine environment.

Norway welcomed the agreement, under the Oslo-Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, on a reduction in discharges of radionuclides into the ocean, the aim of which was to reduce the level of artificial nuclides from releases to almost zero by 2020. As a consequence thereof, significant reductions in technetium-99 discharges from the Sellafield reprocessing plant in the United Kingdom were expected. Norway also welcomed the new initiatives undertaken by the Agency in collaboration with the International Union of Radioecology to develop a system for protecting species other than man from ionizing radiation.

86. A large number of Member States still did not make pledges to the TCF and the rate of increase in the TCF target had slowed down. She urged all Member States to pay their contributions in full and on time.

87. In conclusion, she endorsed the measures taken to increase the number of women in the Secretariat, encouraged the Agency to continue its efforts in that direction and pledged her country's support.

88. Mr. BÖHM (Czech Republic), having welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency, associated himself with the statement which had been made by Finland on behalf of the European Union and associated countries.

89. With regard to the safeguards system, the Czech Republic felt that the implementation of Additional Protocols would conspicuously increase the transparency of national nuclear programmes and would strengthen the Agency's capacity to detect in a timely fashion undeclared use of nuclear material, and of nuclear energy in general, for other than peaceful purposes. His country had just signed an Additional Protocol to the safeguards agreement it had concluded with the Agency pursuant to the NPT. Moreover, the Czech authorities had recently resolved the issue of the application of safeguards at the Temelin nuclear power plant. Since the beginning of 1998, they had been preparing - in regular consultation with the Agency - a new system for registration of nuclear material in the Czech Republic which would be Y2K compatible and would ensure continuity of safeguards information provided regularly to the Agency.

90. In line with its international commitments under the NPT, the Czech Republic had been applying a strict licensing regime for exports and imports of all items subject to control in the nuclear field. In addition, an International Physical Protection Advisory Service mission had been sent to the Czech Republic in the second half of 1998 which had concluded that nuclear facilities and material in the country were subject to a high level of physical protection.

91. Nuclear power engineering was an important part of the peaceful nuclear programme of the Czech Republic, which was of the opinion that using that form of energy to generate electricity was more environmentally friendly and helped preserve limited reserves of fossil fuels for future generations, provided of course that standards of nuclear safety and radiation protection were maintained at the highest possible level. In the preceding year, the Czech Republic had completed a fundamental reform of its legislative and regulatory framework which reflected its long experience in the operation of the Dukovany nuclear power plant,

current international practice, and the latest findings of science and research. Thus it now had modern legislation in that area, and its State supervisory body was independent and had sufficient resources to facilitate evaluation of the level of nuclear safety and radiation protection in all activities relating to the use of nuclear energy and ionizing radiation.

92. The Czech Government was also sensitive to the international dimension of nuclear safety and radiation protection. Thus, it had recently used the mechanism provided by the Convention on Nuclear Safety to supply detailed information on the safety requirements in force in nuclear power plants operating in the country. It had greatly appreciated the frankness and high level of discussion during the first peer review of the Contracting Parties to the Convention, which had been organized in April in Vienna. The positive assessment of the Czech Republic by the other Contracting Parties was confirmation that it had achieved a high level of nuclear safety and radiation protection.

93. All studies carried out to date at both national and international level had confirmed that the Czech organization responsible for the construction and operation of nuclear power plants had been achieving good results in all areas, while maintaining a high level of safety and making improvements where necessary, with the result that the frequency of operational incidents at the Dukovany nuclear power plant had gradually decreased. Construction of the Temelin plant was continuing and startup of the first unit was scheduled for the year 2000. Lately, the Czech Government had reviewed the economic aspects of that investment, including the possible financial risks, and had decided to complete the work, placing its trust as regards safety issues in the studies which had been carried out in accordance with current national legislation by the national body responsible for safety.

94. The Czech Republic, as both a beneficiary and a donor country, highly appreciated the Agency's technical co-operation programme which was one of the international mechanisms that helped promote the development of applications of nuclear energy and ionizing radiation in the country. It attached the utmost importance to its Model Project on the use of a cyclotron to manufacture short-lived radiopharmaceuticals for use in diagnosis in cardiology and oncology, including the creation of a distribution network; that project would soon be complete.

95. Within the limits of its capacities, the Czech Republic was trying to increase its participation in the Agency's programme of technical assistance to other countries. Thus, in 1998 and 1999 it had contributed \$150 000 to a project on the installation of a new system for non-destructive monitoring of WWER reactor pressure vessels in Ukraine. Moreover, the national nuclear safety body had engaged to support the Agency's efforts to improve the radiation protection level within the context of Model Projects over the period 1999-2000. In addition, it had undertaken to train 50 experts - over and above its normal quota of fellowship holders, in particular from the countries of the former Soviet Union. It should also be mentioned that, in 1999 alone, the Czech Republic had organized ten seminars and training courses.

96. In conclusion, he noted that the Director General had made a successful visit to the Czech Republic in November 1998 which constituted an important milestone in co-operation between his country and the Agency.

97. Mr. GOMIS (Spain) welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency and associated himself fully with the statement which had been made by Finland on behalf of the European Union. He said that he would limit his comments to some points of particular interest to his country.

