

General Conference

GC(49)/OR.8

Issued: August 2006

General Distribution

Original: English

Forty-Ninth (2005) Regular Session

Plenary

Record of the Eighth Meeting

Held at the Austria Center Vienna on Thursday, 29 September 2005, at 3.05 p.m.

President: Mr. BAZOBERRY (Bolivia)

Later: Ms. WIJewardane (Sri Lanka)

Contents

Item of the agenda ¹		Paragraphs
8	General debate and Annual Report for 2004 (<i>resumed</i>)	1–105
	Statements by the delegates of:	
	Ireland	1–19
	Greece	20–38
	Sri Lanka	39–53
	Armenia	54–62
	Singapore	63–72
	Ethiopia	73–83
	Palestine	84–92
	Peru	93–105

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(49)/INF/10/Rev.1.

¹ GC(49)/20.

Abbreviations used in this record:

AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
APCs	assessed programme costs
ARCAL	Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Early Notification Convention	Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
EU	European Union
Europol	European Police Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAEC	Greek Atomic Energy Commission
GDP	gross domestic product
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
INLEX	International Expert Group on Nuclear Liability
Interpol	International Criminal Police Organization
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
Kyoto Protocol	Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPCs	national participation costs
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
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (earlier CSCE)

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

OSPAR Convention	Oslo-Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
R&D	research and development
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SQP	small quantities protocol
TCDC	technical cooperation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCO	World Customs Organization

* Speakers under Rule 50 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure are indicated by an asterisk.

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2004 (resumed) (GC(49)/5)

1. Mr. DONOGHUE (Ireland) said that having been a member of the Agency for more than thirty years, Ireland had observed how it had evolved to respond to changing trends in relation to nuclear power, the numerous applications of nuclear technology, new proliferation challenges and the ever-present and increasingly complex challenges of safety and security.

2. The Agency had moved over recent years from a relatively unknown agency to a trusted institution. Under Mr. ElBaradei's leadership, it had continued to uphold the highest standards in serving the Member States and fulfilling its mandate. Ireland therefore welcomed the Conference's approval of Mr. ElBaradei's reappointment.

3. Ireland had long believed in effective multilateralism as the best guarantee of international peace and security. All countries, but especially small ones, had a fundamental stake in a rules-based international order and strong international institutions. Ireland was committed to implementing and strengthening the multilateral regime of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements and to the universalization of the norms they contained. Ireland had a particularly close association with the NPT, the most universal of such instruments, which had been developed following an initiative taken in 1958 by the then Foreign Minister of Ireland, Mr. Frank Aiken. It remained the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament.

4. The Irish Government had been deeply disappointed by the outcome of the seventh NPT Review Conference in May, at which there had been wide-ranging debate, including on issues important to the ongoing work in Vienna, yet which had failed to produce a single conclusion or recommendation of substance. It had been a missed opportunity for the international community to tackle some key threats to global peace and security and to agree on an effective collective response. Global challenges were best tackled together, and efforts to strengthen the NPT and ensure full respect for all its provisions needed to remain the highest priority in disarmament and proliferation.

5. Earlier in the present month, at the high-level summit meeting in New York, the international community had again failed to rise to the occasion to bridge what the United Nations Secretary-General had called the deep rifts over how to confront the challenges being faced. The agreement reached by Heads of State and Government on a United Nations reform programme had many important and positive elements. It was, however, deeply disappointing that it contained nothing on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, nor on the need to strengthen the NPT.

6. The international community must not allow such setbacks to lead to discouragement or despair. The challenges spoken of by the Secretary-General would not vanish by being ignored. If an effective, truly multilateral system was to be achieved, meaningful contributions must be made by all. The multilateral system was about empowerment and ownership, and all parties were responsible for finding shared solutions and playing their part in implementing them.

7. Support for multilateral instruments needed to translate into support for effective compliance with their provisions. A key element in the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime,

therefore, needed to be support for the multilateral institutions charged with verifying that obligations and commitments were being honoured.

