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RECORD OF THE SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Austria Center Vienna
on Wednesday, 20 September 2000, at 3.05 p.m.

President: Mr. OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic)
Later: Mr. RYZHOV (Russian Federation)

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[*] GC(44)/1.

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(44)/INF/18/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	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
Bangkok Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
CEG	Contact Expert Group for International Radwaste Projects in the Russian Federation
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
Early Notification Convention	Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
GNP	Gross national product
IRRT	International Regulatory Review Team
Montreal Protocol	Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987)
NPT	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
NWFZ	Nuclear-weapon-free zone
PHWR	Pressurized heavy water reactor
Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
SIT	Sterile insect technique
SSDL	Secondary Standard Dosimetry Laboratory
START	Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
TranSAS	Transport Safety Appraisal Service
UNMOVIC	United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission
WHO	World Health Organization

GENERAL DEBATE AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1999 (continued)
(GC(45)/4)

1. Ms. PELLICER SILVA (Mexico) said that the sixth NPT Review Conference had been remarkable in that the nuclear-weapon States had committed themselves for the first time to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. That commitment represented a major step forward in the efforts which Mexico and other countries had long been making to promote disarmament and international peace and security, and it opened up prospects for strict compliance with the NPT and with other instruments such as the CTBT. The advances made at the Conference could have a significant impact on the Agency's future role in the verification field. Additional financial resources might be required for new activities, and countries in the strongest financial positions should make the necessary effort.

2. A strengthened safeguards system, integrating traditional safeguards measures and the measures foreseen under the Model Additional Protocol, was likewise essential if the Agency was to meet the verification responsibilities entrusted to it by the international community. However, that goal could not be achieved until a sufficient number of countries signed additional protocols. Mexico was hoping to be in a position to sign its own additional protocol as soon as possible.

3. Despite the many commendable efforts that had been made, the problem of the financing of technical co-operation had not been finally resolved. Moreover, it was difficult to ignore the fact that not all countries that joined the Agency accepted all the provisions of its Statute, such as that in Article III.A.2 concerning the Agency's responsibility to make provision for materials, services, equipment and facilities to meet the needs of research on, and development and practical application of, atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Yet successive NPT Review Conferences had recognized the importance of the Agency's efforts in the field of technology transfer, and Article IV of the NPT specifically enjoined signatories to promote that activity.

4. She commended the Agency's work on the eradication of the screwworm in the Caribbean region using sterile insects produced in a plant in Chiapas, Mexico. The Mexican National Institute for Nuclear Research was benefiting from Agency support in its work on the production of radiopharmaceuticals for the treatment of cancer and the setting up of a radiosterilized tissue bank for treatment of burns. It was also studying the use of nuclear techniques to preserve cultural heritage. The National Commission for Nuclear Safety and Safeguards, in an attempt to recoup costs, had recently instituted a charge for licences for users of radioactive material, which should improve its operating capacity. As part of the technical co-operation project on upgrading of the safety of radioactive waste management, moves were afoot to develop a national policy on radioactive waste. With the Agency's assistance, the National Institute for Nuclear Research was currently upgrading Mexico's radioactive waste storage centre.

5. Mexico had been the first country in the region to ratify the ARCAL agreement and it urged other countries involved in the ARCAL programme to do likewise. It also welcomed the Agency's support for the programme and hoped it would increase.

6. The Laguna Verde nuclear power plant had been operating without incident, and the National Commission for Nuclear Safety and Safeguards had approved a 5% power increase for both units. The Agency was providing support for the plant's ongoing safety culture programme, and a number of seminars were to be held there over the coming months. It would also receive an IRRT visit. In order to meet the concerns of some sectors of the public over the plant's safety, a technical review was to be carried out by a private entity with international experience in the field.

7. Over the preceding two years, co-operation among Member States had helped resolve two long-standing issues: the amendment of Article VI and the elimination of the shielding system in the financing of safeguards. It was to be hoped that similar efforts would be made to strengthen the three pillars of the Agency. In particular, Mexico hoped to see the establishment of a universal nuclear safety culture based on legally binding instruments and appropriate regulations and procedures, a fully functioning integrated safeguards system, and a TCF with adequate resources to respond fully to project requests from Member States.

8. Mr. EGLAJS (Latvia) commended the efforts to speed up implementation of important resolutions of the preceding General Conference, such as those on combating of illicit trafficking and strengthening of nuclear, radiation and waste safety.

9. Latvia had been paving the way for significant changes in its radiation safety infrastructure over the current year. A framework law on radiation and nuclear safety should come into force early in 2001. The Agency's Legal Division had provided swift and efficient assistance when the Latvian Parliament had raised questions concerning the draft of that law. With the promised support from Sweden, Denmark and other neighbouring countries, a new regulatory body should be established and be in a position to work successfully from the outset.

10. His country had submitted a ratification document for the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management earlier in the year and hoped to sign its additional protocol soon. It had made the amendments to domestic legislation required for the ratification of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage.

11. Co-operation with Nordic countries continued to be a success. Joint investigations had been carried out with Sweden and Norway on combating of illicit trafficking. The results had been published in English and translated into several other languages.

12. With regard to the decommissioning of its research reactor, it was not always easy for a country like Latvia to apply internationally agreed approaches to such activities. One important task which would have to be carried out over the coming few years was the handling of spent, highly enriched nuclear fuel. In the past, such material had been returned to the supplier, but that approach was now open to question. Latvia therefore strongly supported the initiatives of the Agency and the United States of America to establish a take-back programme and hoped that the Russian Government would accept that approach. That

would enable Latvia and several other countries to fulfil their responsibilities safely, and would minimize the risk of loss of control over such material.

13. Turning to technical co-operation issues, he noted that Latvia had pledged its full share to the TCF for 2000. A joint financing approach had been used successfully for the subregional project on establishment of a secondary standard dosimetry laboratory. A similar approach was being considered for the decommissioning project. Extra funds from beneficiary countries would make project implementation more efficient.

14. Mr. de QUEIROZ DUARTE (Brazil) commended the Agency's efforts to achieve a global safety regime which would facilitate the implementation by Member States of the latest standards in the safe use of nuclear energy. He also thanked the Agency for its prompt response to the request for a technical evaluation mission on nuclear waste at the Angra I nuclear power plant. Its recommendations had been most useful to Brazil in its efforts to improve nuclear waste management and disposal.

15. With a coastline of over 7000 km, his country was greatly concerned at the increasing frequency of maritime transport of radioactive material and nuclear waste. Owing to the potential risks to the health of coastal populations and the marine environment, Brazil and other countries of the Southern Cone had been advocating the strengthening of the relevant international regime.