98. In 1998, Spanish nuclear power plants had generated some 59 GW·h, which constituted 30.1% of the total amount of electricity produced and an increase of 6.7% over 1997; the availability had been 91.5% in 1998 and the average load factor 88.4%. Driven by the need to adapt to the more competitive environment created by the liberalization of the economy, efforts were being made to optimize costs by increasing plant power level, and to integrate plant management. However, safety remained a constant concern and could not be allowed to suffer as a result of the measures to improve competitiveness. The best way of maintaining and even strengthening safety within the context of a cost optimization programme was to improve knowledge of the technology; that was why emphasis was being placed on R&D activities.

99. Under the new general radioactive waste plan approved by the Spanish Government in July 1999, the procedures to be followed and technical solutions to be applied to such waste had been reviewed. Most of the procedures adopted were similar to those in the preceding plan, but the strategy for final disposal of spent fuel and high-level waste had been modified. In view of the temporary storage solutions currently available, it had been deemed wise to defer any decision on final disposal until 2010; in the interim, Spain would continue to participate in research into storage in deep geological formations and into separation and transmutation.

100. Decommissioning of Unit 1 of the Vandellós plant had begun: some components were currently being disassembled and the waste management plan put into action. Those operations would clear 80% of the site and should be complete by the end of 2002. There would then be a delay of 30 years before the decommissioning was concluded.

101. Additional Protocols to safeguards agreements were being signed at a very pleasing pace. Spain's Protocol was in the process of being ratified; that process should be complete within the next few months. In that context, he welcomed in particular the signing of an Additional Protocol by Cuba, the first country with an INFCIRC/66-type safeguards agreement to do so. However, it should not be forgotten that several countries with nuclear facilities had not yet signed Additional Protocols, and he expressed the hope that efforts would be redoubled to ensure the universal application of the Protocol.

102. The elaboration and implementation of new safeguards measures, and their integration into the existing system, should result in arrangements which were better adapted to current realities. The credibility of the safeguards system and, in the last analysis, of the Agency itself were at stake. The Department of Safeguards should attach the highest priority to the

matter and should be very selective in the launching of new activities. That reservation did not apply to the Trilateral Initiative which aimed at establishing a verification system for fissile material that had become excess to requirements thanks to nuclear disarmament activities. He hoped that the efforts which were being made in that direction would soon be crowned with success, and that the Director General would be in a position to submit to the Board of Governors a new model safeguards agreement which would differ from existing agreements in technical, legal and financial terms; in particular, matters such as the need to ensure irreversibility of use of the fissile material, the estimated costs, and the system of funding would need to be clarified.

103. Spain had made its position on the financial aspects of that initiative clear: in taking on new verification tasks, the Agency should not depart from the principle of zero growth in the budget. Article XIV.C of the Statute could perhaps be applied; however, a special fund could be considered as long as contributions to it were strictly voluntary. Though it was essentially the responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States where the verification activities would be taking place to supply the funds in question, other countries or international organizations could of course contribute. Until new specific safeguards agreements of the kind mentioned were concluded, the Agency should of course continue to apply safeguards in nuclear-weapon States pursuant to their voluntary-offer agreements to the extent that its budgetary constraints allowed, or using voluntary contributions made for that purpose by the States in question.

104. The results of the first peer review organized under the Convention on Nuclear Safety were highly satisfactory. Most participants had given a frank analysis of the situation in their country. Spain had been anxious to play an active part in that meeting and had presented a detailed report on the steps it had taken to meet its obligations under the Convention. The meeting had demonstrated that States attached the utmost importance to nuclear safety, and the frank discussion which had taken place on such complex subjects as the independence of the regulatory body or the safety of older nuclear power plants had given rise to a detailed and objective final report which augured well for the future. It was to be hoped that that would encourage countries which had not yet done so to ratify the Convention soon.

105. By contrast, it was disturbing how few countries had ratified the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Spain had ratified that Convention in May 1999 and hoped that many other countries would follow its lead soon. It was also ready to take part in the elaboration of rules and procedures for the implementation of the Convention. In that connection, he recalled that the International Conference on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management would be held in Cordoba in March 2000 under the auspices of the Agency, the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD, and the European Union. There could be no doubt that the international community would take a close interest in that conference which should help resolve various issues of concern to both the public and politicians.

106. His delegation had examined with interest document GC(43)/INF/8 on measures to strengthen international co-operation in nuclear, radiation and waste safety. It attached great importance to the Agency's IRS, OSART, ASSET and IRRS services. Several OSART and ASSET missions had been sent to Spanish nuclear power plants, and they had prompted



major reviews and had confirmed the high priority accorded to safety in Spanish nuclear facilities. The Agency had also done an excellent job of acting as a central point for exchange of information on the Y2K problem. Spain had allocated considerable resources to that issue in order to ensure it was in a position to cope with any problems, and it would continue to pass on the results it had achieved in that area to other States through the intermediary of the Agency.

107. He called once more upon all countries to reinforce their national arrangements for the control of radiation sources; it was important to be aware that losing control of such sources could give rise to serious risks to public health and the economy not only in the country concerned, but also in other countries. The action plan which the Board of Governors had just adopted in that regard constituted an important step and Spain, for its part, had taken a series of measures with a view to dealing with the problem. However, such arrangements could only be truly effective if there was rigorous control of radiation sources in all countries of origin of such sources. Spain was prepared to support any initiative by the Agency aimed at promoting co-operation with other competent international organizations, in particular the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD. Such co-operation should ensure that the Agency's resources were utilized in a more rational manner.

