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President: Mr. TAKASU (Japan)

Later: Mr. VILLEMUR (France)

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Abbreviations used in this record:

AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
APCs	assessed programme costs
Basic Safety Standards	International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources
CAURB	core activity unfunded in the Regular Budget
CEG	Contact Expert Group for International Radioactive Waste Projects in the Russian Federation
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
ERNET	Emergency Response Network
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
G-8	Group of Eight
ILO	International Labour Organization
INES	International Nuclear Event Scale
INIS	International Nuclear Information System
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
IRRT	International Regulatory Review Team
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
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
Nuclear Safety Convention	Convention on Nuclear Safety
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Abbreviations used in this record: (continued)

OPANAL	Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PATTEC	Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign
R&D	Research and development
SIT	sterile insect technique
TCDC	Technical cooperation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TRANSSC	Transport Safety Standards Committee
UNMOVIC	United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission
WANO	World Association of Nuclear Operators
WASSC	Waste Safety Standards Committee
WHO	World Health Organization

6. General debate and Annual Report for 2002 (continued) (GC(47)/2)

1. Mr. REIMANN (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation were crucial to international security. The international community must spare no effort to achieve those goals while there was still disparity in the world nuclear order and a risk of horizontal or vertical proliferation. The DPRK's recent withdrawal from the NPT was a case in point.
2. The Agency's crucial role as custodian of non-proliferation had been reaffirmed. It had again conducted highly sensitive inspections in Iraq the previous winter at the request of the Security Council. Unfortunately, certain States party to the NPT had been unwilling to place confidence in its expertise, thereby weakening its role and authority. It was in that context that the Agency was currently investigating nuclear activities in Iran. He urged the Iranian authorities to cooperate fully, complying with the terms of the resolution adopted the previous week by the Board of Governors (document GOV/2003/69). He also urged all Member States possessing relevant information to make it available to the Agency. He trusted that the Agency would be able to work without undue pressure and that States party to the NPT would respect its analysis and decisions.
3. Switzerland looked forward to the entry into force of the CTBT and urged States to sign and/or ratify it.
4. Financial austerity in Member States and the increase in the Agency's operational costs had necessitated substantial internal rationalization and reorganization in recent years, and Switzerland supported the proposed increase in the Regular Budget for 2004. However, Switzerland had been in favour of zero real growth. His Government, which attached great importance to the effectiveness of and the need to strengthen the Agency's safeguards activities, felt that further economies could be made by reviewing safeguards approaches and criteria. While acknowledging that a short-term increase in the budget was unavoidable, Switzerland had recommended that the necessary funds be taken from programmes containing projects of lower priority that could be deferred for a few years. It still preferred that procedure — even if it meant giving precedence in financial terms, for as short a period as possible, to verification over promotion activities — and was disappointed that it had not been adopted.
5. Switzerland had placed great hopes in the NPT and would shortly ratify an additional protocol. He noted that, earlier in the year, the Agency had published a document analysing the impact of the introduction of integrated safeguards. According to that document, only an insignificant reduction in the number of inspectors could be contemplated, and then only after the requested increase over the next few years. The purpose of safeguards was to enhance mutual confidence so that Member States could step up nuclear cooperation for development without fear. But not all Member States had made the same effort and not all had the same status. In the case of some States which had ratified an additional protocol, the Agency would soon be able to provide credible assurances of the absence of undeclared nuclear activities. Those States would then have fulfilled all the original nuclear non-proliferation aspirations. As many other States as possible should follow suit. But they needed an incentive for such an additional handover of sovereignty. Otherwise who stood to benefit? States that were not party to the NPT, States that had still not honoured their commitment to eliminate their nuclear arsenals or States that had not signed an additional protocol? He urged Member States that

were concerned to ensure the application of integrated safeguards to take that into consideration and act accordingly.

6. Switzerland was following the Agency's INPRO project with great interest. Its final goal, like that of the Generation IV International Forum (GIF), was the development by 2020 to 2030 of one or more nuclear systems and fuel cycles for the production of electricity and hydrogen, so that nuclear energy could finally become renewable and hence sustainable.

7. In 2002 Switzerland had hosted the first International Conference on Occupational Radiation Protection, convened jointly by the Agency and the ILO. Its recommendations were set forth in the draft action plan contained in document GC(47)/7.

8. Switzerland's new law on nuclear energy, which would probably enter into force in 2005, offered the possibility of building new nuclear power plants and did not limit the lifetime of existing plants. It did, however, introduce a ten-year moratorium in respect of new contracts for the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. Also, it provided for an optional referendum with respect to the construction of new nuclear installations. It thus reaffirmed his Government's long-standing support for the nuclear energy option, which had been endorsed by the people in May 2003 when they had rejected two anti-nuclear initiatives.

9. Mr. RÓNÁKY (Hungary), noting that his country had been one of the first States to sign and implement an additional protocol, was pleased that the Agency had drawn the first conclusion on the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities there. The past year had been exceptionally eventful for the Agency, particularly regarding verification, and there had been alarming developments in the international arena. The extent and nature of Iran's nuclear programme was a matter of grave concern. While all countries had the right to benefit from the peaceful application of atomic energy, that should be done openly and under Agency safeguards control. Hungary supported the Director General's efforts to resolve all outstanding issues as quickly as possible. It urged Iran to respond positively to the calls of the Member States, as reflected in the resolution recently adopted by the Board of Governors (document GOV/2003/69), and to act in line with the provisions of the additional protocol so that definite conclusions could be drawn about its nuclear programme by November 2003, or before.

10. He also expressed concern over the DPRK's actions to block Agency inspections at its nuclear facilities and its announced intention to withdraw from the NPT. Nuclear threat should never be a bargaining chip at the negotiating table and the DPRK must comply with its NPT safeguards agreement, which remained binding and in force. He urged the DPRK to give up its policy of defiance and comply fully with its obligations. Hungary welcomed the six-party talks in Beijing and was hopeful that they would lead to a peaceful solution of the problem.

11. His country supported the Agency's ongoing efforts in Iraq pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions and commended it on its role in drawing a full picture of Iraq's nuclear activities.

12. Universal participation was the most important prerequisite for a reliable nuclear non-proliferation regime, but was not the only one. A solid and reliable verification system was also essential, but required a firm budget. With a zero-real-growth budget the Agency would face difficulties in performing its tasks under a strengthened safeguards system. Hungary was pleased that a consensus had been reached on the Agency's budget proposal for 2004–2005, but efforts to increase effectiveness and efficiency should not be relaxed.

13. Given the threat posed by nuclear terrorism, Hungary supported the endeavours aimed at preventing weapons of mass destruction and their components from falling into the hands of terrorist or criminal groups. It attached great importance to the security of radioactive and nuclear materials

and installations, and appreciated the Agency's leading role in organizing and coordinating national and international efforts to that end. He welcomed the success of the International Conference on Security of Radioactive Sources, which had been held in Vienna in March 2003. Hungary would continue to support the Agency's efforts on that issue and had not only contributed to the Nuclear Security Fund but also allocated resources to provide in-kind assistance.

14. National responsibility for nuclear safety was vital and much had been done to improve it in Hungary in recent years. The Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority had been one of the first national bodies to introduce its own quality management system and its independence had been further strengthened by amendment of the Atomic Energy Act. Supervision of the Authority had been transferred to the Minister of the Interior.

15. The serious incident which had occurred in April at the Paks nuclear power plant had shown that safety should not be taken for granted. Thorough investigations had been carried out to reveal the causes and consequences of the incident and their findings had been summarized and made public. At the request of his Government, the Agency had sent an international expert mission to Hungary to perform an independent evaluation of the event and to formulate recommendations to the facility and the regulatory body. The mission report had recently been made public and action plans were being drawn up for implementation of the recommendations. Further assistance from the Agency on that issue would be appreciated.

16. The incident had shown that there was still room to improve safety culture. In that connection, he noted the success of the International Conference on Safety Culture in Nuclear Installations, held in Rio de Janeiro in December 2002, which had emphasized that the safety culture concept needed to be extended. Also, he welcomed the publication of *Key Practical Issues in Strengthening Safety Culture* (INSAG-15), which would be an important and useful guide in Hungary's everyday activities. The Agency played an essential role in the development of safety standards, which provided the basis for a comprehensive international framework for nuclear safety.

17. Radioactive waste management was another issue of importance to Hungary. He commended the Agency's ongoing work related to waste safety, including the International Conference on Issues and Trends in Radioactive Waste Management held in December 2002, and the establishment of waste safety standards. It was regrettable that adherence to the Joint Convention was still limited; several countries with wide relevant experience and most developing countries had not yet acceded. He requested that the Secretariat look for ways to rectify that situation.

18. The safe use of nuclear technology relied heavily on the accumulation of knowledge, and the successful operation of any organization was greatly dependent on its recruitment and management policy. He commended the Agency's recruitment policy, which took into account both professional and managerial competence.