16. Brazil strongly supported ARCAL which, since its inception, had promoted nuclear applications in such areas as human health, the environment, agriculture and industry, all of which had a strong social impact. The Agency should continue to give due priority in its technical co-operation programme to nuclear power generation, radiation and isotope technologies, and the management and disposal of radioactive waste. It was also imperative that Member States' own interests continue to be taken into account in the approval of technical co-operation projects.

17. The agreements reached by the Board of Governors on the financing of technical co-operation and safeguards reflected the growing perception by Member States of a common responsibility for the achievement of shared objectives in technology transfer and verification. In view of the new activities that the Agency was likely to be asked to undertake, the quest for efficiency and cost-effectiveness in safeguards implementation was of particular importance. Brazil welcomed the steps which were being taken to integrate both traditional and new safeguards measures. Co-operation between ABACC and the Agency should contribute to the streamlining of the safeguards system. Brazil, Argentina and ABACC had initiated informal contacts with the Secretariat regarding an additional protocol to the Quadripartite Agreement.

18. At the sixth NPT Review Conference, the five nuclear-weapon States had for the first time unequivocally undertaken to eliminate totally their nuclear arsenals. The establishment of a detailed programme of action would facilitate future evaluation of the progress achieved. If momentum was maintained, those groundbreaking developments could help break the

impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and encourage countries to proceed with the ratifications needed for the entry into force of the CTBT.

19. The year 2000 had brought with it major developments in the peaceful use of nuclear energy in Brazil, notably the commissioning of the Angra II nuclear power plant which was already generating electricity at 80% of its total capacity and would add 1300 MW(e) to the national power grid when it became fully operational. Uranium extraction activities had begun at a new mine which was expected to produce enough uranium to meet a large part of domestic needs, and a new plant for reconversion of uranium hexafluoride and fabrication of uranium dioxide pellets had been opened. Nuclear research centres had been set up in the central western and north-eastern regions of the country. Steady investment in recent years had brought about remarkable improvements in the quality and quantity of radiopharmaceutical production, where domestic capacity had doubled compared with 1995.

20. Mr. WØHLK (Denmark) said that one important and welcome outcome of the NPT Review Conference had been the confirmation by the States party to the Treaty, and not least by the nuclear-weapon States, of their commitment to nuclear disarmament. The Conference also reconfirmed the importance of Agency safeguards for the international non-proliferation regime, and had endorsed the measures contained in the Model Additional Protocol. Those measures once implemented would substantially strengthen the Agency's safeguards system and put the Agency in a better position to detect clandestine nuclear activities in non-nuclear-weapon States. Denmark was a party to the additional protocol concluded in September 1998 between the Agency, EURATOM and the 13 non-nuclear-weapon States of the European Union, and was doing its best to implement its new obligations. It remained concerned, however, that 50 non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT had not yet even signed basic safeguards agreements and urged all States to comply with their obligations under the Treaty.

21. Supplier countries had long recognized their responsibility to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Effective export control was a precondition for co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy under the NPT. Denmark fully endorsed the recommendation of the NPT Review Conference that transparency be maintained in supplier arrangements. The Nuclear Suppliers Group played an important role in that regard.

22. Many nuclear power plants still operated at unacceptably low levels of safety, and management of nuclear waste was still unsatisfactory. As there was no evidence that spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste could be managed safely in the long term, Denmark belonged to the growing group of countries that could not support nuclear power as an option. Although the assistance the Agency provided in safety matters to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe was of paramount importance, the only defensible solution for certain reactors operating in those countries was to shut them down as soon as possible.

23. Denmark supported the creation of a comprehensive and legally binding safety regime of which 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 would be the main pillars. It also supported the

ongoing efforts to revise the latter instrument. The adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage were appropriate steps towards strengthening the nuclear liability regime.

24. Since no sustainable solutions had been found to the problems of safety and waste storage, Denmark found it disturbing that so much effort was being expended worldwide to extend the use of nuclear power. Agency technical assistance should not be used for the general promotion of nuclear power. Instead, programmes should be demand-driven and should promote the highest possible safety standards in those countries that had chosen the nuclear option to meet their development needs. It was on that understanding that Denmark had accepted the target of US $73 million for the TCF for 2001 and had pledged its full share.

25. With regard to the budgetary situation, high-priority activities such as safeguards and verification should continue to be financed by the Agency's core budget. With regard to the sharing of safeguards financing, Denmark supported a solution whereby Member States would contribute according to the normal United Nations scale of assessment.

26. Ms. HERNES (Norway) expressed the hope that the consensus reached at the NPT Review Conference on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation would be followed up by practical action by all parties to the Treaty. The initiative taken by all nuclear-weapon States to place fissile material no longer required for military purposes under Agency or other international verification arrangements should contribute significantly to the overall efforts to reduce the risk of proliferation of weapons-usable fissile material. The positive results of the NPT Review Conference had also extended to agreement on several recommendations that would strengthen export controls and promote transparency thereof.

27. The additional protocol to Norway's safeguards agreement had entered into force in May 2000 and the work of implementing the necessary reporting and verification procedures was well under way. It was disappointing that around 50 countries party to the NPT had still not concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency, and that only 52 countries had signed additional protocols of which only 15 were in force. She commended the Agency for taking steps to encourage more States to conclude additional protocols.

28. The international instruments and standards in whose management and implementation the Agency played a leading role had only a limited effect without the active involvement of Member States. In that connection, she urged Member States to sign and ratify the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management so that it could enter into force as soon as possible.

29. Nuclear or radiological emergencies could easily turn into international problems requiring international solutions. Norway strongly supported the Agency's work on developing and implementing practical procedures in connection with the Early Notification and Assistance Conventions, but felt that the response capabilities of Member States would be improved and the system made more cost-effective if the Agency devoted even greater efforts

to co-ordinating international response. Sufficient financial and human resources should therefore be allocated to carrying out those tasks.

30. Her country also supported the Agency's initiatives in respect of the safety of radiation sources, security of radioactive material and the prevention of illicit trafficking and, in that context, she commended those countries which were engaged in bilateral projects aimed at improving the level of security and safety in countries that had requested such assistance.

31. Although the Medium Term Strategy should maintain a proper balance between the different pillars of the Agency's activities, safety and security issues and the fulfilment of its legal obligations had to be the Agency's primary objectives in the twenty-first century.

32. Norway was participating in a number of nuclear safety-related projects in north-western Russia involving the development of governmental structures, the purchase of technical equipment, the elaboration of normative documents and the implementation of accountancy systems and physical protection measures; and it was co-operating closely with the relevant Russian authorities.

33. The Russian Federation was currently faced with major problems in connection with the decommissioning and dismantling of a large number of nuclear-powered vessels, and the safe conditioning and storage of radioactive waste and spent fuel. A completely new infrastructure was needed, requiring enormous investments.