108. Radiation protection of patients exposed to radiation for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes was attracting increasing attention owing to the numerous radiotherapy accidents which had been occurring. International co-operation through the Agency with a view to promoting better exchange of information and experience on radiation protection of patients would be most useful. An international conference on radiation protection in medicine could make recommendations which would enable the Director General to submit proposals for the strengthening of activities in that field. Spain was ready to assist in any way with the holding of such a conference, which it would gladly host.

109. His country supported the Agency's technical co-operation activities through various voluntary contributions in cash and in kind in addition to its contribution to the Technical Co-operation Fund, and it was involved in many co-operation programmes and projects. It had played an active part in the extrabudgetary programme on the safety of nuclear power plants with WWER and RBMK reactors which had been completed in 1998. The success of that programme had encouraged it to participate in the extrabudgetary programme on nuclear installation safety in Asia as well, to which it had paid a contribution of \$66 000.

110. Mr. KIENER (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency.

111. The main international instrument in the field of non-proliferation was the regime instituted by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) together with the decisions taken at the NPT Review and Extension Conference of 1995. It was regrettable that the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference had not succeeded in adopting substantive recommendations on the full application and universality of the Treaty; that delicate task would therefore be left to the Conference itself. The nuclear non-proliferation regime had not gone unchallenged, and the situation in the People's

Democratic Republic of Korea and in Iraq, and the obstacles those countries had placed in the way of the Agency in its efforts to monitor implementation of their safeguards agreements, continued to be a source of serious concern. The Conference on Disarmament had still not reached agreement on a working programme which would authorize the opening of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for military uses, and he called upon all members of the Conference to start negotiations as soon as possible with a view to concluding a treaty which would be non-discriminatory and verifiable by the international community.

112. Switzerland wished to contribute to the strengthening of the safeguards system by ratifying an Additional Protocol. However, progress in the implementation of the non-proliferation regime had to be balanced: new constraints on non-nuclear-weapon States were only acceptable if they were matched by progress in nuclear disarmament. That principle should be taken into account when considering the funding of any possible new verification activities to be undertaken by the Agency.

113. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was in the process of being implemented. Switzerland was on the point of ratifying it and would be participating in the conference of State Parties in October 1999. It was important that the Treaty enter into force without delay, and that there be full adherence by all nuclear powers. The ratification procedure for the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management was also under way.

114. Though Switzerland was conducting research on the storage of high-level waste, it remained open to the option of participating in an international storage project. A solution of that kind would offer many advantages, particularly from the point of view of non-proliferation and reduction of Agency verification costs. For any international solution to be acceptable, adequate security arrangements would have to be in place in the receiving country, a state-of-the-art repository would have to be in existence, and transfer of waste from one country to another would have to be carried out within the framework of an agreement based on international law. An international framework needed to be established for the transfer and storage of high-level waste. The Agency was best placed to study the legal and institutional aspects of the problem, and its potential role as a participant in or guarantor of multilateral agreements also deserved consideration. It should undertake that task as soon as possible.

115. On a national level, the process of dialogue which the Ministry of Energy had launched several years ago with the aim of defining future energy policy was partially complete, inter alia with regard to the economical use of energy and the promotion of renewable energy sources. By contrast, it had not been possible to reach consensus on the nuclear energy issue, and repeated attempts by the interested parties to reach agreement on the operational life of existing plants and on waste storage had failed: in Switzerland, nuclear power remained a political stumbling block.

116. With regard to storage of nuclear waste, environmental organizations had requested that the possibility be studied of replacing the current approach, i.e. permanent storage, with

controlled long-term storage; experts were studying the matter. In the meantime, the granting of authorization to store low- and intermediate-level waste at the Wellenberg site had been blocked for political reasons. By contrast, work on the construction of the Würenlingen intermediate storage centre was going ahead; the centre should enter into service at the beginning of the year 2000 and would be capable of accepting spent fuel and high-level waste. In addition, low- and intermediate-level waste could be treated in a processing facility or incinerated in a plasma furnace. Lastly, geological research was still in progress with a view to selecting rock formations suitable for burying high-level waste, and some of the results obtained so far were promising.

117. The Swiss Government was of the opinion that the law on atomic energy of 1959 was in need of revision. A new draft law which was still in preparation would redefine procedures and competencies; it would also contain a clause on an optional referendum which would allow citizens to express their views before the construction of any new nuclear plant in Switzerland. The opponents of nuclear energy had announced that they had collected sufficient signatures to introduce two amendments to the Constitution: the first aimed at prolonging the current nuclear moratorium by ten years and prohibiting any increase in the capacity of existing nuclear power plants; and the second demanded the decommissioning of existing plants after 30 years of operation and the permanent abandonment of spent fuel recycling. Finally, in 1999 it had been reported that rail shipments of spent fuel elements had shown levels of contamination in excess of the current norms; the source of the contamination had been identified and the necessary measures taken.

118. As at the preceding session, Switzerland - concerned as it was about the balancing of the Agency's budget - supported a zero growth budget applied flexibly. It continued to appreciate and support the Agency's activities, and the central role the latter played in promoting international co-operation and security.