19. The success of the technical cooperation programme and improvement of its performance was the result of coordinated efforts. In that regard, he commended the hard work of the Department of Technical Cooperation and welcomed Ms. Cetto, the first lady ever appointed at the Deputy Director General level in the Agency. Hungary supported her intention to move away from technology transfer as a primary operational principle to the idea of knowledge sharing. Strong emphasis should be placed on collaboration to strengthen the institutional capacities of the Member States and the fellowship programme was an essential tool in attaining that goal. However, the administrative work associated with the fellowship programme could and should be simplified. Maximum use should be made of national capabilities and Hungary was ready to assist where possible. Regional cooperation was also a key issue in that regard, and good management from the Agency's side would dispense with the need for formal agreements, as had been shown in Central Europe. The realization of those initiatives would

require a firm technical cooperation budget. He was pleased to announce that his Government had pledged its contribution to the TCF for 2004 and he appealed to all Member States to pay their contributions in full and on time.

20. Mr. HANIFF (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of NAM, noted that a Vienna Chapter of the Movement had been established pursuant to the 13th NAM Summit Conference held in February 2003. NAM Member States felt that it should play an active role in issues before the Agency, in close cooperation with the Group of 77 and China.

21. At that Conference, the NAM Member States had expressed strong concern at the growing resort to unilateralism and unilaterally imposed prescriptions, and had reaffirmed that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, were the only sustainable way of addressing disarmament and international security issues.

22. Also the Summit Conference had reaffirmed the need for the speedy establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981), and paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), and the relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted by consensus. NAM asked all parties concerned to take urgent and practical steps towards the establishment of such a zone and called on Israel to place all its nuclear facilities under Agency full-scope safeguards without delay.

23. NAM noted with concern the persistence of undue restrictions on exports to developing countries of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes and stressed that proliferation issues were best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. Non-proliferation control arrangements should be transparent and open to participation by all States and should ensure that they did not impose restrictions that hindered development.

24. His delegation welcomed the recommended increase in the Regular Budget for 2004 after more than a decade of zero growth.

25. He commended the professional and transparent manner in which the Agency had undertaken its safeguards responsibility in Iraq under the mandate of the Security Council until the suspension of verification activities just prior to the commencement of war in March 2003. That mandate needed to be brought to a proper close with appropriate further guidance from the Security Council.

26. On the implementation of the safeguards agreement between the Agency and the DPRK, he expressed support for the six-party negotiation process towards a peaceful solution of the issue. It was consistent with the NAM view that the parties directly concerned should resolve, through dialogue and negotiations, all issues related to the DPRK's decision to withdraw from the NPT.

27. NAM welcomed the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to begin negotiations with the Agency on an additional protocol and reiterated the basic and inalienable right of all Member States to develop atomic energy for peaceful purposes. NAM attached great importance to achieving an appropriate balance between the rights and obligations of Member States. NAM was pleased that Iran had taken action rectifying the issues reported by the Agency, in particular by providing the Agency with more information and allowing the access requested to additional locations and the taking of associated environmental samples. It encouraged Iran to act with full transparency and hoped that cooperation between Iran and the Agency would be stepped up with a view to achieving a full settlement of the issue. NAM underscored the need for resolution through constructive dialogue within the framework of the Agency. NAM would have preferred the recent Board resolution on the issue (document GOV/2003/69) to have been adopted by consensus. Malaysia, as the current Chairman of NAM, had worked hard to that end and had made four specific proposals for amendments. Consensus

might have been possible had there been opportunity for broader consultations involving the entire Board. The primary objective of the proponents had apparently been to produce a 'strong resolution', even if it had to be put to a vote. In the end, the Board resolution had been adopted without a vote and NAM had made an interpretative statement on its proposed amendments.¹ NAM was confident that the Director General would discharge his responsibilities in that connection in an impartial, effective and professional manner.

28. As a beneficiary of the Agency's technical cooperation programme, Malaysia commended the Department of Technical Cooperation's achievements in 2002. Malaysia would continue to fulfil its financial commitments to the Agency in full and on time, including with respect to the TCF and its APCs. It also welcomed the appointment of Ms. Cetto as the first woman Deputy Director General of the Agency.

29. Mr. TOUQ (Jordan) noted the Agency's efforts to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy in various socio-economic areas and its achievements in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and materials.

30. He recalled the positive role the Agency had played in the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002, which had given a high priority to nuclear applications in the areas of water, energy, health, agriculture and industry. He underlined the importance of such applications in water resource monitoring and management in a world where water was becoming increasingly scarce. To that end, multipurpose medium-size nuclear reactors could be used to desalinate sea water for drinking purposes and radiation technology used to sterilize waste water. He expressed appreciation for the Agency's regional projects in States, including his own, aimed at developing policies to reduce the depletion of water resources.

31. Another vital application of nuclear energy was use of the SIT to control the medfly, an application which benefited people, the environment and the economy. He appreciated all the technical assistance given by the Agency in the past and hoped that help would continue to be provided with a view to eradication of that pest from the region. In particular, he hoped that, with Agency help, a rearing facility could be established to facilitate easy and affordable acquisition of sterile male flies.

32. In cooperation with the Agency, Jordan had been implementing a number of national and regional projects in the important area of nuclear medicine, especially relating to cancer detection and treatment, integrated nuclear medicine in the national health care system, and radiation protection in medical practices. They had led to notable improvements in public health.

33. His country paid attention to the environment in general and the maritime environment of the Gulf of Aqaba in particular. The competent authorities in Jordan, in cooperation with the Agency, had been implementing a radionuclide monitoring project in the Aqaba Gulf area and developing the relevant institutional capability. He hoped that the Agency would continue providing assistance in that regard.

34. Jordan also paid serious attention to the security and safety of radiation sources and nuclear materials by strictly controlling radioactive waste management and the movement of radiation sources. It had set up a radioactive waste management system and issued instructions on the transport of radioactive materials based on the Agency's standards and drawing on the results of model projects implemented in the region over the past years. Also, under an Agency project, it had installed

¹ See document GOV/OR.1081 paras 16-18.

monitoring systems to detect the illicit transport of any radioactive materials into the country. Jordan was currently setting up such systems at all border crossing points.

35. He thanked the Agency for assisting his country in the area of radiation protection infrastructure development, especially as related to legislative and organizational frameworks. As a result of regional model projects, a law on nuclear energy and radiation protection had been promulgated and an independent Nuclear Energy Commission had been established whose functions included all radiation regulatory control activities. While Jordan had made good progress in developing its radiation protection infrastructure, it still needed support under regional projects in order to maintain the efficiency and ensure the sustainability of the work done in cooperation with the Agency over the past five years.

36. Jordan supported all efforts to achieve the universality of the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system, which was the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. It called on all States that had not yet signed additional protocols to do so. Jordan, for its part, had fulfilled its obligations with respect to the non-proliferation regime, the CTBT and the additional protocol.

37. His Government attached great importance to the application of Agency's safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East. Israel should accede to the NPT and implement all of its obligations, including the conclusion and implementation of a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol. Jordan had repeatedly expressed its desire for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and stressed the need for the adoption of a single standard to all States in the region with nuclear activities that were not directed towards peaceful purposes.

38. Jordan, which had already expressed its willingness to attend an international forum on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, noted that the proposed agenda for that forum, contained in document GC(47)/12, included proposals that it had submitted.

39. His country was proceeding with the SESAME (Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East) project; a site had been selected and construction work had already begun. He called on the Agency to provide all possible assistance to ensure its success and thereby enhance international and regional scientific cooperation.

40. Mr. CHRISTENSEN (Denmark) said that a universal nuclear non-proliferation regime, backed by a strong international safeguards system, was essential to all efforts to pursue nuclear disarmament and maintain collective security. The NPT was the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, and the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system was the fundamental instrument for securing non-proliferation. He called on all non-nuclear-weapon States which were party to the NPT to sign and bring into force safeguards agreements and additional protocols. It was regrettable that 47 States had not yet signed and implemented safeguards agreements, and that only 35 States had additional protocols. Denmark had ratified its additional protocol and expected it to enter into force during 2003, along with the national protocols of the other States of the European Union.

41. His Government had long recognized the need for an effective, cost-effective and properly funded safeguards system. It had accordingly supported the increase in the funding of safeguards in the Agency's 2004–2005 budget.

42. Over the previous months, the European Union had voiced its increasing concern about the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. His Government fully supported the resolution contained in document GOV/2003/69, adopted by the Board of Governors on 12 September 2003, which called on Iran to provide accelerated cooperation and full transparency with the Agency and promptly sign, ratify and fully implement an additional protocol.

43. His Government was also concerned about the situation in the DPRK. Since 1993, the Agency had been unable to implement its comprehensive NPT safeguards agreement with the DPRK. Any future settlement must give the Agency the necessary authority to fulfil its verification responsibilities.

44. The situation in Iraq had changed dramatically over the previous year. Pending guidance from the Security Council, his Government fully supported the Agency's continued efforts to ensure that Iraq had declared all its nuclear materials, in accordance with its safeguards agreement.

45. The international community must continue to give the highest priority to nuclear safety. It was the responsibility of States engaged in peaceful nuclear activity to ensure that the highest safety standards were maintained in order to promote the peaceful use of nuclear technology and prevent nuclear terrorism. His Government had noted with satisfaction the Agency's efforts to establish, update and strengthen safety standards and the relevant legal instruments, including the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention and the CPPNM.

46. In the field of the prevention of nuclear terrorism, the Secretariat was stepping up its cooperation with Member States to create a comprehensive nuclear security framework for nuclear installations and materials — an area in which the technical cooperation programme could play an important part.