8. The vital role played by the Agency safeguards system in the global nuclear non-proliferation regime was widely acknowledged and respected. The international community recognized the Agency's independent, technically qualified and impartial verification of global non-proliferation efforts. Events of recent years, however, had clearly demonstrated that the system needed to be reinforced. The Model Additional Protocol was an essential part of an effective safeguards regime and, together with the comprehensive safeguards agreement, should be the verification standard.

9. Over the past year, the Board of Governors had again addressed a number of specific proliferation challenges. Recent developments in the DPRK six-party talks provided hope of a peaceful and negotiated outcome to one of the most critical challenges to face the global non-proliferation regime in recent years. His Government welcomed the joint statement issued on 19 September following the fourth round of the talks and looked forward to the early implementation of the commitments made by the parties and the establishment of effective verification arrangements. Ireland particularly welcomed the DPRK's commitment to return to full compliance with its international non-proliferation obligations under the NPT, including its safeguards agreement with the Agency. He hoped that the DPRK would refrain from any steps contrary to the objectives of the joint statement.

10. Ireland shared the Board's concerns regarding Iran's nuclear programme and its failures and breaches of its obligation to comply with the provisions of its NPT safeguards agreement. It was deeply regrettable that Iran had resumed conversion of uranium at its Esfahan facility. He urged Iran to take further necessary steps to return to full compliance with its safeguards obligations and to work proactively to implement the measures required by the Board in its resolution of 24 September². He hoped that Iran would return to the negotiating process to build the necessary confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear activities.

11. The policy of successive Irish Governments in relation to nuclear energy and reprocessing was clear and unambiguous, shaped by the belief that nuclear energy and its associated activities posed an unacceptable threat to public health and the environment. Ireland did not share the view that nuclear energy provided a sustainable or acceptable energy source given the many serious problems which had been identified, including: the safety and security of nuclear installations; the transport of nuclear materials; the unresolved problems regarding radioactive waste management and the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel; marine and terrestrial environmental contamination; the ever-present danger of a major accident or incident; and increased proliferation risks. The recent so-called renaissance of nuclear power appeared to be based mainly on the belief that nuclear energy remained the only solution to the threat posed by global warming. In Ireland's view, any perceived benefits of nuclear energy in reducing greenhouse gas emissions were heavily outweighed by the serious risks and threat posed to the environment and public safety. He acknowledged, however, that other countries did not share those views.

12. Ireland had not exercised its right to develop nuclear power, yet it derived considerable benefit from its membership in the Agency in other ways. It greatly valued the pioneering work of the Agency in such areas as food and agriculture, human health and other nuclear applications. It valued the high quality of the Agency's research and the opportunity to participate in its work at the General Conference, the Board of Governors and other conferences and meetings.

² GOV/2005/77.

13. The Agency also provided the necessary framework for cooperative efforts to build and strengthen an international nuclear safety and security regime, which included advisory international standards, codes and guides, binding international conventions, international peer reviews and an international system of emergency preparedness and response. The Agency played a vital role in providing for the implementation and coordination of those standards in Member States, to be complemented by bilateral agreements as appropriate. Ireland and the United Kingdom had concluded a bilateral agreement in December 2004 under Article 9 of the Early Notification Convention.

14. As a non-nuclear coastal State, Ireland had a particular interest in the safety of shipments of radioactive material passing through the common marine environment it shared. Given the risks posed and public concerns about such shipments, coastal States needed to be fully informed of such transports near their coasts so that they could assess the risks and take appropriate emergency preparedness measures. Building on the Action Plan for the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material approved by the Board of Governors in March 2004, a number of meetings on that issue had taken place between concerned coastal and shipping States, most recently in July 2005. Ireland was seeking to strengthen and deepen that dialogue, with Agency involvement, and hoped to see common understandings developed regarding how intergovernmental communications related to safe maritime transports could be improved. It was also actively involved in other Agency bodies such as INLEX.

15. Ireland was particularly concerned about the management of nuclear waste. Its deliberate discharge into the terrestrial and marine environment, causing contamination both in the immediate surroundings and further afield, was wrong and thus not an acceptable waste management option. He accordingly welcomed the ongoing efforts among the Contracting Parties to the OSPAR Convention to eliminate radioactive marine discharges in the North-East Atlantic and strongly supported the further implementation of the International Action Plan on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. He was encouraged by the Board's decision the previous week to approve a Plan of Activities on the Radiation Protection of the Environment, which would focus necessary attention on the protection of plant and animal life and on the question whether there was a need to revise or add to existing safety standards, which currently addressed only human health.