34. A strategy for nuclear clean-up in Russia, with a list of priority projects, had been established in close co-operation with the Russian authorities within the CEG under the auspices of the Agency. Norway, the United States of America and a number of European countries were currently working to establish a multilateral legal framework for provision of assistance to nuclear safety projects in the Russian Federation under an agreement that covered nuclear liability, accountability, accessibility and exemption from taxes and customs duties on international aid. Those efforts would greatly facilitate multilateral involvement in nuclear clean-up activities in the region and joint funding of larger projects. It was essential that environmental impact assessments were carried out for multilateral and bilateral nuclear safety projects, in order to ensure that optimal solutions were adopted with minimum risk of environmental contamination.

35. Norway and the Russian Federation were heading the work on radioactive contamination under the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme. Future work under that Programme would focus on environmental surveillance and the impact of radioactive contamination. In 1998, the Contracting Parties to the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic had agreed on a strategy which envisaged significant reductions in discharges of radionuclides into the ocean.

36. Her country hoped that the introduction of the rate of attainment mechanism would help increase payments to the TCF. However, the main goal should be to encourage members to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time. The main focus of technical co-operation activities should be on nuclear applications in agriculture, dam and water resource

management, and human health and medicine; nuclear power projects should concentrate on safety and the problems of waste and spent fuel.

37. Mr. ARAMRATTANA (Thailand) said that, at the NPT Review Conference in 2000, all States party to the NPT had reaffirmed the vital role the Agency played in safeguards, safety and technology transfer. Thailand supported a strengthened safeguards system based on additional protocols, but the latter would only be effective in enhancing nuclear non-proliferation when they were equitably and universally applied. Measures should therefore be taken to assist States with the conclusion and implementation of additional protocols.

38. The decision to end the shielding system was a major concession by the shielded countries for the sake of equity in the obligations and commitments of all Member States. The indicators for establishing the categories of shielded members should not be based solely on per capita GNP: other legitimate indicators such as significant nuclear activities, possession of nuclear weapons, and the arrangements for designated seats on the Board under the amended Article VI of the Statute should also be taken into consideration. Moreover, the freezing of categories during the phasing out of the shielding system did not allow for re-categorization of shielded members if their per capita GNP changed owing to adverse economic conditions. A mechanism for reviewing the implementation of the new arrangement should accordingly be established to ensure fair treatment, and the major concession made by shielded members should be truly reciprocated in all areas of the Agency's activities.

39. Contributions to the TCF, though voluntary in nature, should be treated as a political commitment, since the Fund needed to be predictable, adequate and assured. Thailand had done its best to pledge and pay its full share to the TCF every year, despite economic difficulties, and he urged other Member States to do the same in order to ensure that the Agency had the necessary financial and human resources to meet its responsibilities in the technical co-operation field. The proposed rate of attainment mechanism was meant to stimulate the flow of resources to the Fund. However, there was an enormous difference between a concession with regard to obligatory contributions and a stimulating mechanism for voluntary contributions.

40. As a country that had recently experienced a radiological accident, Thailand applauded the Agency's efforts in the nuclear safety field, in particular the preparation of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the implementation of the related Action Plan. Increased awareness of nuclear, radiological and waste safety issues through public information, training and safety-related activities was required to prevent accidents from occurring. Despite its tragic aspect, Thailand regarded the accident as a lesson to be learned from and shared with other Member States. A report was currently being drafted and would be published as part of a series of reports on radiological accidents worldwide. He thanked the Government of Japan and the Agency for their prompt response and the French authorities for their offer of help.

41. With regard to illicit trafficking, he pointed out that the NPT regime was the one most relevant to nuclear material, while the safety regime applied most directly to other radiation sources. Each regime had its own preventive measures with different political implications. Thus, the Agency should strengthen separately the preventive measures under the NPT regime and the safety regime with a view to minimizing the possibility of illicit trafficking of nuclear material and other radiation sources.

42. As the depositary State of the Bangkok Treaty, Thailand appreciated the close co-operation between the Agency and the States party to the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. Consultations had taken place to identify key issues in the Treaty's implementation and to seek possible forms of co-operation between ASEAN and the Agency, and a workshop on implementation of the Treaty had been held from 23 to 25 August 2000 in Bangkok. He hoped that co-operation would continue and expand.

43. Mr. SAHINBAS (Turkey) said that the preceding year had shown that the risks of non-compliance with nuclear safety rules were not confined within geographical borders. The Agency's vigilance regarding safety issues was highly commendable and was illustrated by the successful conclusion of the first review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the assistance it had provided to four countries including Turkey in emergency situations, its efforts to improve reactor safety in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and the establishment of TranSAS.

44. In the radiation safety field, Turkey welcomed the establishment of the peer review teams, which should have an important impact on improvement of legal and regulatory frameworks and staff training; and the completion of the safety guide on radiation protection in medical exposure. The Action Plan for the Safety of Radiation Sources and the Security of Radioactive Materials should also alleviate the concerns of many Member States.

45. General Conference resolutions GC(42)/RES/13 and GC(43)/RES/11 on safe transport of radioactive material constituted important steps forward and had created the basis for the establishment of TranSAS; moreover, by creating a mechanism for the exchange of information upon request, they had helped build confidence between shipping States and potentially affected States. The Turkish authorities had decided to apply for a TranSAS evaluation of Turkey's national regulations on the safe transport of radioactive material.

46. In view of its proximity to regions where there was generally considered to be a high risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Turkey attached importance to the speedy entry into force of the strengthened safeguards system. It had recently signed an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement and was taking steps to ensure its early ratification.

47. The main responsibility for efficient international co-operation in the prevention of proliferation lay with supplier countries, but countries on the routes of nuclear-related transfers should also shoulder their responsibilities and co-operate with suppliers to prevent unauthorized access to such goods and technologies. Thus, after establishing the necessary

export control regulations at the domestic level, Turkey had joined the Zangger Committee and the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

48. While the new climate which was beginning to prevail on the Korean peninsula gave rise to hope, Turkey joined in the international community's invitation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with its safeguards agreement and co-operate closely with the Agency. Similarly, Iraq had to abide by Security Council resolution 1284 and extend its collaboration to the newly established UNMOVIC and to the Agency.

49. His country welcomed the adoption by consensus of the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and noted with satisfaction that, once again, 187 countries had confirmed the validity and importance of the nuclear non-proliferation regime established by the Treaty.

50. Curbing illicit trafficking in nuclear material was another way of preventing proliferation. He invited States to implement the Agency's recommendations on the physical protection of nuclear material and to undertake a review of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material with the aim of broadening its scope. The registration by exporter and importer countries of radiation sources used in industry and medicine could help ensure proper control of such sources.