47. Denmark had decided almost two decades before that nuclear power would not form part of its energy policy because of the great problems posed by nuclear safety and waste storage. It therefore believed, as a growing number of other countries did, that nuclear power was not an option for sustainable development. His Government trusted that its views would be duly acknowledged in the technical cooperation work of the Agency.

48. Technical cooperation was one of the main pillars of the Agency's activities. Denmark had always paid its contributions to the TCF in full and on time, and would do so again in 2004. Technical cooperation activities must be demand-driven. Recipient countries should select and prioritize their own projects in close cooperation with the Secretariat. The activities chosen should receive financial and practical support from the recipient government; they should be integrated into national programmes and closely coordinated with the activities of other international organizations. High priority should be given to monitoring and evaluation of programmes, which would provide valuable inputs for programme formulation and implementation. The limited funds available for technical cooperation must be used in the most cost-effective, efficient and transparent manner. His Government was concerned to note that outstanding APCs now stood at almost \$10 million, \$3 million more than the previous year.

49. Mr. NOIRFALISSE (Belgium) said multilateralism was the keystone of Belgium's foreign policy. His Government was committed to promoting multilateral diplomacy, strengthening existing multilateral structures and making the best use of the mechanisms which they offered, and in that connection it recognized the vital role of the United Nations, and in particular that of the Agency.

50. The NPT was the essential foundation of both the nuclear non-proliferation regime and nuclear disarmament. For that reason, Belgium was pursuing its efforts to make the NPT universal, including through the specific proposals which it had made at the second preparatory meeting for the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

51. Belgium continued to work actively with a view to elaborating a European Union action plan against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The declaration of the European Council at Thessaloniki in 2003 on that subject stressed that the European Union would support multilateral institutions entrusted with verifying and upholding compliance with multilateral disarmament and

non-proliferation treaties. The European Union was in favour of strengthening the role of the Security Council and its ability to meet the challenge of non-proliferation.

52. His delegation welcomed the compromise attained on the 2004–2005 Regular Budget. In particular, Belgium was pleased that Member States had agreed to provide the safeguards system with considerable additional funding.

53. Belgium shared the international community's concern about the Iranian nuclear programme. Despite increased cooperation by Iran, troubling questions persisted. Belgium supported dealing with the issue in the appropriate institution, namely the Agency, and welcomed the Board's adoption the previous week of a resolution on Iran, contained in document GOV/2003/69. Belgium called on Iran to provide clear, detailed and conclusive answers to all questions pending so that the matter could be brought to a satisfactory close. His delegation welcomed Iran's positive attitude towards signing an additional protocol and encouraged it to proceed without delay. Iran's implementation of that additional protocol should help prevent a recurrence of the current difficulties.

54. With regard to the DPRK, Belgium also endorsed a multilateral approach. His Government commended China on its initiative to set up a useful basis for discussion. Belgium continued to favour a diplomatic settlement, and urged the DPRK to dismantle its nuclear programme in a visible, verifiable and irreversible manner and comply fully with its international non-proliferation obligations as an important step towards a global and peaceful solution. The ongoing process would require not only a firm stance on non-proliferation, but also creative and bold initiatives in order to restore peace to the Korean Peninsula.

55. The safety and security of nuclear materials and radiation sources was of particular importance to Belgium. There could be no peaceful use of nuclear energy without standards and measures to protect populations from ionizing radiation and the risk of accidental or criminal radioactive contamination. Belgium welcomed the Agency's activities in those areas, which were a part of its statutory work to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy. His delegation would like to see the broadest possible application of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Closer consideration should be given to how the Code's provisions could be incorporated into the existing regulatory framework and what impact the Code would have on the export and import of sources. Although nuclear safety and security had points in common, they were very different and at times incompatible subjects. That made it difficult for States to elaborate or update a clear and coherent regulatory framework. His delegation asked the Secretariat to initiate discussion of that topic.

56. Belgium, which was developing expertise in food irradiation, was participating with interest in the Agency's activities in that area. The Belgian authorities also attached importance to radiological protection for patients, in particular dosimetry, and was exchanging information with the Agency in that field. Yet another area in which Belgium was actively cooperating with the Agency was radioactive waste management and was currently chairing the WASSC. Belgian university institutions and research centres continued to host many trainees under Agency auspices.

57. Recent history had shown that the multilateral non-proliferation regime was under pressure. It was up to the Member States to strengthen the Agency's authority and credibility so as to prevent any violation of the joint commitments undertaken to ensure world peace and security.

58. Ms. BECERRIL MARTÍNEZ (Spain) expressed satisfaction with the work done over the past year by the Agency to improve the security of nuclear and other radioactive materials, and nuclear installations, as reported by the Director General in document GC(47)/17. In particular, the programme on nuclear security had been incorporated into both the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security and the technical cooperation programme. However, the \$1.5 million limit for the latter should be removed, and recipient countries should themselves decide what type of projects they

required. To demonstrate the importance her country attached to the matter, Spain had pledged €67 000 to the nuclear security plan of action.

59. She commended the Secretariat's revision of the Action Plan and Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Spain had adopted, and was implementing, a national action plan to improve the security of nuclear and radioactive materials and installations.

60. Another important achievement had been the finalization of preparations for amendment of the CPPNM. The diplomatic conference to adopt the amendment should be held as soon as possible.

61. The financing of safeguards had been the subject of much discussion over the past year. The significant increase in resources proposed for the Department of Safeguards over the coming four years should be sufficient to ensure the efficiency and quality of the Agency's safeguards system. However, that increase would establish a new point of reference for the agreed 'cost neutrality' of integrated safeguards. Maintaining that neutrality would require constant improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the system, and necessitate changes in the traditional approaches and criteria used. The planned review of safeguards working methods would doubtless provide new and useful ideas.

62. Good progress had been made in developing the conceptual framework of integrated safeguards. It should be applied as soon as possible to countries with medium or large nuclear programmes as it was not desirable for a long period to elapse between submission of the initial declarations and the drawing of conclusions by the Agency. The fact that, 6 years after the adoption of the Model Additional Protocol, 21 States with significant nuclear programmes had not yet signed additional protocols was a cause for concern. Spain had already completed the necessary internal processes for entry into force of its additional protocol.

63. Her delegation, which attached great importance to nuclear safety, radiation protection and waste management, was satisfied with the significant progress made in that area in 2002. In particular, the Agency had done much to improve the regulatory infrastructure for nuclear safety by strengthening national regulatory bodies. Spain was prepared to contribute its know-how and human resources in support of the Agency's IRRT service.

64. Enhancing nuclear safety culture and addressing the ageing of installations were challenges that would require constant scientific, technological and regulatory updating. She congratulated the Agency on its organization of the International Conference on Safety Culture in Nuclear Installations, held in Brazil in December 2002. The Agency should, however, intensify its activities in that regard. Spain was willing to assist in the preparation of a safety guide on safety management and culture.

65. Given the increasing importance of risk assessment, the Agency should do more work in that area, seeking a balance between deterministic and probabilistic approaches, and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of risk-based methods.

66. She welcomed the Agency's efforts to strengthen regulatory infrastructures and education and training infrastructures and to develop networks for the sharing of knowledge and experience in the field of radiation safety. Spain intended to contribute €98 000 in support of the extrabudgetary programme on nuclear and radiation safety in Ibero-America, which was just being established and was to be coordinated with the activities of the Forum of Ibero-American Nuclear Regulators.

67. Spain had participated actively in the Agency's successful International Conference on National Infrastructures for Radiation Safety, held in Morocco in September 2003 and was grateful for Agency support for the international conference on training in radiation protection currently being held in Madrid. Spain was in favour of the Agency organizing an international conference aimed at finding

consensus on the right balance between the levels of protection and the resources required to integrate environmental protection into the current radiation protection system.

68. The first review conference of the Joint Convention would demonstrate States' willingness to attach a high priority to the safety of radioactive waste management. On a related issue, Spain would have liked the Agency's Annual Report for 2002 to contain information on its activities to develop safety standards applicable to deep geological storage.

69. Regarding technical cooperation, she noted with satisfaction the increase in the implementation rate and the total volume of assistance provided. The decrease in available financial resources reflected the budgetary difficulties being faced by Member States. Spain had also had a strict budgetary policy, but intended to continue increasing its contribution to the TCF, by €200 000 in 2003. Spain had also supported the technical cooperation programme in other ways in 2002, including the hosting of 67 fellows and visiting scientists, the provision of 55 experts for technical assistance missions and had hosted 4 training courses or events. The increase in expenditure on equipment under the technical cooperation programme was worrying. Although equipment was often essential, human resources training should be given priority. Also, the Secretariat should diversify its equipment procurement, more than half of which had been from only two countries.

70. Spain was in favour of budget normalization and a gradual elimination of CAURBs so that all core activities would be included in the Regular Budget.

71. The main highlights in the Spanish nuclear sector in the past year were that its 9 nuclear facilities had produced 63 043 GWh, contributing 26% of the total electricity generated. Nuclear energy had continued to play an important role as a means of diversification of energy sources, reduction in dependence on external power sources and control of greenhouse gas emissions. Spain's nuclear power plants had functioned safely and efficiently, with an average availability of 93%. The construction of a new storage facility for low-level radioactive waste had progressed. It would provide additional capacity and allow more rational management of low-level waste, including that from the dismantling of nuclear installations, or scrap that could not be treated as conventional waste.