16. Given the potentially devastating consequences of nuclear material, equipment or technology falling into the wrong hands, nuclear security needed to be a key priority for the Agency. The Board of Governors had recognized that the first line of defence against nuclear terrorism was the strong physical protection of nuclear facilities and materials. Ireland therefore warmly welcomed the success of the Conference to Consider and Adopt Proposed Amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material held in July. It intended to ratify the amendments as soon as possible and urged all other States Parties to do likewise.

17. He also welcomed the Board's recent approval of the Nuclear Security Plan for 2006–2009 and supported the call on States to contribute to the Nuclear Security Fund, to which Ireland had made voluntary contributions totalling over €86 000 since its inception in 2002 and to which it expected to make a further payment in the coming weeks.

18. Ireland fully supported the Agency's technical cooperation programme, in particular its role in upgrading safety in beneficiary States. It endorsed activities in the broad area of non-power nuclear applications and had paid its full assessed contribution for 2005.

19. While the perspective of individual Member States might vary in relation to the Agency's work in all of its three pillars, all Member States had an interest in supporting the work of the Agency and helping it to discharge its basic mission. The Agency's role in helping to maintain international peace and security was currently as vital as it had ever been. The Agency was also an important catalyst in the promotion of a culture of safety and security in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Ireland would

continue to engage constructively with the Agency in support of the unstinting efforts of the Director General and his staff.

20. Mr. SOTIROPOULOS (Greece), noting the Agency's programmes contributing to nuclear research in medicine, agriculture, industry and education, said that his country fully supported the Agency, which, in collaboration with major international partners like WHO, FAO, UNESCO and others, as well as with major donors, had provided training, experts and equipment to assist national and regional efforts to sustain the intensification of crop production systems, improve cancer therapy, address other human health problems and combat hunger and malnutrition. The Agency had cooperated with other institutions to improve the availability of water resources, so crucial for the world's sustainable development, and to protect the marine coastal environment.

21. The safe operation of nuclear power plants and related nuclear facilities around the world required the preservation of nuclear knowledge, and Greece highly appreciated the Agency's action in giving high priority to it in all programme areas.

22. As to the development of nuclear power plants, Greece recognized the urgent need for energy to meet the world's requirements and improve quality of life for the benefit of all peoples. However, it would prefer the Agency to concentrate on resolving issues of economic performance, security, waste management and proliferation resistance, leaving the promotion of nuclear power plants to the individual sovereign States.

23. The Agency's activities in the area of nuclear safety and security were of paramount importance to Greece, which had always played an active role in all aspects of that pillar of the Agency's work, having joined the Incident Reporting System for Research Reactors and ratified all the conventions related to nuclear safety. In May, the Greek Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC) had participated in an Agency-organized international exercise for radiological accidents, code-named CONVEX-3.

24. Greece endorsed the Agency's efforts to establish and maintain a global safety regime and therefore supported the development and strengthening of safety standards covering the whole spectrum of fuel cycle facilities and welcomed the adoption of a number of action plans, including the international Action Plan on the Decommissioning of Nuclear Facilities. Several safety reports had already been published on decommissioning and a large international conference organized by the Agency and the GAEC was to take place in Athens at the beginning of December 2006. He encouraged the Director General to maintain and step up the Agency's efforts in the safety area with a view to achieving implementation of its safety standards by all States as soon as possible and in close cooperation with other international and multinational organizations.

25. The Greek Government also attached great importance to nuclear security. International terrorism was now more far-reaching and more ruthlessly planned than ever, with sub-State actors showing that they were ready to attack any target. Greece had already provided a financial contribution to the Nuclear Security Fund and contributions in kind, for example three seminars on security issues being held in Athens in November with Agency and EU support. The topics would include training on advanced detection equipment for combating illicit trafficking. Greece fully supported all Agency activities related to protection against nuclear terrorism and considered the Agency's cooperation with the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee, Interpol, the WCO, Europol, the OSCE and the EU to be essential. It had also signed and was in the process of ratifying the amendments approved by the Conference to Consider and Adopt Proposed Amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material in July.