119. Mr. HEATHCOTE (United Kingdom), having fully endorsed the statement made by the Finnish Minister for Trade and Industry on behalf of the European Union, said that, although the past 12 months had been characterized by progress on such important issues as the Agency's future priorities and its funding regime, he was concerned by the slow progress or lack of progress in other areas.

120. He welcomed the Director General's initiative in producing a draft Medium Term Strategy, which he regarded as an essential tool to ensure that the Agency's activities remained relevant and useful. However, the existing draft required further work, particularly in terms of defining priorities and performance indicators, and identifying areas of work which could be phased out.

121. The proposal to amend Article XIV of the Statute in order to allow for biennial budgeting was also a welcome move, since it should enable the Agency to plan its activities better while still maintaining an effective overview. The Agency should, of course, use the possibilities offered by biennial budgeting wisely, without stretching its limited resources too far. The United Kingdom would continue to participate fully in the budget process with a view to ensuring that the Agency identified its priorities efficiently and effectively.

122. Significant progress had been made towards the implementation of the strengthened safeguards system. He congratulated the Director General on having submitted Additional Protocols with 45 States to the Board for approval; those States included a number with significant nuclear activities, and he urged all States which had not yet done so to conclude and sign an Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

123. The next stage would be to implement those agreements. The United Kingdom was continuing its efforts to put the necessary legislation in place and, over the next few weeks, it would be transmitting to the Agency a voluntary declaration containing the information that it was required to provide under its Additional Protocol, thereby demonstrating its commitment to the strengthening of safeguards. He urged all States to do their utmost to support the Secretariat's efforts to secure the rapid implementation of the strengthened safeguards system which would help optimize Agency safeguards through the integration of the old and new measures.

124. The United Kingdom was disappointed at the lack of progress in the area of non-proliferation during the past 12 months. The third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 NPT Review Conference had only been able to reach agreement on procedural arrangements for the Conference. The latter would be very important for the non-proliferation regime, since it would provide an opportunity to look back over the previous five years and set an agenda for making real progress over the following five years. The United Kingdom would do its utmost to contribute to its success.

125. It was very regrettable that the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament had not started, although an ad hoc committee had been established for that purpose. His country remained committed to playing an active role in those negotiations because it believed that such a treaty would constitute a major step forward in the area of non-proliferation, and he urged all States to facilitate the start of negotiations at the next session of the Conference on Disarmament.

126. The situation in Iraq and the DPRK continued to cause concern. Like its partners in the European Union, the United Kingdom commended the Agency's work in investigating Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme but was deeply concerned at the fact that, since December 1998, it had been unable to fulfil its mandate in that country. He called on Iraq to resume full co-operation with the Agency immediately.

127. The United Kingdom was also concerned by the DPRK's continuing refusal to co-operate with the Agency and he urged the DPRK to comply with its commitments under its safeguards agreement and to co-operate fully with the Director General. He hoped that the fruitful discussions that had taken place earlier in the month between the United States and the DPRK marked the beginning of a commitment by the latter not to destabilize the region by its missile proliferation activities, and to behave responsibly in international affairs.

128. His country continued to support the Agency's active role in the field of nuclear safety, and in particular the priority given to the revision of existing safety standards and the preparation of new standards. The International Conference on the Strengthening of Nuclear

Safety in Eastern Europe, organized in June 1999, had highlighted the technical and operational improvements that had been made in many States during the past decade to strengthen safety, and the major changes that had been made to their legislative and regulatory infrastructures. The United Kingdom endorsed the Conference's conclusions that further improvements in nuclear safety in Eastern Europe remained desirable, notably in terms of strengthening the technical capabilities and enforcement powers of independent nuclear regulators.

129. The United Kingdom had been pleased to provide additional funding to the Agency for its technical co-operation projects in the area of safety and for its work on the Y2K problem. He commended the Agency's efforts to increase international awareness of the risks associated with potential Y2K computer failures and the way it had helped countries share their experience in that area.

130. The open and frank discussion that had taken place at the first review meeting held under the Convention on Nuclear Safety in April 1999 had been very encouraging. The success of that meeting fully justified the confidence of the Contracting Parties, which had set up that peer review mechanism in order to promote continuous improvement in nuclear safety levels worldwide, and it augured well for future review meetings in which the United Kingdom intended to continue to play an active role.

131. His country continued to support the Agency's technical co-operation activities. It had once again paid its full share of the target for the TCF in 1999 and had paid additional voluntary contributions in a number of areas.

132. The External Auditor had made a number of comments and useful recommendations on the subject of the technical co-operation programme. The United Kingdom fully endorsed those comments and recommendations and believed that the Agency should act upon them with a view to improving the programme still further. All parties should play a role in that endeavour, and he urged those States that had not yet done so to pay their share of the TCF target and their assessed programme costs in full and on time.

133. Mr. EL-FEKI (Egypt), having welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency, said that his country attached great importance to the goals of worldwide non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. There was a particularly pressing need to make progress in those areas in the Middle East, since the outdated deterrent strategy posed a threat to peace and stability in the whole region. Egypt had been working since 1974 to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and, as a logical extension of that aim, on 8 April 1990 President Mubarak had called for the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the region. Within the Agency, Egypt had recommended the application of comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear facilities in the Middle East as an essential step towards ensuring nuclear non-proliferation at regional and international level; it had also proposed that the Agency prepare a model agreement for the application of safeguards and for the verification of compliance with legal obligations stemming from the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

134. Following the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference, multilateral negotiations had been initiated at Egypt's request on the vital issue of disarmament and security in the Middle East, on which a regional agreement would have to be reached in order to achieve genuine peace and stability in the region. It was clear that agreement could not be reached in a region characterized by military imbalance. The resolution on the Middle East (NPT/CONF.1995/32/RES/1) adopted by the participants of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, including the three depositary States, had reaffirmed the importance the international community attached to nuclear disarmament in the region. All those States which had supported the resolution, and especially the depositary States, had a responsibility to ensure that its provisions were implemented, in particular within the framework of the NPT Review Conference that would be held the following year.