72. Spain had gained extensive experience from the dismantling of the Vandellós I plant, which had now reached level 2 in the Agency's classification. The site had been offered by her Government as a potential site for the ITER project. Also, ENRESA (National Radioactive Waste Company) had decided to establish a technology centre on the site to carry out future projects in collaboration with CIEMAT (Research Centre for Energy, Environment and Technology) and Spanish universities, including the dismantling of the José Cabrera nuclear power plant, scheduled for 2006. All experience and know-how acquired would, of course, be shared with the Agency.

73. Mr. KERIMOV (Azerbaijan) said that his country was actively involved in the international community's efforts to strengthen the international safeguards regime. It supported universal nuclear disarmament and was party to all the main international treaties and agreements on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Caspian Sea region was acquiring increased significance on the world's political map given its geographical location and energy resources. It was also particularly vulnerable to the threat of nuclear and radiological terrorism.

74. Azerbaijan had repeatedly called for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the South Caucasus. Unfortunately, that was proving impossible owing to the policy of Armenia, which had committed armed aggression against Azerbaijan and occupied 20% of its territory. That had led to the creation of a zone not under the control of the Government of Azerbaijan and not subject to international verification mechanisms, thereby greatly increasing the risk of illegal movements of nuclear and radioactive material and their possible use for the purposes of terrorism. To prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive material, Azerbaijan was cooperating closely with the Agency and had

taken steps to train and equip border guards and customs officials. However, those actions would not be fully effective unless the occupied zone was liberated and control over the area re-established.

75. The Agency was the only international forum able to counteract the threat of nuclear terrorism and it was essential to strengthen its activities in that domain. Member States had a responsibility to strengthen their national radiation safety infrastructures, improve control mechanisms, establish reliable physical protection systems and make inventories of nuclear and radioactive materials. The Agency's role in providing assistance in that regard could not be overestimated.

76. Azerbaijan welcomed the Agency's efforts to implement the action plan for nuclear security. The services it provided to help identify physical protection requirements, and to provide legislative assistance and staff training would clearly increase the capability of Member States in that area. The Agency should coordinate activities with Member States to ensure the effective use of available resources. The steps taken to assist Member States in strengthening their national infrastructures and in taking other necessary measures should be fully consistent with the priorities of the recipient States, and should include both recommendations and specific proposals for their implementation, including sources of funding.

77. With regard to technical cooperation, he said that the Agency continued to provide assistance to Azerbaijan under the project launched in 2001 on upgrading the radiation protection infrastructure and safety of radioactive sources. Several expert missions had been carried out, and staff of the regulatory bodies had participated in a number of training sessions and seminars to improve their skills. The regulatory bodies had been restructured and a system had been established for the issuing of permits for the transport, import and use of radioactive materials. Azerbaijan was receiving assistance under three further Agency projects on the establishment of an INIS centre, the prevention of illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive materials, and the upgrading of radiation oncology at the National Oncology Centre. The modernization of nuclear diagnostics and radiotherapy services was of particular importance in the health sector and Azerbaijan looked forward to cooperation with the Agency in that area. Raising radiation safety levels to comply with international standards, while meeting the urgent needs of the public, industry, agriculture and also protecting the environment, remained a priority. His Government's aim was to introduce new methods, including nuclear techniques, to enhance the technological development of the country.

78. A priority area for his country's technical cooperation with the Agency was upgrading of the regulatory and legislative infrastructure. In that connection, a programme concerning radiation protection and radiation safety standards was currently being formulated. To improve cooperation with the Agency, a State Commission for Cooperation with the IAEA had been established comprising experts from various scientific and technical fields.

79. Azerbaijan had paid its contributions to the Regular Budget in good time and had taken steps to pay its share of the TCF target.

80. Given the need to intensify efforts regarding nuclear and radiation security and the growing threat of nuclear terrorism, it was hoped to establish a National Centre for Radiation and Nuclear Security at the Institute for Radiation Problems, for which support under the Agency's technical cooperation programme would be welcome.

81. Detailed inventories were being taken of all the radioactive waste generated and issues such as its collection, processing, transport and storage were being addressed. The existing storage facilities were being modernized, and new ones for the long-term storage of radioactive materials were under construction.

82. The use of nuclear techniques for the protection, rehabilitation and monitoring of the environment was also a high priority. Contamination of the drinking water was a serious problem in Azerbaijan, not least because waste water from nuclear power plants in countries neighbouring Azerbaijan was being discharged into the Caspian Sea. The Agency should pay more attention to the radioactive contamination of water resources.

83. Finally, he looked forward to closer cooperation with the Agency and all interested Member States in order to resolve all the issues he had mentioned with a view to strengthening peace and security in the region.

84. Mr. SHANGULA (Namibia) said that Namibia profited greatly from Agency assistance under the AFRA regional projects and interregional projects, particularly in the areas of animal disease control, water resources management and human resources development.

85. Efforts were currently being made to diagnose and eradicate livestock diseases in the northern part of Namibia, where 60% of the population lived. Since farming accounted for 28% of national income, the Agency's role in expanding the diagnostic capacity of the Central Veterinary Laboratory was greatly appreciated.

86. Namibia was a very arid country which was often hard hit by droughts. His delegation welcomed the Agency's assistance in transferring technology to Namibia to enable it better to exploit the groundwater recharge and flow mechanism of the country's aquifers. Greater knowledge would assist Namibia in its efforts to manage its groundwater resources and provide clean and safe water to its citizens.

87. The Agency was actively involved in seawater desalination activities using nuclear power. His Government would consider the merits and viability of that technology for Namibia, 13% of whose population did not have access to safe drinking water. He hoped that Namibia's cooperation with the Agency on water resource management would help reduce that figure significantly.

88. His delegation was grateful for Agency help under the technical cooperation project on human resource development and nuclear technology support, which would strengthen national capacity and enhance the impact of current and future technical cooperation projects.

89. His Government was exploring new areas of cooperation with the Agency to reduce and eradicate the armoured bush cricket and fruit flies, which caused damage to Namibia's most important subsistence crops. His delegation was confident that, given the merit of the project proposals, the Agency would provide Namibia with the necessary technologies and resources.

90. As in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, malaria placed a heavy burden on Namibia's society and economy and accounted for a significant percentage of the country's mortality, particularly in the north. His delegation called on the Agency to provide increased resources and to step up research into malaria control. The success of the SIT in alleviating the problem of tsetse infestation in parts of Africa was encouraging. The north-eastern parts of Namibia suffered greatly from diseases transmitted by tsetse flies, and he asked the Agency to expand its current tsetse fly campaign.

91. His Government would like to see technical cooperation funding increased without diversion of financial resources to other projects within the Agency's mandate, and it urged the donor community to support funding for technical cooperation projects. Namibia, for its part, would continue to honour its financial obligations towards the Agency.

92. It was important not to overlook the importance of radiation, nuclear waste and transport safety. In that context, the model project on upgrading radiation protection infrastructure in Member States offered an effective mechanism for addressing common needs in meeting the principal requirements of

the Basic Safety Standards. That project had had a significant impact on Namibia's radiation protection infrastructure. He called for renewed commitment by the Agency to that project to enable Member States to attain its milestones.

93. Namibia also attached great importance to the security of nuclear and radioactive material. It had stringent measures in place to control trafficking in radioactive sources and nuclear material. With the atomic energy and radiation protection authority bill at an advanced stage, those measures would soon be strengthened.

94. Namibia was one of the largest uranium mining countries in the world, and it was important for it to safeguard against illicit trafficking in nuclear material. Following a recent attempt to traffic illicitly in uranium oxide, the culprits had been immediately arrested, and the law would take its full course. Namibia had an NPT safeguards agreement and had signed an additional protocol, and was keen to expedite its obligations under those agreements. Its additional protocol was expected to enter into force soon. In addition, a national system for nuclear materials accounting and control was being set up to support the legislative initiatives.

95. His delegation welcomed the formation of the Advisory Group on Nuclear Security (AdSec) and would appreciate it if the Secretariat kept Member States regularly informed of its activities.

96. Namibia was concerned at the under-representation of developing countries in the Secretariat. He called for increased efforts to recruit staff from developing countries, including women, that were not represented or under-represented.

97. Mr. NIEWODNICZAŃSKI (Poland) said his country attached great importance to the Agency's efforts to enhance the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The signing of additional protocols to safeguards agreements would help to build trust among States and adherence to them was mandatory under Article III of the NPT. Poland, which had ratified all international instruments under the non-proliferation regime, urged other States to fulfil their obligations in that area in advance of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. He expressed full support for the Final Declaration of the third Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT. The early entry into force of that Treaty, which Poland had ratified in 1999, would further strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

98. The events of 11 September 2001 had underlined the need for international cooperation to face common threats, including the possibility of nuclear terrorism. The Agency played a crucial role in planning and coordinating efforts to prevent nuclear material and radioactive sources being used in terrorist acts. Poland therefore considered that high priority should be given to further implementation of the Agency's nuclear security plan of activities. In that context, it fully supported the proposed extension of the scope of the CPPNM to include the protection of such material in domestic use, storage and transport and protection against sabotage. He hoped that the diplomatic conference to amend the Convention would be convened as soon as possible. While Poland appreciated the establishment of the Nuclear Security Fund, it was unable to support it for the time being for budgetary reasons. However, it would do so in due course.