26. He recognized the high value of the outcome of the International Conference on Nuclear Security held in London in March 2005 with the aim of achieving comprehensive security and eliminating the high risks of nuclear and other radioactive material worldwide which posed a threat to

the international community, including that of Sub-State actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction to achieve their malicious purposes.

27. Greece welcomed the United Nations General Assembly's adoption by consensus of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which was a vital step forward. Its implementation would prevent terrorist groups from gaining access to the most lethal weapons known to humanity and strengthen the international legal framework against terrorism.

28. The previous year, the GAEC, in cooperation with the Agency and Greek customs and under the Second Line of Defence programme of the United States Department of Energy, had installed at Greece's borders state-of-the-art technology to detect illicit trafficking in radioactive and nuclear materials. The Greek Government attached great importance to the sustainability of that large-scale project and had allotted significant funds to it. All Greek authorities involved had the appropriate personnel and the technical infrastructure to support the programme. The GAEC was contributing its know-how to ensure smooth operation of the systems and had undertaken the responsibility to provide continuous training to customs officers as well as to maintain and calibrate the equipment installed.

29. As the past few years had shown, the nuclear non-proliferation regime was continuously under stress on multiple fronts, for various reasons. The failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, the lack of any substantive progress in non-proliferation and disarmament, and the threat of nuclear terrorism and regional instabilities were among the causes for concern. The non-proliferation regime, a prime responsibility of the Agency, required urgent corrective actions and full support to strengthen it even further.

30. Greece reiterated its strong commitment to a universal non-proliferation regime and its support for the Agency's verification role. Reliable verification, which was of paramount importance to curbing the spread of nuclear weapons, required that comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols be universally in force so that the Agency could conduct all necessary verification and evaluation activities. Such universal application would provide assurances that atomic energy was being used peacefully in accordance with the principles of the NPT and the Agency's Statute and would thus foster peace, security and prosperity.

31. His country endorsed the objectives of the Proliferation Security Initiative and the principles of Security Council resolution 1540 regarding enhanced information cooperation and fully supported the efforts being undertaken to increase the effectiveness of the NSG control regime.

32. Greece was participating in the fuel conversion programme for the GRR-1 research reactor. Conversion had been completed and the reactor was operating on LEU fuel. All HEU spent fuel would soon be shipped back to the United States.

33. The development of nuclear energy and, in particular, of sensitive technologies should be only for peaceful purposes and should not be used as a tool for enhancing national prestige or as a pretext for national military expansion with the argument of regional instability. Nuclear military ambitions served exactly the opposite purpose. International relations should be based on mutual understanding, multilateral dialogue and well-established diplomatic methods.

34. Greece therefore welcomed the Director General's initiative to establish an expert group to study ways and means of achieving multilateral control of sensitive nuclear technology. The group had already presented its results at the beginning of the year; it remained for Member States to discuss them as soon as possible. That issue was one of the main sources of disagreement between the haves and the have-nots, and a common understanding was very essential and urgent.

35. Greece supported the principle of creating an Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification, as approved in June 2005 by the Board of Governors with the aim of strengthening the Agency's safeguards systems. He was looking forward to participating in the Committee.

36. His country was both a donor and, to a lesser degree, a recipient of technical assistance, fully appreciating its contribution to the worldwide promotion of scientific, technological and regulatory capabilities for the benefit of participating Member States through technology transfer and capacity-building. Greece contributed its full share to the TCF and assisted the Agency by offering training for Agency fellows, providing experts and hosting and supporting events under the Agency's technical cooperation programme.

37. The GAEC, after the successful organization of the Agency's postgraduate course on radiation protection and the safety of radioactive sources in 2003, had become a regional training centre in that area and would continue organizing that course on a regular basis.

38. Technical cooperation was a fundamental pillar of the Agency's statutory activities. Greece supported every measure to ensure that its projects achieved meaningful and sustained benefits to Member States. However, programme planning must remain the prerogative of individual Member States, which in turn must ensure that the projects selected had strong government support. Technical cooperation projects needed to form a network of partnership, primarily between the Agency and its Member States, but also including partners from other governmental institutions, relevant United Nations agencies, NGOs and private-sector donors. They should focus on putting advanced science and technology to work for meeting the economic and social needs of developing countries.