51. For countries in the developing world that were seeking increased electricity production in the context of sustainable development, the energy that could be derived from renewable sources was insufficient for use in long-term, large-scale applications. Despite its higher capital cost, nuclear power was therefore still one of the options most frequently envisaged. Despite the Turkish Government's decision to postpone its plans for the Akkuyu nuclear power plant on account of economic reforms, the nuclear option remained on the country's agenda. Turkey hoped that the Agency's studies on small- and medium-sized reactors would assist developing countries in more accurately targeting their energy strategies.

52. The Agency should play a role in helping national authorities educate the public about nuclear energy. Especially in countries where the construction of nuclear power plants was being contemplated for the first time, anti-nuclear lobbies were presenting the waste problem as a complex one with no solution.

53. Many nuclear research centres had developed expertise in a whole spectrum of nuclear fields and, by virtue of their multidisciplinary nature, had contributed to technology development and benefited industry. The Agency should assist such centres by collecting and furnishing information on the global and regional benefits of nuclear technology.

54. Under the Montreal Protocol, the use of chemicals for food preservation was to be phased out by the year 2005 and food irradiation would accordingly be used increasingly as a means of conservation. The Agency should engage in further research on the development of food irradiation techniques and the improvement of food safety.

55. Nuclear techniques in medicine were widely used in Turkey and, owing to their increasing importance for human health, the quality of the relevant standards needed to be improved. The Agency's guidance in that area would facilitate quality assurance.

56. Co-ordinated research programmes had proved to be one of the most effective ways of disseminating and exchanging information on recent developments in nuclear-related fields, and the resources for increasing the number of such programmes should be secured.

57. Through the Agency's technical co-operation activities, countries received assistance, co-operated with the Agency and collaborated among themselves in a wide spectrum of fields ranging from human health to nuclear safety. Co-ordination between the technical departments and the Department of Technical Co-operation, however, still needed to be improved. In addition, clear criteria needed to be defined for upgrading of footnote-a/ projects.

58. The financial requirements for such a wide spectrum of activities were clearly quite large, yet the technical co-operation needs of developing countries were being met through unsatisfactory voluntary contributions. It was therefore essential that Member States abide by their pledges. Turkey was pledging its full share to the TCF for 2001.

59. Mr. KURDI (Saudi Arabia) commended the Director General on his continuing efforts to reform and modernize the Agency, applying the "one-house approach", rationalizing use of resources, and judiciously combining regular programme and technical co-operation activities.

60. The Agency had developed an effective results-based approach to technical co-operation with and among its Member States, promoting technology transfer and enhancing States' research capabilities. Two regional training courses had been organized in Saudi Arabia in the preceding year on non-destructive testing and in-service inspection for industry, and on the production and control of radiopharmaceuticals.

61. While stressing the importance of the safeguards system in maintaining international security, he expressed concern at the failure of the Agency to provide a detailed picture of the costs and proposed means of financing of the anticipated increase in inspection activities as a result of various requests and initiatives. That trend could be expected to lead to a reduction in funding for development-related programme activities in budgets based on the principle of zero real growth.

62. During its previous session, the General Conference had stressed the importance of applying comprehensive safeguards to all nuclear activities in the States of the Middle East, and the desirability of establishing an NWFZ in the region, an aspiration echoed by the United Nations General Assembly. The final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference had reaffirmed the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. Saudi Arabia had proposed that Israel should, as a first step, announce its willingness to apply Agency safeguards without joining the NPT for the time being. The Director General could rely on his country's full support in his efforts to

apply safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East as a prerequisite for the establishment of an NWFZ.

63. The Agency had acquired considerable knowledge and expertise on nuclear power plants and reactors, fuel cycle facilities and radioactive waste, and had developed contacts with non-traditional partners and the general public to ensure that the use of nuclear power was consistent with the aims of sustainable development. Nuclear power currently produced 16% of the world's electricity and would undoubtedly play an important role in meeting future demand, which was expected to increase threefold over the next 50 years. However, in addition to being faced with technical, economic and political obstacles, it was also unpopular among the general public, especially since the Chernobyl and Tokaimura accidents.

64. The Agency had made laudable efforts to assist Member States in devising sound and sustainable energy strategies. However, the Agency's statements regarding the non-sustainability of fossil and other fuels seemed to reflect a bias in favour of nuclear power, in contradiction to the evidence of the risks to human health and the environment from the operation of nuclear facilities, transport of nuclear material, nuclear accidents and disposal of radioactive waste. The relevant international fora had not yet completed their comparative assessment of the future prospects of nuclear power from the standpoint of sustainable development, costs, competitiveness and public confidence. The Scientific Forum on the role of nuclear power in sustainable development held during the preceding session of the General Conference had failed to agree either on the concept of sustainability or on the role of nuclear power in meeting the growing demand for electricity in the face of stiff competition from natural gas- and coal-fired power plants. Efforts to enhance the competitiveness of nuclear power should focus on its intrinsic advantages and high safety standards rather than on the imposition of environmental taxes or restrictions on its competitors. In that connection, he commended the Agency's efforts to promote effective safety standards and a global nuclear safety culture.

65. Saudi Arabia paid its contributions to the Regular Budget at the beginning of every year. The Board of Governors had noted the impact of adverse economic circumstances on the ability of low-income States and countries in transition to finance programme activities, had discussed the matter from the standpoint of the financing of safeguards and of technical co-operation, and had recommended a temporary reduction in TCF resources with a gradual restoral to their current level, and the phasing out of the shielding mechanism for low-income countries for financing of safeguards. While he understood the reasons for those proposals, he feared that they would lead to a decline in funds for technical co-operation and an increase in those for safeguards, to the detriment of developing Member States. Saudi Arabia therefore reiterated its request for financing of technical co-operation through the Regular Budget.

66. Mr. ALEXANDRIS (Greece) said that although individual countries bore the ultimate responsibility for the safe operation of their nuclear facilities, the role of setting standards and ensuring their worldwide application belonged to the Agency. Greece especially appreciated the Agency's long-standing efforts to improve reactor safety in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Projects on the safety of ageing nuclear power

plants should be given special emphasis in the Agency's programme and budget for 2001. Moreover, decommissioning of nuclear facilities was bound to become a challenge in the future going far beyond the borders of the countries directly involved. Greece would also welcome every effort made to increase the safety of radiation sources, including the adoption of legally binding measures to enable the Agency to discharge its functions fully under Article III.A.6 of the Statute.

67. On 17 July 2000, Greece had submitted to the Director General its letter of ratification of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. A Presidential decree on the safety of radioactive waste management was expected to enter into force in the near future.

68. Despite isolated differences among States party to the NPT, a consensus had been achieved at the 2000 NPT Review Conference on measures to strengthen Agency safeguards. The NPT and the strengthened safeguards system had to be universally applied if their credibility was to be maintained and even enhanced. To that end, all States that had concluded safeguards agreements should sign additional protocols. Greece had signed the additional protocol to the safeguards agreement between the 13 non-nuclear-weapon States of the European Union, EURATOM and the Agency, and had ratified the CTBT and committed to it a seismological station on Crete. The entry into force of the latter Treaty, the conclusion of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, and the revitalization of the disarmament process were essential steps in completing the NPT regime.