99. Poland, which was party to the Nuclear Safety Convention and the Joint Convention, noted with satisfaction the increase in the number of signing and ratifying States. He trusted that the First Review Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention in November 2003 would prove as productive as the Second Review Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Nuclear Safety Convention in 2002.

100. Noting the improved quality of the revised nuclear safety standards, he said that Poland would continue to support initiatives aimed at enhancing their application. Polish experts had assisted in revising the codes of conduct on the safety and security of radiation sources and on the safety of research reactors. Poland also welcomed progress in ensuring the safety of transport of radioactive

material and the strengthening of the international response to nuclear and radiological emergency activities. The Agency also played an essential role in education and training for nuclear safety.

101. In the current difficult socio-economic situation, nuclear and isotopic techniques could play a valuable and sometimes unique role in meeting basic human needs. Poland strongly supported the Agency's technology development activities and its involvement in international projects on innovative nuclear reactors. It endorsed all Agency initiatives aimed at ensuring the availability of qualified manpower to sustain the current scientific and engineering level in nuclear technology.

102. Poland had moved from being a purely recipient country under the technical cooperation programme to being a partner and even a donor, contributing within its region by means of TCDC. However, that did not mean that it no longer required assistance. An example of regional cooperation was that fuel for the further operation of the only Polish research reactor would soon be provided by the Russian Federation. Also, Polish training centres accepted many fellows and scientific visitors from the region. Indeed the technical cooperation planning and programming process in Europe, involving not only Member States but also the Agency's technical divisions and potential donors, had been one of the most efficient, transparent and effective, even without a formal regional agreement. He commended the Europe Section of the Department of Technical Cooperation on its contribution to that process.

103. He supported the Agency's active collaboration with organizations within the United Nations system, regional organizations and other bodies to increase funding for footnote-a/ projects. He also shared the view that every opportunity should be taken to simplify procedures in order to facilitate cost-sharing or outsourcing.

104. To ensure that the financing of technical cooperation activities was assured, sufficient and predictable, Member States should pledge and pay their share of the TCF target and their APCs on time and in full. Poland therefore strongly supported the due account principle. As usual, Poland intended to pledge and pay its target share.

105. Poland supported the compromise proposal for the programme and budget for 2004–2005.

106. Mr. GONZÁLEZ ANINAT (Chile) said that his country, on signing an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement the previous year, had joined the growing number of States that recognized the Agency's role in ensuring the reduction and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. At the same time, Member States should do more to convince public opinion of the benefits to be gained from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, thereby strengthening the Agency and promoting peaceful research and development at country level. Chile had therefore proposed including an item on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the agenda of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly.

107. The Director General had successfully steered the Agency through a period of great international political tension. Chile was confident that the Agency would maintain that course, but Member States should resist the temptation to exploit the Agency for transitory political goals.

108. Chile had signed the NPT and ratified the CTBT which, together with other instruments and regional bodies such as OPANAL in Latin America, were the cornerstones of the global disarmament regime. The members of OPANAL, including Chile, were due to meet in Havana in November 2003.

109. The current scenario, characterized by proliferation and a qualitative increase in nuclear weapons, could be perceived as a flagrant violation of the principle of equality among States and an example of double standards. Some States could feel morally justified under the circumstances in developing or continuing to develop nuclear weapons. Such a state of affairs, when combined with political instability, could provide an incentive for terrorism.

110. States that possessed nuclear weapons thus bore a heavy responsibility for non-proliferation and the gradual elimination of their arsenal. Transparency was essential because action aimed at international confidence-building could easily be thwarted by suspicion. Multilateral action to that end, particularly by specialized agencies, should continue to create conditions in which human security, as a concept transcending national or international security, could be guaranteed. Multilateral cooperation was all the more important at a time when unilateral policies were undermining confidence among States, potentially generating or escalating conflicts. Sustainable confidence-building mechanisms based on transparent cooperative action were therefore essential.

111. Chile hoped that the action envisaged at the recent International Conference on the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material would be carried out in the manner outlined by the Director General. It attached special importance to the convening of a group of experts, in which Chile would participate, to examine the legal regime governing nuclear liability.

112. The transport of nuclear material and radioactive waste should be brought within the scope of the predominant international law doctrine that characterized nuclear activities as 'ultrahazardous' on the basis of the 'abuse of right' theory, a logical consequence of which was appropriate prior notification of such transport. The practice of some States and operators, which provided coastal States with advance notification and responded to queries regarding transport safety and their ability to react in an emergency, should be extended to all cases of transport and should ultimately form part of a global regime governing communications and liability in the event of accidents. The doctrine of liability for acts not prohibited by international law should be one of the building blocks of that regime. Moreover, as a confidence-building measure the principle of absolute liability should be applicable to damage caused by an accident during the transport of radioactive material. Chile was particularly concerned about the possible adverse impact of accidents on the health of coastal human populations and the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic marine environment, and also about the potential economic damage.

113. In the area of technical cooperation, the Agency had responded to a decision by the Chilean President to set up an ad hoc committee on the red tide problem. In addition to the health risk from toxins contained in seafood, which was sometimes lethal, red tide also affected the Chilean economy because the commercial potential of large coastal areas could not be exploited and thousands of families who depended on fishing had been deprived of their livelihood.

114. The Agency had also offered successful bilateral cooperation in projects agreed with Argentina and the Republic of Korea.

115. The Latin-American section of the American Nuclear Society had held a symposium in Chile on the development of nuclear energy attended by experts from the region, the Agency and the United States Department of Energy.

116. In the area of nuclear applications, fuel elements for research reactors, wholly designed and produced in Chile, had been certified at the Petten Energy Research Centre in the Netherlands. Now Chile could produce fuel independently for its two research reactors and become an international supplier. Also, in the past year Chile had acquired a cyclotron for the production of labelled glucose for medical diagnosis through positron emission tomography, creating new potential for nuclear medical applications and for basic and applied research.

117. With regard to nuclear security and verification, Chile had offered to host a regional congress on nuclear security in conjunction with the Agency and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

118. With an eye to the future, steps were being taken to train scientists and engineers in nuclear science and technology in Chile.

119. Chile was pursuing activities using funding from the national budget and a World Bank loan aimed at, in the medium term, developing a knowledge-based economy based on strong links between research centres and industry.

120. Mr. KANGAI (Zimbabwe) called on Member States both to cooperate fully with the Agency so that it could implement its statutory mandate and to allow it sufficient time to reach credible definitive conclusions in connection with its verification activities.

121. Zimbabwe was in the process of finalizing a Country Programme Framework with the Agency which, it hoped, would further enhance the implementation of technical cooperation programmes in Zimbabwe for the period 2005–2010 addressing immediate human needs with respect to health, agriculture, food and education. In the past some projects had not got off the ground because of lack of support or financial resources.

122. A regulatory authority would soon be set up in Zimbabwe establishing an appropriate legal framework to facilitate the implementation of Agency projects and compliance with the requirements of the Agency's Basic Safety Standards.

123. He noted with satisfaction the number of experts from his country receiving training from the Agency. Zimbabwe was experiencing a high level of manpower attrition in the health sector, including nuclear medicine and radiotherapy.

124. The Agency had been involved in a project with the University of Zimbabwe Medical School to improve medical services by introducing in vivo diagnostic procedures at the Parirenyatwa Group of Hospitals in Harare. It had also installed a new gamma camera, which would be of enormous benefit to cancer patients. He was grateful for Agency assistance in providing the Mpilo Hospital with a new cancer treatment planning system and hoped that the Agency would fund a gamma camera and more equipment for the Mpilo Hospital's Nuclear Medicine Department. Also, Agency assistance was sought in sourcing funds for the project on upgrading radiotherapy in Zimbabwe (Phase II), which had been placed in the footnote-a/ category.

125. Zimbabwe appreciated the equipment, training and expert visits provided in connection with the development of isotope-aided molecular techniques for the early detection, treatment and control of the human papilloma virus, which caused cancer of the cervix.

126. His Government was committed to the ongoing project on groundwater assessment in the Northern Matebeleland and had provided significant financial resources to enable borehole drilling to continue despite the withdrawal of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Zimbabwe would be working with the Secretariat to find much-needed technical and financial support.

127. He thanked the Agency for its involvement in the development of biofertilizers for increased crop production and soil fertility. Although Zimbabwe had been hit by severe drought, the project had proved valuable to smallholders and had been expanded to include all provinces except Matebeleland.

128. Zimbabwe was participating in the project on sustainable energy development in sub-Saharan Africa and hoped that appropriate plans for sustainability would be devised. It was also participating in a number of AFRA projects on the maintenance of medical and scientific instruments, strengthening of waste management infrastructure, the development of improved crop varieties, the improvement of clinical radiotherapy and tumour marker capabilities, and non-destructive testing. Through such projects, Zimbabwe was gleaning numerous benefits in the form of manpower development and equipment.