39. Ms. WIJewardane (Sri Lanka) said that her country attached great importance to the Agency's mandate and to all areas of its work, such as the development and application of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology transfer, safeguards and verification activities and nuclear safety standards. As a developing Member State, Sri Lanka had benefited in particular from its technical cooperation activities, which had contributed substantially to the well-being and betterment of the lives of millions of people in Sri Lanka and other parts of the world. She encouraged adequate funding for those activities and equal emphasis on them.

40. The Agency's Annual Report for 2004 outlined activities undertaken against a background of global developments which had resulted in great challenges and opportunities for the Agency. Important work had been carried out in promoting and meeting the growing demand for nuclear power, and developing countries now accounted for 60% of the new reactors under construction. Nevertheless, while recognizing the growing interest in nuclear power, including its potential economic value and its environmental benefits under the Kyoto Protocol, Sri Lanka was concerned about its possible safety hazards and its security and proliferation dimensions.

41. Sri Lanka attached particular importance to the work carried out to increase Member States' capabilities in the development and application of nuclear science in fields such as food and agriculture, human health, water resources management, the environment and industrial applications. That important dimension of the Agency's work in Sri Lanka complemented her country's social and economic development goals.

42. She welcomed the continuing emphasis on nuclear safety and the maintenance of an effective and transparent global framework based on strong national safety infrastructure. Sri Lanka recognized the synergies between nuclear safety, nuclear security and safeguards. In the light of global realities and the threat of nuclear terrorism, it supported the Agency's nuclear security activities and welcomed the Nuclear Security Plan for 2006-2009. Nuclear security was an issue of relevance to all States, not only those with large nuclear programmes. Sri Lanka endorsed the strengthening of the CPPNM by

the amendments adopted in July, and also considered the Agency's assistance with regard to the Early Notification Convention to be of practical benefit to Member States.

43. Concerning the Agency's safeguards conclusions for 2004, she noted that safeguards had been applied in 152 States and that in States which had failed to report nuclear activity to the Agency, corrective actions were being taken and verification was in progress.

44. The technical cooperation programme continued to be a key dimension of Sri Lanka's partnership with the Agency, and she was encouraged that resources for the TCF had increased in 2004. Extensive restructuring of the Department of Technical Cooperation had begun in 2004, in conjunction with a comprehensive review of the technical cooperation programme cycle. She looked forward to the successful completion of the restructuring, which would eliminate uncertainties that could negatively impact the programme's substantive work.

45. The Annual Report highlighted that an important change in Member State financial contributions had been made with the replacement of APCs by NPCs. The change had been implemented on a trial basis and its effectiveness would be reviewed. It was essential to ensure that the requirement that NPCs be paid prior to the implementation of projects did not have an adverse impact on the delivery of technical cooperation projects.

46. Sri Lanka had paid its NPCs in full at the beginning of the year in the aftermath of the tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004. The Atomic Energy Authority of Sri Lanka had been successful in keeping the inventories of radioactive sources and irradiation apparatus intact within the areas affected by the tsunami.

47. In 2004, the implementation rate of the technical cooperation programme had dropped by comparison with previous years. The reason for that drop should be examined to enable the Secretariat to maintain higher levels of implementation.

48. Sri Lanka had significantly benefited from the technical cooperation programme by acquiring the capability to use nuclear technology in the fields of health, agriculture and industry. Projects fulfilling the central criteria and having a high impact on socio-economic development had been selected, targeting such issues as improvement of the quality of radiotherapy services provided in cancer hospitals, diagnosis of major infectious diseases through the use of molecular diagnostic techniques, assessment of pesticide contamination of surface water and groundwater for judicious application of agrochemicals, and safety and sustainability of dams built in Sri Lanka for irrigation and hydropower.

49. Sri Lanka had also established a partnership with the Agency on cancer diagnosis and treatment, and it appreciated the Agency's effort in developing the PACT to assist Member States with sound national cancer control programmes. The strategic partnership between the Agency and WHO was also important for mobilizing funds and obtaining greater credibility for Agency activities in cancer therapy.