135. All Arab States without exception had acceded to the NPT and had placed their nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards, thereby demonstrating their confidence in the non-proliferation regime and their desire to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Israel was the only country in the region that had not acceded to the Treaty; it had also not given any indication that it intended to do so, and it refused to place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards.

136. For its part, Egypt would continue to favour dialogue between the parties in the region and encourage the Agency to take steps to establish an appropriate framework for regional arrangements that might prove acceptable. It therefore expected the other party to show the same determination to achieve the common objective of eliminating the risks of nuclear weapons in the region, and to demonstrate the necessary commitment and credibility by initiating a dialogue on ways of achieving that objective, particularly since Egypt had already taken constructive steps within the Agency and the United Nations General Assembly to create a suitable climate for the initiation of genuine dialogue on the denuclearization of the Middle East and the other aspects of security and stability in the region.

137. Egypt believed that technical co-operation, like non-proliferation, was an essential aspect of the Agency's programme and an integral part of its work to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. While certain States were really not able to pay their contributions to the TCF owing to their economic and political situation, others, invoking the Agency's Statute, looked upon the "voluntary" nature of contributions to the TCF as lending a certain legitimacy to their failure to pay. Those contributions should be regarded - at least politically - as compulsory. Member States, whether donors or recipients, should honour all their commitments and pay their contributions to the Fund regularly and in full in order to ensure the smooth implementation of the Agency's technical co-operation activities.

138. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, some States had said that the issue of Board expansion should be linked to that of the composition of regional groups. It was true that a complex political issue was involved, but the logic of that linkage was not clear to Egypt, which had nevertheless shown flexibility and understanding in accepting the principle of linkage with a view to solving the problem of the composition of regional groups and the problem of criteria in a manner acceptable to all. He reaffirmed Egypt's support for the African position that the Board should be increased by at least seven seats.

139. Egypt was strengthening its programmes related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and making sure that they were transparent and implemented in accordance with the safeguards system and the standards established for nuclear safety and the protection of workers, the public and the environment. The commissioning in February 1998 of its second research reactor - with a capacity of 22 MW - and of its reactor fuel fabrication plant had enabled it to enter a new phase on the industrial and technological plane.

140. The Egyptian Atomic Energy Authority was participating actively in regional and international programmes, and in training courses and scientific conferences on the development of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, particularly within the framework of the activities carried out by the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, the Middle Eastern Regional Radioisotope Centre for the Arab Countries, and the AFRA programme, in co-operation with the African States. In that connection, Egypt had welcomed the meetings held in April 1999 in connection with the tenth anniversary of the African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology, and the third African symposium on nuclear science and technology, thereby demonstrating the importance it attached to regional co-operation within the framework of AFRA.

141. Convinced of the importance of developing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to ensure the well-being of its people, Egypt was evaluating, in co-operation with the Agency, alternative strategies and technologies in the area of electricity production and, in particular, nuclear power, which it would need during the coming decades. Since its water resources for irrigation were limited, it was conducting a technical and economic feasibility study on the construction of a nuclear power plant to be used for electricity generation and seawater desalination, in order to decide on the best option in preparation for the next stage when it would be implementing a project on electricity generation and desalinated water.

142. Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands), endorsing the statement made by the Finnish Minister for Trade and Industry on behalf of the European Union, said that his country was planning to ratify before the 2000 NPT Review Conference the Additional Protocol with the Agency which it had signed one year previously together with the 12 other non-nuclear-weapon States of the European Union and EURATOM. He noted with pleasure how many other countries were in the process of negotiating, signing and ratifying Additional Protocols and urged all States that had not yet done so, including those that had not concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements, to follow that example. His country welcomed the Director General's statement to the effect that the integration of "classical" and additional safeguards measures was a matter of priority, since it was convinced that an integrated safeguards system was a prerequisite for meeting the challenges which lay ahead.

143. The Agency would have an important role to play in the future in the arms control and verification field. The verification of surplus weapons-grade material from dismantled nuclear weapons in the Russian Federation and the United States deserved priority, as all States would benefit from the enhanced global security it would bring. A number of important questions still needed to be settled, such as the scope of verification and funding, and he called upon all States to engage in a serious discussion of those issues.

144. Although the review meeting organized under the Convention on Nuclear Safety had been a success, the effectiveness of the Convention would of course depend on the measures taken by the Parties pursuant to the recommendations and suggestions made during the review process. The safety authorities in the Netherlands were paying close attention to the comments of their colleagues. In particular, they fully supported the recommendation that the Netherlands should maintain enough technically qualified staff to ensure that its level of nuclear safety remained high.