69. With regard to illicit trafficking of nuclear material, Greece welcomed the Agency's database programme through which assistance was provided to States with the secure management of nuclear material. Setting up efficient national physical protection systems based on international standards seemed to be the best way to prevent illicit trafficking. The revision of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material could widen the scope of its application to cover not only transboundary movements of nuclear material but also storage of such material, including for domestic use.

70. The Greek Atomic Energy Commission inspected all imported cargoes of scrap metal for the possible presence of radioactive substances or radiation sources. The customs services and the industries processing scrap metals had likewise been equipped with proper instrumentation for detecting radioactive substances. Much effort had also been devoted to the early detection of increased radioactivity levels in the Greek environment through the installation of a telemetric network covering the whole country.

71. The voluntary contributions used to finance the technical co-operation programme kept on increasing year after year, in contrast to the Regular Budget which had been held to zero real growth for quite some time. Greece contributed to both the Regular Budget and the TCF and hosted Agency training courses under its fellowship programme. The Greek Atomic Energy Commission had received Agency assistance with the operation of a secondary standard dosimetry laboratory which had been incorporated in the IAEA and WHO SSDL network.

72. Finally, the key to the Agency's success was to ensure that the programme met the real needs of Member States while maintaining cost-effectiveness.

Mr. Ryzhov (Russian Federation) took the chair.

73. Mr. FERRER (Argentina) said that the new formula for the financing of safeguards meant that several countries, including his own, would be paying more. His country did not consider it either a good or a just formula, but was making a special effort to support it and believed that that effort should be taken into account in a number of ways.

74. A system for periodic evaluation of safeguards costs should be put in place, allowing for adjustments to be made based on actual implementation and economic developments in Member States. Zero real growth should be strictly adhered to in future programmes and budgets. The Secretariat should intensify its efforts to achieve greater efficiency in the use of the funds allocated for safeguards. No additional costs should be incurred from the application of additional protocols, and the implementation of a truly integrated safeguards system should accordingly be monitored. With such measures, and the introduction of new methods and techniques, existing concerns about continuing reliance on extrabudgetary resources for financing of the Agency's core activities could be met. It was also important to maintain a proper balance between safeguards activities and promotional activities.

75. Argentina and Brazil had initiated contacts with the Secretariat with a view to signing an additional protocol. Argentina welcomed the progress made in the co-operation between ABACC and the IAEA on the application of safeguards and hoped that it would develop further, thus preventing duplication of effort.

76. Turning to developments inside Argentina, he noted that the funding had been approved for the CAREM prototype 25 MW(e) low-power reactor, and an interministerial committee had been set up to make recommendations regarding the options for the completion of the Atucha II nuclear power plant. A new PHWR fuel called CARA had been developed for use in all of Argentina's reactors. It was easy to manufacture and handle and should, therefore, help reduce costs and improved the competitiveness of nuclear power. The two nuclear power plants already in operation, which used domestically produced fuel and heavy water, were furnishing approximately 11% of electricity generated in the country.

77. In the field of non-power applications, boron neutron capture therapy was being used to treat cerebral tumours. The National Atomic Energy Commission had substantially increased production of industrial cobalt-60 sources that were being marketed internationally. All the above-mentioned nuclear activities were being carried out under the control of an independent regulatory body.

78. His country had continued its co-operation activities within the Agency's technical co-operation programme and ARCAL. It particularly valued the training offered to scientists through the Agency. A bilateral co-operation agreement on co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy had recently been signed with Bulgaria. Argentina was particularly proud to report that one of its firms had recently been awarded a contract for the construction of a research reactor in Australia.

79. Use of nuclear energy was closely linked to public acceptance thereof, and therefore to nuclear safety. On 31 July 2000, the Argentine National Congress had ratified the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, whose rapid entry into force should help improve safety of nuclear activities worldwide. In December 2000, his country would be hosting the International Conference of National Regulatory Authorities with Competence in the Safety of Radiation Sources and the Security of Radioactive Materials. It participated in Agency meetings on the formulation of nuclear, radiation and waste safety standards and, like other countries in the region, it attached great importance to the safe transport of radioactive material and felt that the dialogue with the shipping countries should continue with a view to strengthening the relevant regulations.

80. Mr. URRUELA PRADO (Guatemala) said that despite the significant efforts made to stop the nuclear arms race in the 55 years since the end of humanity's worst armed conflict, a new millennium was beginning without nuclear weapons proliferation having been curbed or disarmament achieved. He appealed to the parties concerned to end the deadlock and make good the commitment to disarmament contained in the NPT.

81. Guatemala welcomed the START III negotiations between the United States of America and the Russian Federation and found the ratification of START II by both parties encouraging. So far, 160 States had signed the CTBT. However, the continuing refusal of the United States Senate to ratify the Treaty was cause for concern. Moreover, not all of the 44 States whose ratification was required for the Treaty to enter into force had so far ratified it, and he appealed to the remaining States in that group to do so. Under Article 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, merely signing a treaty obliged a State to refrain from defeating its object and purpose.

82. The pioneering role of Latin America and the Caribbean in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones was a source of satisfaction for Guatemala. It accordingly supported unequivocally all efforts to establish such zones in other areas of the world and welcomed the progress made in that direction in Central and South East Asia. The same did not hold, unfortunately, for South Asia or the Middle East, and he called on Member States in those regions to step up their efforts to make nuclear-weapon-free zones a reality. The objective should be to use nuclear energy for the development of humanity and not for its destruction.

83. The final document adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference was a consensus text, but it did not represent real progress. Nevertheless, something had still been achieved through the unequivocal commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

84. His country's interest was exclusively in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and the technical assistance it had received from the Agency had been devoted to national development objectives to benefit the greatest possible number of Guatemalans and improve their quality of life. Technical co-operation projects carried out in recent years had had a growing impact in such fields as human health, electricity generation, agriculture, hydrology,

the environment and radiation safety and protection. The legal framework for radiation protection was already in force, an indispensable instrument for the protection of the public, occupationally exposed workers and the environment. Guatemala was interested in pursuing and expanding its technical co-operation activities to improve the use of nuclear technology, as it had demonstrated by making available its infrastructure for national and regional training courses and visits by fellowship holders.

85. His country had been chosen many times to organize meetings under the ARCAL programme which had provided assistance to Guatemala in such areas as training, improvement of radiation protection, maintenance of nuclear instrumentation and laboratory analysis, plant breeding, quality control in radiotherapy and nuclear medicine, nuclear applications in agriculture and human health, radiopharmaceutical quality control and production, and exchange of information. Conventional and nuclear techniques had been applied to the study of pollution in certain water bodies in Guatemala. Two geothermal power plants had been installed in the country and another 13 possible sites were being explored. Co-operation with the agricultural authorities of the United States of America and Mexico had yielded successful results in the fight against the Mediterranean fruit fly.