50. The Agency's continuing efforts to improve nuclear institutes' self-reliance and sustainability through regional technical cooperation were in line with the policies of Sri Lanka's Atomic Energy Authority, the national institute responsible for nuclear science and technology and the focal point of Agency programmes. The Authority had been able to generate 50–60% of its operational expenses in 2004.

51. Sri Lanka appreciated the efforts made by the Agency to improve radiation protection and waste management infrastructure. Sri Lanka had participated in the programme since the original interregional Model Project INT/9/143 had been launched in 1994 and in subsequent regional Model Projects. It had achieved the Project's first two milestones. Regarding milestones 3 to 5, the need for

further assistance had been identified and Sri Lanka appreciated the Agency's consideration of further support.

52. Sri Lanka had become party to the RCA in 1976 and had actively participated in its programmes, which had been instrumental in establishing national programmes on the use of nuclear technology, mainly in the health, agriculture and industrial sectors. Many programmes initiated through the RCA had been developed into national programmes through Agency technical cooperation with the support of the Sri Lankan Government for the benefit of its people. Sri Lanka strongly supported the Agency's approach to foster regional cooperation. Members of her delegation also believed that regional cooperative agreements were effective mechanisms through which transboundary issues in safety and security could be addressed.

53. In conclusion, Sri Lanka reaffirmed its fullest cooperation and support for the Agency's efforts to further peace, development and prosperity through effective utilization of peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology.

54. Mr. KIRAKOSSIAN (Armenia), noting the international community's growing demand for strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, said that his country had often declared its commitment to the principles of international treaties and conventions on the peaceful use of nuclear energy and of non-proliferation. Its ratification the previous year of the additional protocol to its safeguards agreement was explicit evidence of its serious approach to cooperation with the Agency. Its adherence to the international community's joint efforts in combating terrorism was shown by the fact that the Prime Minister of Armenia had recently signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

55. Armenian national legislation in the nuclear domain had been improved significantly. The National Assembly had adopted a number of reforms to the national law on the peaceful use of nuclear energy aimed at upgrading the safety and security of the Armenian nuclear power plant at Metsamor and the verification regime. Armenia had also signed the Final Act of the conference to amend the CPPNM and its ratification was in process. The Government paid great attention to the physical protection of the Metsamor plant: an IPPAS mission had taken place there whose report would be ready by the end of 2005. The Armenian authorities would follow the recommendations made in that report and take action to upgrade the physical protection of the plant.

56. An OSART mission to Armenia was to take place by the end of the year. In cooperation with the Agency, Armenia hoped to finalize its report, with all relevant findings and recommendations, in 2006.

57. The Armenian nuclear power plant was visited by an average of more than 30 different missions and inspections each year. Armenia had reported on it to the third Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The assessment of the Metsamor plant's safety and security had been considered satisfactory and several recommendations had been made which would be taken into account during its future operation. Armenia would continue to collaborate with the Agency in a transparent and open way.

58. One of the most important events of the year had been the Director General's visit to Armenia. He had met the President, Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Energy. He had also visited the Metsamor plant and the oncological centre. Discussions had been very open, constructive and efficient. Armenian authorities had expressed their deep satisfaction with collaboration with the Agency. The Director General had confirmed that the safety of the Metsamor plant was the most important issue and that in order to be able to continue to upgrade its safety, additional funds were needed. He had promised to seek additional extrabudgetary funds for that purpose.

59. The future of the national energy policy had been one of the main topics of the discussions. Both the President and the Prime Minister had said that nuclear power was very important for Armenia since it supplied about 40% of actual demand, thus making the country relatively independent in terms of energy supply. The Metsamor nuclear power plant was also of regional significance as it would be able to supply neighbouring countries which had shortages of electricity.