145. Several conclusions in the report of the review meeting focused on older power plants in Central and Eastern Europe that did not meet internationally accepted safety standards. As some of those plants could not be upgraded to meet those standards, the countries concerned and the international community should put more effort into planning and preparing for their speedy decommissioning. Some of the countries concerned were heavily dependent on the electricity generated by those plants and international assistance would need to be provided to them in that regard.

146. He commended the intensive efforts the Agency had made as co-ordinator of the international efforts to deal with the Y2K problem in nuclear power plants. His country had supported those endeavours from the outset through financial contributions and the provision of cost-free experts for technical missions. It was prepared to continue providing such assistance, on the understanding that the focus might shift from problems in nuclear power plants themselves to related problems in electricity networks.

147. The Netherlands had only one nuclear power plant which would stay in operation until 2003; another had been shut down for economic reasons related to the liberalization of the electricity and gas market, currently one of the main objectives of national energy policy. Furthermore, two studies on the advantages and disadvantages of spent fuel reprocessing and direct storage had been carried out at the Government's request; on the basis of those studies and subsequent discussions in Parliament, the Government had concluded that there were no pressing reasons to modify the current strategy based on reprocessing. That view had been largely accepted by Parliament.

148. Mr. BOTA (Romania), after welcoming Honduras and Angola to the Agency, said that his Government's nuclear policy encompassed not only the development and use of nuclear energy, but also the establishment and enforcement of legislation and regulations to ensure the highest standards of nuclear safety and prevent proliferation. Romania, which had long supported the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, was now benefiting from its investment with nuclear energy accounting for approximately 10% of its electricity output. The Government had always attached high priority to safety and protection of the environment and the public, and the nuclear industry was one of the most closely controlled industries in Romania.

149. Over the preceding year, a National Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation had been established with a mandate to promote nuclear energy applications and R&D programmes through the National Atomic Energy Agency. There were two governmental organizations responsible for nuclear safety: the National Commission for Nuclear Activities



Control (which enforced the regulations), and the "Nuclearelectrica" company (which constructed and operated CANDU reactors). Following the privatization of commercial energy production and distribution, the "Nuclearelectrica" company, the Autonomous Company for Nuclear Activities and the National Uranium Company had assumed control, with the Ministry of Trade and Industry co-ordinating activities.

150. Unit 1 of Cernavoda, the first Romanian nuclear power plant, was equipped with a CANDU-6 reactor and was managed by Romanian specialists; it had been in operation since December 1996, and by August 1999 it had generated over 15 million MWh and had attained a gross capacity factor of 98%. The Government viewed the completion of Cernavoda Unit 2 as a strategic objective and had entrusted an interministerial committee with the task of concluding a financing agreement for that purpose. The Agency and the technical assistance it provided to Romania had made a major contribution to the safe operation of Unit 1.

151. The National Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation had recently adopted a national research, development and innovation plan for 1999-2002 consisting of four programmes, including one to promote applied research in the nuclear field and another on international co-operation and partnership arrangements in the nuclear research field. The objective of the plan was to meet the country's medium- and long-term needs, taking into account the objectives of the European Union's Fifth Framework Programme for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Agency's technical assistance requirements. Romania's participation in the Fifth Framework Programme opened up new co-operation opportunities for it, and it attached particular importance to the involvement of Romanian institutes in EURATOM research projects on fission and fusion.

152. The financial support provided by the Agency had taken the form of research contracts, expert missions, fellowships and national and regional projects. The Secretariat had displayed a high degree of competence and effectiveness, and the technical co-operation programme gave Romania valuable assistance with the transfer of equipment and know-how and the training of experts. In addition, the Agency and the United States had given Romania unfailing support in nuclear power development; that support had taken many forms, including footnote-a/ projects, even if those projects required a great deal of funding. The project on the conversion of the 14 MW TRIGA reactor core at the Pitesti Institute for Nuclear Power Research was worthy of mention. The two Model Projects on strengthening of the Romanian nuclear safety regulatory authority and the technical review of spent fuel dry storage at the Cernavoda nuclear power plant should also be noted.

153. Moreover, fellowship holders and specialists from several developing countries had received training in Romania in 1998 and 1999. He hoped that those activities would continue, and that his country would be in a position to go on sharing its expertise with other developing countries. Furthermore, Romania was willing to host courses and provide on-the-job training in its nuclear facilities and specialized institutes as part of the regional technical co-operation programme for Europe. Finally, two seminars on public awareness had been organized in 1998 and 1999 at the initiative of the National Atomic Energy Agency, with the support of the Agency; as a follow-up to those, a national centre for public information in the nuclear field was soon to be established.

154. The first review meeting organized under the Convention on Nuclear Safety in April 1999 had demonstrated that the Convention was a valuable instrument for evaluating and improving nuclear safety. Romania was currently assessing the lessons learnt from the review and would continue to meet fully its obligations under that Convention.

155. The Y2K action plan would make the Agency a centre for exchange of information on diagnostic and remedial actions to be taken. All nuclear facilities in operation in Romania had prepared themselves for the changeover to the year 2000 by implementing a special programme based on the requirements of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

156. Romania supported all steps taken by the Agency to ensure that safeguards were applied in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The Additional Protocol to the safeguards agreement between Romania and the Agency had been approved by the Board of Governors and signed in June 1999. The Government of Romania looked forward to the assumption by the Agency of new verification tasks relating to nuclear arms control and reduction, and felt that the Agency should continue its long-standing tradition of accepting all requests for the application of safeguards.