129. He commended the Agency on its sustained commitment to the expansion of tsetse-free zones using the SIT and encouraged it to build technical, strategic and financial partnerships in support of the PATTEC initiative.

130. Malaria and tuberculosis were a major threat to human lives and he welcomed the support of the United States of America, Germany and France for Agency initiatives on use of the SIT in combating malaria.

131. Ms. DRÁBOVÁ (Czech Republic) said that the commissioning of the two units at the Temelin nuclear power plant had remained a prominent theme in the area of nuclear energy in the Czech Republic in recent years. Both units were still in the trial operation phase and the next challenge was to switch to the standard operation mode, combining the highest possible standards of operational safety with adequate operational efficiency. The Temelin plant could not have been completed without broad international cooperation. Most of the vendors from more than ten countries had made significant safety improvements to the original project. Close cooperation between the Czech national regulatory authority, its partners in several countries and various international agencies had enabled independent peer reviews at different stages of the authorization process and a high level of transparency. She thanked the Agency for its prompt response to requests for a third-party peer review. Criticism from some quarters of an unfeasible 'mix of technologies and approaches' had eventually proved unjustified. All future projects should be based on a similar cooperative approach and the Agency's potential in that regard should be used to the full. The Czech Republic was willing to contribute to such efforts and share its experience in the safe use of nuclear energy.

132. With the aim of supporting technical cooperation among Member States, a number of Czech organizations and individual experts had contributed to the technical cooperation programme and other Agency-sponsored activities, and her Government had again provided extrabudgetary support. The Czech Republic had contributed money to four projects in countries of the former Soviet Union in 2003: nuclear power plant safety in Armenia and Ukraine; radiation protection in medical applications in the Republic of Moldova; and safety of a research reactor in Uzbekistan. Also, her country had co-sponsored the training of more than 80 experts in radiation protection and waste safety, and had supported 7 Agency-organized training courses in the Czech Republic through in-kind contributions.

133. In line with its long-term strategy of supporting concerted action on common problems, her country had contributed \$40 000 to the Agency's Nuclear Security Fund.

134. Earlier in 2003, the Czech Republic had joined the Agency's safeguards support programme by signing a cooperative arrangement. A medium-term plan had identified areas in which the Czech Republic could join 16 other Member States in further enhancing the Agency's safeguards system, thereby demonstrating its commitment to the global non-proliferation process.

135. The Czech Republic had ratified the amendment to Article VI of the Statute in 2002 and urged all Member States that had not yet done so to speed up their ratification process in order to bring the amendment into force. She was prepared to support a General Conference resolution to that effect.

136. Ms. ŽIAKOVÁ (Slovakia) said that, following the events of 11 September 2001, the world had been confronted with the threat of nuclear terrorism. That threat had affected all countries which cooperated together in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and had brought them closer together in their efforts to strengthen the international nuclear security regime. She was pleased that the international community was implementing the Agency's nuclear security programme.

137. Slovakia attached great importance to the ongoing review of the CPPNM and the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Despite the fact that the open-ended group of legal and technical experts, established to prepare a draft amendment aimed at strengthening the

CPPNM, had concluded its work, agreement had not yet been reached on all clauses. She called on all States Parties to the CPPNM to work towards adoption of the amendment as soon as possible.

138. The NPT constituted a firewall against nuclear terrorism and proliferation, and Slovakia believed that it should embrace the whole international community. All States that had not done so should accede to the NPT as non-nuclear weapon States and place their facilities under comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency.

139. Slovakia supported the Agency's programme on strengthening the effectiveness and improving the cost efficiency of the safeguards system. She welcomed the progress that had been made in the implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols. It was also encouraging that the framework for integrated safeguards continued to be developed and that integrated safeguards were being implemented in two Member States. Despite the Secretariat's great efforts, a significant number of States had still not concluded NPT safeguards agreements and additional protocols thereto. She urged them to do so without delay.

140. Non-proliferation regimes and nuclear disarmament were an integral part of the CTBT. However, seven years after its opening for signature, the Treaty had still not entered into force. She called on all States which had not done so, to sign and ratify the CTBT so as to ensure its entry into force without further delay.

141. All nuclear material and facilities in Slovakia were subject to the Agency's full-scope safeguards. In addition, Slovakia's nuclear regulatory authority performed regular inspections in accordance with the provisions of the national legislation.

142. Slovakia considered the safe use of nuclear energy to be of the utmost importance. Regulators and operators exchanged experience and technical information on nuclear safety related matters in a number of forums. The Agency had an essential role to play in supporting those activities and making its services available to Member States. Slovakia welcomed Agency cooperation with other bodies within the United Nations, with institutions of the European Union and other international organizations, such as the OECD's Nuclear Energy Agency and WANO. It was the responsibility of the nuclear community to promote global nuclear safety and her country therefore supported the Agency's activities aimed at globalizing nuclear safety through networking, integrating its safety evaluation activities and promoting adherence to international safety conventions.

143. Nuclear energy remained an important source of energy in the medium term in Slovakia's energy plan and currently accounted for 54% of national consumption. Safeguards and safety were important prerequisites for the use of nuclear energy in Slovakia. The nuclear regulatory authority was working to ensure that the operation of all nuclear installations in Slovakia was safe, reliable and in line with the relevant regulations and international good practices. Nuclear installation safety continued to be the subject of bilateral meetings with neighbouring States to discuss common issues and exchange experience. Those meetings had been beneficial and had helped to build confidence.

144. Slovakia had invited the Agency's IRRT to conduct a follow-up mission in November 2002. The mission report had contained valuable comments and suggestions, had identified some good practices, and had identified the need for improvements in the area of roles and responsibilities, staffing and financial resources of the regulatory body. The Agency's expert services were an essential part of international cooperation and provided support to the national regulatory decision-making process.

145. Her country was cooperating with the Agency on a number of national, regional and interregional technical cooperation projects. For Slovakia, which was an acceding country to the European Union, technical cooperation in such fields as nuclear safety, long-term nuclear power plant

operation and decommissioning was an important source of information transfer and necessary for strong national development. There were other cooperation activities with the Agency in the area of nuclear applications, including a national project on radiochemical facilities for producing medical radionuclides.

146. Her Government was also cooperating with the Agency to organize workshops for experts from all over the world. Slovak organizations would continue to accept fellows and scientific visitors sponsored by the Agency to share its broad experience in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As in previous years, Slovakia intended to contribute to the TCF.

147. Finally, noting that Slovakia had already deposited its instrument of acceptance of the amendments to Articles VI and XIV A. of the Statute approved by consensus by the 43rd General Conference, she urged all Member States which had not done so to follow suit.

148. Mr. VAPIREV (Bulgaria) said that the effectiveness of the non-proliferation regime depended on Member States fulfilling their safeguards commitments consistently and comprehensively, enabling the Agency to provide credible assurances in accordance with its mandate. Bulgaria had been one of the first countries to ratify an additional protocol to its NPT safeguards agreement and to submit an initial declaration as required. It had recently supported the decision on increased financing for safeguards. It was encouraging that by July 2003 a total of 74 Member States had signed an additional protocol and that 35 protocols had entered into force. However, it was necessary to intensify the process to ensure the effectiveness and credibility of the safeguards system.

149. Bulgaria supported all measures taken by the Agency in Member States to prevent the acquisition and use of nuclear material and violent acts against nuclear facilities by terrorist groups. The integrated multi-track approach to planning and implementing the nuclear security plan was the right response to a complex issue.

150. He welcomed the outcome of the International Conference on Advances in Destructive and Non-destructive Analysis for Environmental Monitoring and Nuclear Forensics and the International Conference on Security of Radioactive Sources. Bulgaria was interested in starting the diplomatic process to amend the CPPNM to strengthen its capacity to prevent unlawful trafficking or seizure of nuclear material and equipment.

151. For the past 10 years the Kozloduy nuclear power plant had been providing between 40 and 47% of Bulgaria's annual electricity supply. Units 1 and 2 had been disconnected at the end of 2002 and a decision on their decommissioning would be taken in the light of a comprehensive analysis. The Agency experts who conducted a safety review mission of Units 3 and 4 in June 2002 had concluded that all problem areas of design and operational safety had been resolved in full compliance with the Agency's safety standards and guides and sound international practice. In the first half of 2003, the Bulgarian nuclear regulatory agency had issued operating licences for Units 3 and 4 for eight and ten years respectively. The European Union Working Party on Nuclear Safety had confirmed that Bulgaria had taken into consideration all recommendations contained in its report on nuclear safety in the context of European Union enlargement. A peer review of Units 3 and 4 would be undertaken prior to completion of the negotiations for accession to the Union. The terms of reference for that review included methodology requirements, assessment criteria and qualifications of experts.

152. A programme for modernization of Kozloduy Units 5 and 6 had been initiated in 1993. Based on the safety issues and their ranking identified by the Agency for WWER-1000 model 320 nuclear power plants, it aimed to achieve a safety level comparable to international practice and lifetime extension of 15 to 20 years.

153. The decision to halt construction of Bulgaria's second nuclear power plant at Belene in 1991 had been overturned by a Council of Ministers decision in late 2002. A final decision on the future of the project would be taken in the light of feasibility studies on nuclear safety, radiation protection, environmental impact, physical protection, and radioactive waste and spent fuel management.