86. His Government felt it was important that a balance be maintained in the distribution of the Agency's resources so as to ensure that the maximum number of requests for assistance could be met. Guatemala, for its part, would provide the necessary economic support for technical co-operation projects and make its assessed contribution to the Regular Budget when feasible.

87. Mr. CHAMBESHI (Zambia), referring to the initiatives undertaken in recent years to strengthen international co-operation in radiation protection and safe disposal of radioactive waste, said that safety was of crucial importance in building public confidence in the use of nuclear science and technology. Measures initiated in Zambia to address illicit trafficking in nuclear material and radiation sources included information workshops for major stakeholders.

88. His country was happy with the focus of the Agency's programme and budget for 2001 and believed it would facilitate the strengthening of technical co-operation activities, which were of great benefit to Member States. Building on the assistance it had received from the Agency, Zambia had made some notable achievements in recent years, including the production of radiosterilized tissue grafts, of potato seedlings at the plant tissue culture facility and of two improved bean varieties via radiation-induced mutation. The capacity had been established to carry out measurements of industrial aerosols and radon at underground mining sites in order to protect workers.

89. Zambia supported AFRA and was especially interested in projects aimed at controlling tsetse flies and malaria-carrying mosquitoes using the SIT, which should make a significant contribution to sustainable economic development. Any approach that targeted only a few countries in a single region was doomed to failure, and AFRA was therefore to be congratulated for setting up specialized teams in such fields as radiotherapy, dam leakage and nuclear medicine, using expertise and capacity available in the African region. In the past

year Zambia had received AFRA missions in instrumentation and conditioning of radium sources, and Zambian professionals had attended a number of AFRA meetings and courses. He hoped that support for AFRA would continue to enable it to implement the projects planned for 2001 and 2002.

90. In conclusion, his country would be contributing its full share of the target for the TCF for 2001.

91. Mr. GONZÁLEZ ANINAT (Chile) said that, in order to counter public fear of nuclear energy, States should endeavour to promote public awareness of the benefits nuclear technology brought in such fields as human health, agriculture, industry, water resource management and other economic and social sectors, highlighting the "human dimension" of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. With that in mind, Chile and Peru were co-sponsoring a seminar on the benefits of nuclear energy, to be held in 2001, for which they hoped to receive IAEA support.

92. The compromise reached on the financing of technical co-operation and safeguards had required concessions from all sides, especially the developing countries, and Chile hoped it would not result merely in an increase in contributions and a corresponding increase in frustration. The commitments entered into should be fulfilled in order to ensure that an increasingly efficient, predictable and secure system for implementing technical co-operation activities was in place. Chile had achieved high implementation levels for technical co-operation projects, and it paid its contributions to the TCF in full and on time.

93. His country had also made significant efforts in the safeguards area by supporting the abolition of the shielding system that had been in effect for 30 years. That effort, and the similar efforts of other countries, should be duly recognized as a contribution towards the creation of a more equitable situation within the Agency.

94. Because Chile had strong concerns about the safe use of nuclear energy, it attached great importance to the Agency's work in that field and to the projected measures to strengthen international co-operation and revise and update the relevant safety standards and the safety guides.

95. Given Chile's geography, the safe transport of radioactive material was a matter of great concern to it. Accordingly, it advocated constant improvement of the measures and regulations designed to enhance safety in the transport of radioactive waste and irradiated nuclear fuel. It welcomed the activities carried out by the Director General pursuant to General Conference resolution GC(42)/RES/13 aimed at promoting closer co-operation among international organizations active in the field, and resulting in the establishment of TranSAS and the organization of training courses on transport of radioactive material. It would continue to support the application of the highest international standards in transport activities.

96. The radioactive waste treatment plant Chile had built with IAEA support was operating in full compliance with the relevant standards and was providing training services. The Agency's co-operation with Member States in the radioactive waste management field was

essential for the protection of the public and the environment, and for public acceptance of nuclear energy. Chile, together with some other Latin American countries, had submitted a regional project for the 2001-2002 biennium on storage alternatives for spent research reactor fuel.

97. Stronger commitment and participation from those involved in technical co-operation activities were needed if greater efficiency and impact were to be achieved. The Agency was to be congratulated on its efforts to focus technical co-operation focus on productive and sustainable human development, which was the only framework in which co-operation could be translated into concrete benefits for countries. The ARCAL programme had created ties that facilitated the co-ordination of activities in a region where differing nuclear development levels offered good prospects for horizontal co-operation. There too, it was essential that projects were linked to national social and economic programmes from the outset.

98. Mr. NASSREDDINE (Lebanon) said that Lebanon, which had recovered most of the territory occupied since 1978, was still threatened by Israel's nuclear arsenal and advanced nuclear facilities. Israel's failure to accede to the NPT and to open its nuclear facilities to international inspection posed a threat to peace not only in the region but in the world as a whole. Lebanon's call for the placement of Israel's nuclear facilities under international safeguards and the termination of its non-peaceful nuclear programme was motivated by its concern for the safety of the peoples of the region and its desire to protect water resources and the environment from nuclear pollution.

99. The Model Project on upgrading of radiation protection infrastructure had allowed Lebanon to make significant progress in the establishment of laboratories and the drafting of legislation. The Government had submitted a bill to the National Assembly on protection against ionizing radiation, pursuant to which a supervisory authority would be established. Legislation and regulations governing the use of ionizing radiation sources would also be enacted. It was hoped that the bill would be adopted within the next few months.

100. Turning to technical co-operation activities, he said that development, especially in the context of globalization, should be viewed as a right to be enjoyed by every individual. The organizations of the United Nations system, including the Agency, had a duty to meet the costs of such development, thereby contributing to the preservation of social and economic security and world peace. He therefore called on donor countries to increase their contributions to the TCF and urged the Agency to appropriate a portion of the Regular Budget to the Fund.

101. Lebanon attached great importance to the promotion of regional co-operation among Arab States in West Asia under the auspices of the Agency, which provided a solid basis for the efficient and cost-effective implementation of diverse projects. It was in favour of increased co-operation between the Agency and the Arab Atomic Energy Agency. In particular, the Agency should support the latter's projects aimed at protecting the environment and providing safe and clean drinking water for the peoples of the region.

102. In recent years, Lebanon had implemented a number of technical co-operation projects with the Agency. The Lebanese atomic energy authority had established several laboratories for preliminary analysis of environmental samples and was planning to provide scientific services to the public and private sector with the help of experts trained with Agency assistance. Owing to the increasing use which was being made of ionizing radiation in Lebanon, especially for medical purposes, there was a need for a secondary standard dosimetry laboratory, a matter to which he hoped the Agency would give favourable consideration.