157. Ms. PELLICER (Mexico), having welcomed Honduras to the Agency, said that the ongoing session of the General Conference was a good opportunity to re-evaluate the Agency's activities and consider structural modifications, so as to adapt the organization to current circumstances and strengthen its role in the future. Her country attached great importance to the strengthening of technical co-operation and felt that the efficient integration and co-ordination of the Agency's activities, particularly in the areas of technical co-operation and nuclear applications, would be very beneficial to the Agency and Member States. The Secretariat should therefore make moves to develop a co-ordination programme with a view to ensuring consistent and integrated planning of the activities of the Department of Technical Co-operation and the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications.

158. Turning to the programme on comparative assessment of energy sources, she commended the Secretariat on its work to develop methodological tools to facilitate decision-making. It was to be hoped that the comparative assessments of all energy supply options would provide a useful evaluation framework for all Member States, many of which were searching actively for other energy sources to replace those which generated greenhouse gases. Her country was of the opinion that it would not be possible to forgo nuclear power in the medium and long term, and the decision to extend the analysis time horizon to the

year 2100 for tasks related to the role of nuclear power in sustainable energy development and in the mitigation of potential climate changes was therefore wise.

159. The activities undertaken as part of the programme on co-ordination of safety-related activities (development of guidelines, follow-up and application of relevant conventions, exchange of information and assistance to Member States) fully met the concerns of Member States and the international community and laid the foundations for convincing the public that nuclear energy was a prerequisite for development.

160. Mexico was of the view that the Agency should begin to consider the possibility of extending its activities in the safeguards field to promote a universal non-proliferation regime covering vertical proliferation. It therefore welcomed the agreement recently reached in the Board of Governors on measures to address the proliferation potential of neptunium and americium. However, that agreement would only have positive results if the nuclear-weapon States fulfilled their responsibilities. She therefore requested the Director General to keep Member States informed of progress with the implementation of the measures adopted by the Board of Governors.

161. Her country was also looking forward to the Director General's report on Agency verification of fissile material declared surplus to requirements by the Russian Federation and United States of America. The financial implications of the tripartite agreement between those two countries and the Agency should be examined as soon as possible, as well as the legal provisions which would need to be adopted to ensure that the Agency's work was viable and credible, since the voluntary-offer agreements did not contain any irrevocable commitments.

162. The results of applying safeguards in nuclear-weapon States showed that that work was useful, should continue, and should even be intensified, not only for political and moral reasons, but also because it raised the technical abilities of the inspectors involved.

163. Mexico therefore called upon Member States to support the Agency in that area, which was vital for the non-proliferation regime, and even to encourage it to contribute to the efforts of the international community in the disarmament field.

164. Over the preceding year, Mexico had made significant progress in the nuclear field. A project had been successfully implemented that had raised the power levels of both units in operation at the Laguna Verde nuclear power plant by approximately 30 MW(e). Constant efforts were being made at the plant to promote a safety culture. It was a member of the World Association of Nuclear Operators and would be subjected to a review by other members in November 1999. Furthermore, collective exposure levels had been reduced considerably and significant environmental improvements had been recorded in the vicinity of the plant, thanks to the implementation of an aggressive programme.

165. The National Institute for Nuclear Research (ININ) had continued its work on nuclear energy and related issues, and on applications of radiation in agriculture, food, industry and human health. In addition, it had expanded its activities to provide specialized advanced technology services to the Laguna Verde nuclear power plant, the petroleum sector and

industry in general. It had also studied the possibility of providing services to the governments of the federal capital and other federal states.

166. In the area of health, ININ was carrying out research into the development of radiopharmaceuticals for cancer treatment. It had also been granted a licence by the Secretariat of Health to operate a radiosterilized tissue bank.

167. The first doctorates in nuclear science and non-linear physics had been obtained by students on the masters and doctoral programmes set up by the ININ in collaboration with the Mexico State Autonomous University. The excellence of those programmes had been recognized by the National Council for Science and Technology.

168. Finally, she thanked the Director General for the efforts he had made to increase the number of women in the Secretariat. An intensive public information programme was required to encourage women, and in particular those from developing countries, to move into scientific activities related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; without such a programme, it would not be possible to increase the number of female applicants, despite the Director General's good intentions. In addition, a special programme of fellowships for women with a scientific education could perhaps be established at the Agency in order to acquaint them with its activities.

169. Mr. HABIB (Lebanon), after welcoming Angola and Honduras to the Agency, said that water was vital to stability and progress, particularly in the Middle East region, and the Agency should therefore make efforts to expand the use of techniques involving nuclear energy - and more specifically isotope hydrology - in the development and management of water resources. He urged the Agency to intensify co-operation in that area at national and international level.

170. The 3% increase in the world demand for nuclear material for the production of electricity, and the increased use of such material in various peaceful applications had led to an increase in the volume of nuclear waste; the processing and management of such waste had become a matter of urgency and necessity in order to protect the environment and limit the risks of contamination.

171. Technical co-operation was the link between Member States and the Agency and enabled the Agency to carry out its primary tasks, namely to enlarge the contribution of nuclear energy to the peace, health and prosperity of Member States. Lebanon therefore welcomed the Agency's new technical co-operation strategy and hoped that it would further increase the effectiveness of collaboration between international organizations and the competent authorities of Member States. Technical co-operation also played an important role in providing the training required to address specific problems related to the objectives and priorities of Member States.