154. He commended the Agency on the broad range of achievements recorded in the Annual Report for 2002, especially with respect to the nuclear safety regime and the effectiveness and efficiency of the technical cooperation programme. Bulgaria was grateful for the Agency's assistance in upgrading the safety of its nuclear facilities, developing and applying new nuclear energy technologies and enhancing the capabilities of the Bulgarian nuclear safety authority.

155. A new act on the safe use of nuclear energy had entered into force in Bulgaria in July 2002, establishing the Nuclear Regulatory Agency. At the request of his country's authorities, an Agency IRRT mission had been conducted in June 2003. It had been concluded that Bulgaria had now established an effective regulatory framework, laying the basis for independence and minimizing the potential for political interference. The staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency were described as experienced and competent.

156. Bulgaria participated actively in the Agency's technical cooperation programme, giving high priority to projects related to nuclear power and nuclear safety. With financial support from the Agency, Bulgarian scientists and specialists attended international conferences, symposia and seminars. Bulgarian research institutes and laboratories took part in the Agency's research programme and contributed to the implementation of coordinated research projects.

157. Expressing support for the proposed budget for 2004, he said that Bulgaria, despite considerable financial difficulties, had met in full its financial obligations to the Regular Budget for 2002 as well as its pledged voluntary contribution to the TCF and APCs. In addition, it had contributed extrabudgetary funds to INPRO and to a project on safety aspects of the long-term operation of pressurized water reactors. It was prepared to provide experts to assist in the implementation of the latter project.

158. Bulgaria's voluntary contribution to the TCF for 2004 would be \$10 000.

159. Mr. WALTHER (Norway) said the NPT, which was the cornerstone of collective security, was facing serious challenges. He called on the DPRK not to withdraw from the NPT, to comply with its obligations thereunder and to cooperate unconditionally with the Agency.

160. Also, the Agency should be allowed to complete its work in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as the Board of Governors had stressed in its resolution adopted the previous week (document GOV/2003/69). Iran should sign and implement an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement as soon as possible to demonstrate its peaceful intentions and its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. He noted with satisfaction from the Director General's most recent statement to the Board of Governors that Iran now seemed prepared to work more closely with the Agency.²

161. A strengthened Agency safeguards system was an essential part of the multilateral non-proliferation regime, and must be properly funded. A key message from the 2005 NPT Review Conference should be that any country seeking to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes should implement fully a comprehensive safeguards agreement with an additional protocol.

162. Norway had been the second Member State, after Australia, to apply integrated safeguards. He was pleased to see that Indonesia had now become the third and he urged others to follow suit.

² See document GOV/OR.1075, para. 26.

Australia and Norway were establishing a bilateral programme to improve the implementation of both traditional and integrated safeguards.

163. Export controls were crucial to non-proliferation efforts and his country had therefore strengthened its national export control system as an important means of preventing terrorists from acquiring sensitive nuclear materials or technology.

164. Nuclear safety was an integral part of the fight against terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The concentration of nuclear installations in the north-west of the Russian Federation was greater than anywhere else in the world. Since 1995, Norway had contributed over \$100 million to help the Russian Federation secure its nuclear waste and spent fuel. Norway had joined the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, set up by the G-8 countries. It was also a donor in the Multilateral Nuclear Environment Programme in the Russian Federation (MNEPR), a multilateral framework for assistance to nuclear safety projects in that country. Coordinated action through the Agency's CEG and other bodies should allow an efficient division of labour between donors in order to face the enormous environmental and non-proliferation challenges. A high priority was the dismantling of decommissioned Russian nuclear submarines. Norway had already financed the dismantling of two submarines and hoped that other countries would support those efforts.

165. His country fully supported the conclusions of the International Conference on Security of Radioactive Sources, held in Vienna in March 2003, and commended the Agency's efforts to promote the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

166. Norway likewise supported the Agency's action plan to combat nuclear terrorism and had contributed \$60 000 to the subprogramme on nuclear and radiation emergencies. Member States should take steps at a national level to keep their nuclear and radioactive materials secure and to be prepared to respond to emergencies.

167. He welcomed the establishment of the National Competent Authorities' Coordinating Group (NCACG)³, chaired by Norway, and the decision to develop an action plan to enhance international nuclear and radiological emergency preparedness and response systems, to which he hoped all Member States would contribute.

168. Norway supported efforts to strengthen the CPPNM and welcomed the Austrian initiative to amend the Convention. He commended the Agency for its work to develop the IPPAS, which would help to improve international regulatory approaches and standards. An IPPAS team would shortly visit Norway to evaluate its physical protection systems. To facilitate further work on security and physical protection, Norway intended to make a voluntary contribution to the Nuclear Security Fund.

169. Many States, especially coastal States, were concerned about the potential dangers of the maritime transport of radioactive materials. Efforts should be made to improve the relevant international regulations and more effective enforcement of them. Also, all States should accede to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention), the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS Convention), and adopt the Agency's Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material. His country supported the conclusions of the International Conference on the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material, held in Vienna in July 2003. Increased international cooperation was needed in accident emergency planning to ensure rapid containment of damage and to ensure

³ See document GC(47)/INF/4.

public safety. Norway was in favour of a liability regime that would help to cover the costs of dealing with nuclear accidents.

170. His country welcomed the Agency's emphasis on sustainable development and environmental protection, and looked forward to the International Conference on the Protection of the Environment from the Effects of Ionizing Radiation, to be held in Stockholm in October 2003.

171. His country was in favour of a substantial increase in the Agency's Regular Budget, ensuring continuation of the Agency's core programmes and reducing dependency on extrabudgetary funding. He urged all Member States to pay their share of the TCF target in full and on time.

172. Mr. STRITAR (Slovenia) said his country attached the utmost importance to nuclear safety and to the work of the Agency in that field. It was worth noting that the European Union was discussing Council Directives on basic obligations and general principles on the safety of nuclear installations, and on the management of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste. The concept of common safety standards was a key element.

173. As a country with only one nuclear power plant and a limited number of other nuclear facilities, Slovenia supported Agency initiatives aimed at the preservation and better management of nuclear knowledge.

174. Slovenia continued to need the Agency's advisory and review services on nuclear safety. The third OSART mission to the Krško nuclear power plant was scheduled for 20 October to 6 November 2003.

175. In May, Slovenia had submitted its first report under the Joint Convention. Slovenia trusted that the First Review Meeting of Contracting Parties under that Convention would be conducted in the same productive spirit as the previous two under the Nuclear Safety Convention.

176. Slovenia was grateful to the Agency for the technical assistance it had provided in the field of radiation safety under a model project on upgrading radiation safety infrastructure, as well as through activities related to the safe transport of radioactive materials, occupational radiation protection and radiological protection of patients. The revised Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources provided the basis for significantly better control of radioactive sources and for improving their safety and security. The Agency had launched commendable initiatives to promote emergency preparedness and response capabilities among Member States. Earlier in the year Slovenia had applied for membership of the ERNET and had appointed four standby emergency response teams at the Josef Stefan Institute in Ljubljana.

177. Verification and security of nuclear and other radioactive materials was another issue of great importance and his country had repeatedly stressed its commitment to the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the NPT. Slovenia was already implementing a comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol. Unfortunately, only 35 such protocols were in force, a number that was still well below expectations. It was regrettable that the Agency was still unable to verify the correctness and completeness of the DPRK's initial declaration of nuclear material. The reporting obligations under safeguards agreements must be met in order to preserve the safeguards regime and provide the international community with the credible assurance of the non-diversion of nuclear material and the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities. Slovenia fully supported the Agency's efforts to resolve all outstanding issues with the Islamic Republic of Iran as soon as possible. In relation to Iraq, his country was pleased that the Security Council had expressed its intention to revisit the mandates of the Agency and UNMOVIC, and that the Agency remained ready to resume its verification activities.

178. Over the past year the Agency's activities relating to protection against nuclear terrorism had been significant. They included the establishment of the Advisory Group on Nuclear Security (AdSec), organization of design basis threat workshops, and expansion of the use of the Illicit Trafficking Database. His delegation endorsed the recommendations made in Vienna in March at the International Conference on Security of Radioactive Sources to revise the action plan for safety and security of radioactive sources and believed that the proposed activities had been prioritized correctly to ensure the long-term security and control of such sources.

179. He reiterated Slovenia's support of the Agency's technical cooperation activities. Greater efforts needed to be made by the Member States to ensure adequate funding for the technical cooperation programme and he appealed to all Member States to pay their contributions in full and on time. As in the past, Slovenia had pledged its full share of the TCF target for 2004, and it had met its financial obligations with regard to the TCF and the Regular Budget for 2003.

180. Mr. MÁRQUEZ MARÍN (Venezuela) said that, as a developing country, Venezuela favoured careful selection of an energy mix based on available resources. In Venezuela, 75% of the electricity generated came from hydroelectric sources. For nuclear energy to make a greater contribution to electricity operation in the future, it would be necessary to address its implicit operational and developmental risks, and decrease the enormous costs of constructing, maintaining and operating reactors as well as of training a qualified workforce. For those reasons, Venezuela would prefer to see the development of new technologies — not necessarily nuclear — that were more accessible to developing countries, as well as sustainable and environmentally friendly.