60. However, owing to the unstable political situation in the region, Armenia could not rely on uninterrupted fuel supply for its thermal plants, and hydroelectric energy, in the most optimistic scenario, could cover only 25% of national demand. Preliminary estimates showed that, based on sustained GDP growth and present rates of consumption, Armenia would need four times more power in 2020. Therefore it must seriously consider the possibility of constructing a new nuclear power plant — an intention that was fully in line with the conclusions of the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power for the 21st Century in Paris, which had stressed the rapid growth of energy demand along with a desire to ensure the security of energy supply. The Director General had promised Agency assistance in the feasibility study for construction of a new plant.

61. Armenia was grateful to the Department of Technical Cooperation for its continuous assistance in different fields. In particular, significant assistance had been provided to the oncological centre. A follow-up project was foreseen for 2006–2007, and after its termination, Armenia would have a fully equipped medical service for its citizens. Another important area of technical cooperation was the strengthening of the Armenian National Regulatory Agency, which provided a strong and independent verification regime for nuclear power plants and radioactive sources.

62. His country was deeply satisfied with its bilateral cooperation with other Member States. The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, the Russian Federation and Bulgaria were constant partners. With their assistance, projects had been undertaken to upgrade the safety and security of the Metsamor nuclear power plant. He hoped that collaboration would continue.

Ms. Wijewardane (Sri Lanka), Vice-President, took the Chair.

63. Mr. CHONG (Singapore) said that the NPT remained the foundation of the global non-proliferation regime and emphasized the importance of full and non-selective implementation of its objectives, the peaceful use of nuclear energy and nuclear disarmament.

64. Over the past few years, the NPT had faced serious challenges which had highlighted the need for it to be underpinned by a strong safeguards regime. There was currently significant potential for nuclear proliferation, given the discovery of a sophisticated and clandestine nuclear procurement network; the spread of nuclear knowledge and access to sensitive technology; and the complications that could arise from the peaceful use of nuclear energy. While the Agency safeguarded the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, it also needed to ensure that such a right was exercised in compliance with States' non-proliferation obligations under Article II of the NPT.

65. The Agency had a central role to play in combating nuclear proliferation and needed to remain capable of responding to new challenges within its mandate. Singapore therefore welcomed the establishment by the Board of Governors of an Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification. It also agreed that the additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreement should be the new standard for safeguards verification so as to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. Singapore had signed its additional protocol on 22 September as a reflection of its strong commitment to non-proliferation. It supported the Board's decision to mandate the Director General to enter into negotiations with SQP States to modify their SQPs and for the Agency to conclude only modified SQPs with eligible States henceforth.

66. States themselves also needed to enhance international cooperation to counter nuclear proliferation. Singapore supported the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 which, inter alia, called on United Nations Member States to enhance domestic controls and step up cooperation against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. While legally binding multilateralism needed to be the basis of the global non-proliferation regime, other multi-country initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative were important elements in international counter-proliferation efforts.

67. The Agency's Board of Governors had addressed several cases of proliferation concern over the past few years. On 24 September, the Board had adopted a resolution on Iran. He urged that country to heed the Board's calls and hoped that it would return to the process of dialogue and resolve the outstanding matters within the framework of the resolution.

68. The joint statement on the DPRK resulting from the six-party talks held in Beijing was a significant step forward. Patience, perseverance and the political will of the parties had been the key ingredients of the outcome. Singapore welcomed the adoption of the joint statement and encouraged continued progress in its implementation.

69. There was a clear trend towards the use of nuclear power in the developing world, particularly in Asia, as energy needs increased. A strong emphasis was therefore needed on effective nuclear safety and security regimes. Singapore strongly commended and endorsed the Agency's efforts to promote adherence to Agency safety standards and guidelines. He urged Member States to make effective use of the Agency's safety review services and other forms of assistance to raise nuclear safety standards and uphold an effective nuclear safety culture. It was incumbent upon States to establish regulatory infrastructures that would support credible national nuclear safety regimes.

70. While ensuring nuclear safety ultimately remained the national responsibility of States, the cross-border implications of radiological fallout made nuclear safety very much a transnational concern. He emphasized the importance of transboundary emergency preparedness capability, including appropriate regional cooperation. Such efforts also needed to include aspects related to radiological terrorism.