172. Lebanon was convinced that co-operation was the means to accelerate progress and development and had participated in several regional Model Projects, including the one on upgrading radiation protection infrastructure. The national projects it was currently implementing in co-operation with the Agency related to use of the Van de Graaff accelerator of the Lebanese Atomic Energy Commission, the fight against the Mediterranean fruit fly, and determination of toxic pollutants in the environment.

173. With regard to the amendment of Article VI of the Statute, it was essential that regional groups be represented in a more equitable manner on the Board of Governors. The draft amendment submitted, and in particular the new paragraph K, appeared to meet with the approval of a large number of Member States. Nevertheless, while Lebanon recognized the right of each State to belong to a regional group, it had to be recognized that any group had the right to accept or refuse a country's application for membership.

174. The application of safeguards was one of the Agency's main tasks and constituted the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Progress had been made in recent years thanks to the development of new inspection techniques and the signing of Additional Protocols. Lebanon, which had ratified the NPT and joined the safeguards system, would be honoured to see highly skilled Lebanese nationals acting as members of the Agency's inspection teams responsible for the application of safeguards and the NPT.

175. The safeguards system had to be accepted by all States if it was to be applied comprehensively and effectively. It was well known that Israel was the only country in the Middle East which had not acceded to the NPT and concluded a safeguards agreement. It refused to submit its nuclear facilities to inspections, creating a very serious situation in the region; the General Conference should therefore demand that Israel submit its nuclear facilities to Agency safeguards and agree to receive Agency inspectors.

176. Lebanon attached great importance to the Agency's efforts to make the Middle East a denuclearized zone and to apply comprehensive safeguards there. It therefore appreciated the visit the Director General had made to the region in 1999 to pave the way for denuclearization of the Middle East, with a view to strengthening peace efforts and consolidating the non-proliferation system. The Director General was undoubtedly aware of the existing military imbalance in the nuclear field in Israel's favour, and of the latter's stubborn defiance of the international community and the resolutions it had adopted. Given the fact that Israel continued to occupy a part of Lebanese territory, oppress the civilian population, and bomb and destroy its installations and infrastructure, Lebanon called upon the international community, through the forum of the Agency, to put pressure on Israel and persuade it to discharge its obligations vis-à-vis the Agency, like all States in the region, and to comply with international resolutions and provisions in order to strengthen peace and security in the Middle East and in the rest of the world.

177. The current session of the General Conference provided an opportunity, on the threshold of the third millennium, to recall that the Agency was the most appropriate framework through which the threat posed to humanity by the proliferation of nuclear weapons could be averted. Lebanon therefore called upon all members of the international

community to join forces to reject violence, injustice and intolerance, and ensure that reason, justice, peaceful coexistence and moderation prevailed, so that the future of subsequent generations was not compromised, thus making the current session the crowning success of the present millennium.

178. Mr. NOBILO (Croatia), having welcomed Honduras and Angola to the Agency, said that the Agency's goals were also of vital interest to his country. Since becoming a member of the Agency in 1992, Croatia had implemented a number of projects in co-operation with it which had enhanced safety and security in the management of nuclear energy. Its legislation had been harmonized with the Agency's standards, it had acquired expertise in the fields of radiation protection and waste management, and it had improved the skills of its experts.

179. As an indication of its desire to co-operate fully with the Agency, Croatia had signed an Additional Protocol to its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency during the forty-second session of the General Conference in September 1998. It was anxious to strengthen the efficiency of the safeguards system in order to diminish the threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, Croatia had concluded two bilateral agreements on early exchange of information in the event of a radiological emergency - one with Slovenia and one with Hungary. Those two agreements went beyond the Additional Protocol and also foresaw exchanges of information between the information systems of the various countries concerned.

180. Croatia welcomed the achievements in the field of nuclear safety. A legally binding regime was being established under the auspices of the Agency and world awareness of the issue was constantly increasing. Nevertheless, much remained to be done and his country pledged its continuing co-operation in the future. The first review meeting of the States party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety had shown that exchange based on experience was a good way of promoting the Convention's objectives.

181. While the Agency's field of activities was increasing, its available funds were not; something would have to be done about that in the not too distant future. His country supported the recent initiatives whereby the Agency would play an active role in the training of young experts, primarily in physics and other scientific disciplines related to the use of nuclear energy. It was firmly convinced that investing in education was an investment in the future. In addition, the Croatian Nuclear Society was currently preparing for the third international conference on the topic "Nuclear Option in Countries with Small and Medium Electricity Grids", due to take place in Dubrovnik in June 2000; Croatia had proposed that the Agency sponsor that event.

182. The Croatian electricity company was the co-funder and co-owner of the Krško nuclear power plant built on Slovenian territory. Both sides were pleased with the results achieved as regards safety and reliability indicators, and they looked forward to the planned visit to the site of the Agency's team. Some differences of opinion concerning management of the facility were currently being resolved; they had, however, at no time represented a threat to safety or security.

183. Co-operation between Croatian universities and research institutes on the one hand, and the Agency's technical co-operation programme on the other, was increasing, and the appreciable number of applicants being awarded fellowships at Croatian establishments was proof of the respect and esteem they enjoyed. That fruitful co-operation would continue in the future.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.