103. Mr. CHARRY SAMPER (Colombia) said that, in line with Agency recommendations, his country was developing a national programme structure to facilitate the definition of priorities in radiation protection, nuclear safety, regulation and control. That programme structure would include projects on nuclear applications in human health, the environment, the agriculture and stockbreeding sector and hydrology.

104. A draft law on nuclear safety and radiation protection had been elaborated with Agency assistance. The aim was to harmonize criteria, establish competencies, correct legislative deficiencies and define responsibilities, in order to promote the safe and sustainable development of nuclear technology. In 1999, the Government had assigned the responsibility for formulating policy on nuclear energy and handling of radioactive material to the Ministry of Energy and Mining. The Directorate for Energy and Gas had been made responsible for elaborating regulations. A process of redefinition of regulatory functions, financial responsibilities and competencies was under way in which the advice provided by the Agency was crucial.

105. Colombia was working to apply the Agency's recommendations on the safety of radiation sources and radioactive waste management. Radioactive material was subject to regulation, control and licensing by the Ministry of Energy and Mining; radiation sources for use in medicine were subject to additional controls by the Ministry of Health.

106. One priority over the last two years had been to update the national inventory of radiation sources with a view to elaborating, in co-operation with the Agency, a national plan for the management of disused sources covering the next two years. The technical infrastructure required for the temporary surface storage of over 330 disused ^{226}Ra sources was being prepared; other types of disused source were being accepted at the express request of the users.

107. International agreements to improve compliance with nuclear safety standards were central to efforts to improve nuclear safety worldwide, thus ensuring that nuclear applications contributed to technological, social and economic development. Colombia had started work on the legislative arrangements necessary for the signature and ratification of the Early Notification and Assistance Conventions. On 29 March 2000, the Constitutional Court had accepted the argument put forward by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in favour of simplified procedures for the conclusion of other agreements. Such procedures had been used for the conclusion of the safeguards agreement with the Agency, which his Government hoped would be finalized by the end of the year.

108. Aware as it was that the Agency could only carry out its functions if States paid their contributions in a timely fashion, despite its own financial difficulties Colombia was paying its contributions and supporting efforts to obtain better funding, particularly in the field of technical co-operation.

109. Conditions were propitious at the start of the new century for surmounting the twin threat that had been hanging over humanity since the discovery of nuclear energy: man-made and accidental apocalypse. The necessary instruments to achieve that end were in place; they still needed to be implemented. Nuclear energy, freed of that twin threat, should be in a position to promote ever more effectively equitable development worldwide. To that end, the Agency's work on training of human resources from developing countries, particularly in such important areas as health, the environment, industry, education and sustainable development, should be reinforced. Advanced technology should be made available through a combination of traditional North-South and South-South co-operation.

110. Finally, Colombia supported the strengthening the safeguards system, even though it would clearly necessitate increased budgetary contributions. It was also committed to total nuclear disarmament.

111. Mr. KASTCHIEV (Bulgaria) welcomed the determination expressed by the States party to the NPT to work for its strict application. His country had been among the first to sign an additional protocol, which had just been ratified. Bulgaria implemented its obligations under its safeguards agreement rigorously, as was confirmed by the IAEA's statement on the results of inspections of its nuclear facilities conducted in 1999.

112. As a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Zangger Committee, Bulgaria complied strictly with the requirement for comprehensive safeguards as a precondition for supply of nuclear material or equipment, and resolutely applied that principle in its foreign trade policy. The Agency played an essential role in promoting international co-operation to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radiation sources. Bulgaria participated in the IAEA database on illicit trafficking and fully supported the measures taken in that field.

113. With regard to enhancement of the safety of nuclear facilities and installations, the Agency was in a position to provide national and international policy-makers with the specific information and expertise needed for decisions to be taken on a technical rather than a political basis. Efforts in that direction needed to be maintained and strengthened.

114. The Agency had achieved considerable results with regard to improvement of management of the technical co-operation programme and the volume of assistance rendered to Member States. Bulgaria was grateful for the assistance it had been given with safety enhancement in its nuclear facilities, and in particular for the missions to the Kozloduy nuclear power plant.

115. His country supported the programme and budget for 2001, and it had paid its assessed contributions for the current year and its full share of the TCF target for 2000.

116. Nuclear power continued to play an important role in meeting Bulgaria's electricity demands. In 1999, 43.6% of all electricity generated had been of nuclear origin. The country paid a great deal of attention to safe operation of its nuclear facilities and was working on improving their safety level. The seismic upgrading of the spent fuel storage facility at the Kozloduy nuclear power plant continued, and other reconstruction measures were expected to be completed by the end of the year. A radioactive waste processing plant and a processed waste storage facility were under construction and should be commissioned in 2001. Following the Government's decision to shut down units 1 and 2 of the Kozloduy plant early, an administrative structure had been established and plans for its decommissioning, including safety requirements, were being elaborated.

117. The development and upgrading of Bulgarian nuclear legislation in order to bring it closer to that of the European Union was continuing. On 10 May 2000, the National Assembly had ratified the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Draft legislation on the safe use of nuclear energy was currently being prepared and he thanked the Agency for its expert assistance in that endeavour.

118. Bulgaria participated actively in the IAEA's regional technical co-operation activities, giving high priority to projects relating to nuclear safety, nuclear energy, nuclear medicine and legislation. It had a high opinion of, and strongly supported, the Agency's activities aimed at promoting international co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the application of safeguards.

119. Mr. ALLOTEY (Ghana) said that nuclear energy and technology should be an asset to humanity, not its bane. He therefore called on all States to sign and ratify the CTBT, the NPT and all treaties aimed at accelerating the process of nuclear disarmament. The nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike should commit themselves more fully to the objective of complete nuclear disarmament in order to promote global peace and a congenial environment for economic development and overall social progress. Universal application of all rules and regulations contained in the various conventions and treaties relating to nuclear disarmament should be fairly and firmly enforced.

120. States in nuclear-weapon-free zones should be appropriately commended for their bold decision to reject weapons of mass destruction in favour of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The international community should support development projects that utilized atomic energy for peaceful purposes in such zones in order to motivate other regions to bid farewell to nuclear arms.

121. To continue spending money on strengthening nuclear arsenals while large sections of the human community did not have access to potable water was to undermine the worldwide campaign for human rights. The successful implementation of the plan for producing potable water economically would bring to the doorsteps of ordinary people one of the most important products of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. His Government would support any joint project aimed at ensuring year-round supplies of water for both domestic and agricultural purposes throughout the country.