181. On the other hand, there was vast scope for nuclear applications in many sectors of the economy, where they often provided the best or even the only solution to a specific problem. Venezuela therefore attached great importance to the Agency's technical cooperation programme. Venezuela's national development plans aimed at improving the standard of living for its people. It endorsed the Agency's view that projects should have clear governmental support and produce tangible results. Venezuela had submitted to the Agency a list of proposed projects for the biennium 2005–2006 in a number of sectors including human health, protection of the environment, training of human resources, mineral prospecting, the oil industry, animal production and the maintenance and development of nuclear instruments. All had been given a high priority in the national development programme and complied with the Agency's core criteria.

182. Given the current international situation, another important role of the Agency was its verification of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. Each State should do all it could to strengthen those treaties. In addition, Venezuela was convinced that early entry into force of the CTBT would provide the international community with a greater degree of security.

183. His country was deeply concerned by doctrines justifying the development of a new generation of limited-range nuclear weapons. That would very probably lead to a new arms race, or damage the international disarmament regime.

184. Finally, regarding the resolution recently adopted by the Board of Governors on implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran, contained in document GOV/2003/69, he said that the solution to the problem lay in a detailed technical analysis that only the Agency could carry out in a sufficiently neutral and non-political manner. His delegation was concerned that the resolution set unrealistic deadlines with potentially counterproductive consequences. He urged Iran to accelerate its cooperation with the Agency and rectify any errors or omissions that had caused doubts to be raised by the international community.

185. Mr. SOURGHIA (Niger), having thanked the Agency for the assistance it had given to his country, said that Niger was firmly committed to the Agency's objectives and would make every effort to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and to strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

186. Progress with respect to disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, safeguards and the safety and security of nuclear installations would greatly reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism and the illicit trafficking of nuclear material and radiation sources. The NPT remained the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, and he hoped that international community would continue to work towards the achievement of all the Treaty's objectives.

187. Niger welcomed the Agency's activities to promote sustainable development and the peaceful use of nuclear techniques in areas such as human and animal health, protection of the environment, and food and agriculture. His country was particularly grateful to the Agency for the technical assistance it had received in the fields of radiation and waste safety, human health, nuclear medicine, animal health and production, and nuclear sciences and applications. Thanks to the Agency, nuclear medicine had become a reality in Niger. His country now had a radioimmunoassay laboratory and a gamma camera for cancer diagnosis.

188. Niger's Country Programme Framework had almost reached completion. Under it, technical cooperation activities would correspond to the national strategy to combat poverty, the main aspects of which were education, health, water and purification, population growth and the strengthening of capacities.

189. Like many other countries in Africa, Niger suffered from a cruel shortage of renewable water resources. It was therefore grateful for Agency assistance under the regional project to combat desertification in the Sahel.

190. He looked forward to increased Agency involvement in the use of nuclear techniques to help deal with communicable diseases, particularly the HIV/AIDS virus.

191. His Government's priority in the area of human health was to provide palliative and curative treatment for cancer patients. Niger had an infrastructure for diagnosis, had developed in vitro and was in the process of establishing an in vivo nuclear medicine service in Niamey. According to WHO estimates, more than 8000 new cases of cancer per year would be diagnosed in Niger by 2005. While some types of cancer, such as cervical and breast cancer, could be treated in Niger others had to be referred to hospitals abroad, an often prohibitively costly exercise. If a radiotherapy centre were established in Niger, two-thirds of new cancer patients could be treated. His Government planned to build such a centre, recruit staff and allocate an operating budget which provided for replacement of the cobalt source and for the necessary radiopharmaceutical products and consumables. He called on countries to contribute to the construction of the centre within the framework of bilateral cooperation. A cancer reference centre in the subregion was also needed. The fact that there was already a radioprotection service in operation in Niger meant that it would be feasible to establish a cancer management and treatment programme in the country in the near future.

192. Mr. DE ESTEBAN (European Commission) endorsed efforts to establish the euro as the Agency's functional currency. During the previous year, the Commission's Green Paper on the security of energy supply had become firmly anchored in its energy policy. World events had underscored its importance for both national and international security. The volatility of the oil markets, predicted by some in the wake of the Iraq war, had been averted to some extent by the Commission's active participation in the ongoing dialogue with oil and gas producers.

193. Since the previous session of the General Conference, the Council of Ministers had adopted a Directive on the energy performance of buildings, a new programme entitled *Intelligent energy for*

Europe and a package for promoting the use of biofuels in transport. The Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technical Development, adopted in 2002, would help develop new, cleaner nuclear and non-nuclear energy options. Also, work was progressing satisfactorily on two important packages to improve the security of oil and gas supplies and safety in the nuclear sector. Euratom was vigilant with regard to the security of nuclear fuel supplies. Given the time it took for additional uranium resources to reach the market, the European Union nuclear power industry had been advised to maintain an adequate level of strategic inventories and diversify the origin of their main suppliers.

194. The Commission had adopted two Directive proposals, one setting out the basic obligations and general principles for the safety of nuclear installations, and the other, for the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste. Their legal bases were the Euratom Treaty, the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention. The first Directive proposal on nuclear safety would be compatible with, and build on, the international nuclear safety framework and would make the international conventions binding under Community law. National safety authorities would ensure the system's credibility. It also aimed to ensure that adequate resources were available to cover all decommissioning operations and waste management.

195. The second Directive proposal was based on the Commission's conviction that the safest and most lasting option for long-lived high level radioactive waste was burial in geological formations. Under it, Member States were obliged to launch, and report regularly on, detailed programmes for the management of all radioactive waste under their jurisdiction. It also encouraged research on waste management and better coordination of activities. The two Directives, which should enter into force by May 2004, would ensure enhanced nuclear safety in the enlarged European Union and fair competition on the internal power market.

196. The Commission still financed research on the transport of radioactive material to enable Member States to constantly upgrade their regulations, many of which had served the Agency in the revision of its regulations. The Commission and national experts had successfully collaborated with the Agency on the preparation of transport guidelines in the application of INES and looked forward to their imminent inclusion in Agency recommendations. The Commission was also working with European Union member countries on more harmonious enforcement of the regulations on their territory. It encouraged the Agency to pursue its development of a forum to consider such matters outside TRANSSEC.

197. Once the acceding countries became members of the European Union, most of the 24 nuclear reactors currently operating there would become part of the Union's enlarged nuclear capacity, so nuclear safety was an important issue in accession talks. Following the 2001 and 2002 safety assessments of acceding countries nuclear facilities, it had been agreed that 6 units, which did not meet the required safety standards, would be closed down between 2005 and 2009, while other reactors could be brought up to European Union standard. The Commission was closely monitoring how the acceding countries applied the European Union recommendations. The Phare programme had contributed immensely to improving the nuclear safety of the acceding countries, the accent being placed on institutional strengthening to ensure the efficiency and independence of the nuclear regulatory authorities, and on radioactive waste management. The European Union was the main contributor to the three international decommissioning support funds to help Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia, which were already closing down some of their nuclear reactors.

198. Over the years, under the Tacis programme, the European Union had allocated 900 million euros for improving nuclear safety in the Russian Federation and the Newly Independent States. The main priorities were to promote a genuine culture of nuclear safety, management of spent fuel, decommissioning and management of nuclear waste, and participation in international initiatives such

as that for the closure of the Chernobyl plant. In that regard, close cooperation with the Agency and other international donors had been much appreciated.

199. Where safeguards were concerned, close collaboration between the Commission and the Agency was crucial to stability at a time when the latter was facing huge challenges. Despite the fact that the Commission's safeguards were still being modified to take account of changing requirements for an enlarged European Union and to move towards a regional system similar to the Agency's international safeguards system, the Commission had pledged to honour its commitments. Once the changes were completed, it would study with the Agency the implications for their continued close cooperation. It was preparing for the implementation of additional protocols in the European Union; in liaison with the Agency, it had put in place all the modalities for prompt ratification and implementation.

200. Regarding radiation protection, European legislation contained strict rules for the general public and for workers. The Commission supervised the alignment of domestic laws with the European provisions. The Commission, sharing international concerns over radioactive sources not under regulatory control and the need for greater security and safety in the management of radioactive sources, had submitted to the Council a Directive proposal on the safe management of high-activity sealed sources, supplementing existing legislation with a view to harmonizing and strengthening member countries' controls. By increasing traceability, it hoped to reduce the risk of criminal diversion of radioactive sources.

201. Joint research by institutes in Europe was vital for the safe operation of nuclear reactors. During the Fifth Framework Programme for 1998–2002, the European Union had supported over 200 projects. For the Sixth, 2002–2006, it planned to support further nuclear research to improve nuclear safety, radiation protection and radioactive waste management. All R&D activities in the area of nuclear fusion in member countries and certain associated countries had been integrated in a single European programme.

202. The Commission had always supported international cooperation on nuclear matters. The European Union had concluded bilateral agreements with a number of Agency Member States and was negotiating with many others. Talks were under way for implementation of the ITER project to discuss such topics as site location, cost-sharing, management, personnel, and privileges and immunities. He hoped that the Agency would continue to lend its strong support to that project.

203. In conclusion, he said that the European Commission looked forward to strengthening its cooperation with the Agency in a number of areas of common concern.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.