122. Ghana gratefully acknowledged the considerable assistance the Agency had provided to its Atomic Energy Commission, which was continuing to explore the use of biotechnology and related nuclear technologies to achieve increased agricultural output and overall socio-economic development. Progress had been made with the control of tsetse flies and in the agricultural sector. The National Nuclear Research Institute operated a radiotherapy centre and a nuclear medicine unit, and the country's research reactor provided analysis facilities for industrial, geological and agricultural samples. Ghana's Radiation Protection Board had become an important training centre for African fellowship-holders and its Biotechnology and Nuclear Research Institute was actively promoting plant tissue culture in the African region.

123. That catalogue of remarkable achievements should not be allowed to give the impression that the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission was already firmly on its feet. Inadequate financial resources and the lack of appropriate equipment continued to constrain its efforts to realize its full potential. The Government of Ghana was resolved to co-operate fully with the Agency in supporting the Commission's work and would welcome more technical assistance from the Agency and other Member States. In a wider context, the Agency could count on Ghana's co-operation in pursuing the common objectives of promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy for prosperity, security and peace.

124. Ms. CARMINE (New Zealand) said that her delegation's optimism at the previous General Conference regarding the prospects for enhanced security at the start of the new millennium had not been misplaced. The outcome of the recent NPT Review Conference had exceeded expectations and was of real importance to the Agency. Particularly welcome was the new, unequivocal political undertaking given by the five nuclear-weapon States to eliminate totally their nuclear arsenals. However, the real challenge lay ahead, for the undertakings given had now to be implemented. It was time for the Conference on Disarmament to establish a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament, to resume negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and to deal with outer space issues. Equally, the CTBT was still to enter into force. Some Member States had yet to fulfil their NPT obligations by concluding safeguards agreements, and adherence to the strengthened safeguards regime was proceeding all too slowly. New Zealand applauded the welcome developments on the Korean Peninsula but regretted the continuing lack of progress on safeguards implementation in the DPRK, and the fact that - since December 1998 - the Agency had not been in a position to implement its mandate in Iraq under Security Council resolutions.

125. New Zealanders held the Agency in high esteem for its contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, especially through its verification activities; but its work on promoting a global nuclear safety culture was also enormously important. Because her country's concern about the effects of nuclear accidents on humanity and the environment ran deep, it strongly supported the Agency's work to strengthen international co-operation in nuclear, radiation and waste safety and the assistance it provided in the event of accidents.

126. The South Pacific was a nuclear-weapon-free zone and New Zealand itself was a nuclear-free zone, yet it remained at risk from maritime transport of radioactive material

because it was on one of the shipping routes for nuclear material being returned to Japan following reprocessing in Europe. Although the risk was small, the environmental and economic impact could be substantial. Its concern was shared by other countries in the region, and New Zealand maintained an active dialogue with the shipping States and had made some progress in securing prior notification of shipments and agreement to regional talks on liability issues. Bilateral and regional efforts to address that issue would be strengthened if there was international agreement on a realistic but progressive agenda for improving the measures and mechanisms relevant to international maritime transport of radioactive material and spent fuel.

127. The Agency was fulfilling its mandate fully and professionally, but any international organization was only as strong as its members were dedicated. The responsibility lay with Member States to ensure that the Agency had the resources it needed to meet the high expectations that the international community had placed upon it. New Zealand would continue to play its part in helping the Agency to meet its important responsibilities.

128. Mr. THEIN (Myanmar) said that his country highly appreciated the Agency's accomplishments in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation, safeguards, radiation and waste safety and the promotion of nuclear applications. At the same time, it was important that Agency safeguards and verification measures were applied in a non-discriminatory manner and in conformity with the relevant provisions of the NPT.

129. A major contribution by ASEAN to the promotion of regional peace and security was the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which had entered into force in 1997. Even before becoming a member of ASEAN, Myanmar had signed the Treaty and had been one of the first ASEAN members to ratify it.

130. The Agency's valuable assistance had enabled his country to make available nuclear medicine services, nuclear diagnostic techniques and radiotherapy. In 2000, the IAEA had provided Myanmar with a cobalt-60 irradiator which would be used mainly in a tissue bank, but also in research and development. The Agency's assistance in other areas, such as food and agriculture, industry, education and training, was also having a positive impact on national development.

131. The Agency's involvement in regional co-operation programmes for promoting nuclear science and technology was also highly effective and desirable. The RCA, AFRA and ARCAL were doing very productive work in their respective regions.

132. Having embarked on a programme for the promotion of nuclear applications, Myanmar was aware of the need for an adequate radiation protection and waste safety infrastructure. The elaboration of regulations for the safe use of radiation and atomic energy was nearly complete, and he thanked the Agency for its assistance in that work through the interregional Model Project on radiation and waste safety infrastructure.

133. Self-reliance in and sustainability of nuclear applications was important to his country, which was just starting out in that field, and had been the topic of a useful international

workshop held recently in Malaysia. He urged the Secretariat to give priority under the technical co-operation programme to projects for least developed Member States.

134. In conclusion, he assured the Agency of Myanmar's support and expressed the hope that it would continue to contribute to the peace, health and prosperity of people throughout the world.

135. Mr. NOBILO (Croatia) said that his country had not only developed a wide range of projects that had contributed to the safe use of nuclear energy, it had also harmonized its legislation with the Agency's standards and norms. The additional protocol to its safeguards agreement had entered into force on 6 July 2000. On 30 August 2000, Croatia had informed the depositary State that the internal conditions for acceptance of the amendment to Article VI of the Statute had been met. As one of the first countries to finalize that procedure, Croatia invited other Member States to ratify the amendment to Article VI as soon as possible.

136. The NPT Review Conference had proved a milestone on the path towards a better world free of nuclear threat. His country had participated actively in it.

137. As an illustration of the priority his Government attached to the extension of international co-operation in all fields he noted that, in June 2000, an international conference on the nuclear option in countries with small and medium electricity grids had been held in Dubrovnik in close co-operation with the Agency. Croatia had hosted several other meetings under Agency auspices and more were planned.

138. Regional co-operation in waste management was of special interest to Croatia owing to its co-ownership with Slovenia of the Krško nuclear power plant. The plant was operating without major problems. There had been differing opinions on its management which were on their way to being resolved and had never threatened its safety

139. Co-operation between the Agency and Croatian research and educational institutions was growing. The number of candidates who had been granted fellowships for training in Croatian institutions, and the number of Croatian experts who had attended seminars and courses abroad was noteworthy.

140. The recent visit of an IAEA expert team, and the visit scheduled later that year, would create a solid basis for technical co-operation projects that focused even better on Croatia's needs and whose implementation should yield good results in the fields of waste management, radiation protection, nuclear medicine and nuclear power, as well as in demining efforts.

141. In conclusion, he stressed Croatia's commitment to continuing its co-operation with the Agency and other Member States in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.