71. Singapore firmly supported the Agency's technical cooperation activities and had consistently contributed its full share to the TCF. He was pleased that the technical cooperation programme had expanded and improved its management and delivery of technical assistance projects. The needs-driven approach adopted by the Agency together with the Member States targeted the particular concerns identified by Member States while optimizing the Agency's financial resources. Singapore looked forward to further cooperation with the Agency in bilateral technical cooperation initiatives and supported the Agency's promotion of regional technical cooperation projects.

72. Singapore had supported and would continue to support the work of the Director General and the Agency in all its three pillars of promoting nuclear safety and security, peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, and nuclear verification and safeguards. He urged all countries to give their full cooperation to the Agency and to comply fully and transparently with their obligations.

73. Mr. AMHA (Ethiopia) said his country had been engaged in a number of national and regional projects that applied nuclear techniques to address various socio-economic development problems in agriculture (crop breeding, animal productivity and health); human health (nuclear medicine, radiotherapy, drug resistance in tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS); water resources management; non-destructive testing; energy planning; nuclear instrumentation; and radiation protection. Not only had the number of active national projects increased from three in 2003–2004 to five in 2005–2006, but the content and depth of the projects had shown remarkable transformation. As a rule, in technical cooperation with the Agency, Ethiopia had pursued an approach focused on areas of high relevance for

socio-economic development objectives. The untiring efforts of Agency staff who had worked hard toward the positive development of technical cooperation between Ethiopia and the Agency would lead to rewarding results in the small number of areas pragmatically selected.

74. The project aimed at eradicating the tsetse fly from the southern Rift Valley of Ethiopia using an area-wide integrated pest management approach with wide community participation and technical support from the Agency had been initiated in 1997 with serious commitments from both the Ethiopian Government and the Agency. The two major components of the project were establishment of a centrally operated sterile insect production plant and actual field operation with fly population control followed by ultimate eradication. Although the commitment from both sides had been enormous, the fact that the project was a pilot and learning project had meant that there were daunting challenges to implementation. However, the problems faced had only increased Ethiopia's resolution to make the project a reality. The Ethiopian Government had concluded a loan and grant agreement of over US \$14 million for six years with the African Development Bank, a measure which showed that a problem of the highest priority was being addressed.

75. In the area of human health, Ethiopia had managed to build a modest infrastructure for nuclear medicine and radiotherapy services through its collaboration with the Agency. However, the fact that it had only one reconditioned gamma camera that had served it for nearly 20 years and an old ⁶⁰Co machine for a population of more than 71 million showed that there was a long way yet to go.

76. Turning to the area of water resources management, he said that Ethiopia was identified as the 'water tower' of North-East Africa. It was thus paradoxical that the country was suffering from recurrent drought, and from famine caused mainly by water scarcity. The lowlands that constituted a substantial part of the country depended to a large extent on groundwater resources for their domestic and even agricultural water supply. The fact that the groundwater resource potential had not been well studied and documented had caused problems for the economic and sustainable exploitation of the groundwater, even though in some dry areas it was the only viable option for meeting the growing demand for potable water. Technical cooperation to apply isotope techniques in managing groundwater resources had enabled basic capacities to be built and useful isotopic data to be generated. Major success stories were the establishment of an isotope hydrology laboratory at Addis Ababa University, a national groundwater database with standardized data collection forms and field methods, and training of personnel. Support from the Agency in the form of equipment, experts, fellowships and data analyses was highly appreciated by the Ethiopian Government.

77. Ethiopia also benefited from Agency-supported regional projects. Useful data were being generated and encouraging results were being registered in the areas of mutation breeding of indigenous crops, improvement of milk and meat production, equitable use of the common Nile basin water, energy planning, non-destructive testing, molecular detection of drug resistance in malaria and tuberculosis, and study of nutritional interventions in HIV/AIDS patients.

78. In that context, he wished to underline the role being played by AFRA in streamlining and coordinating activities related to various applications of nuclear techniques, from the inception of projects to ensuring sustainability of the results, as well as its efforts to strengthen TCDC, to develop national and regional strategies for human resources development in nuclear science and technology, and to integrate nuclear-related activities with the flagship programmes of NEPAD. Such initiatives played a vital role in mobilizing resources and expertise from within the region to solve African problems.

79. Ethiopia had been one of the Member States whose country cooperation programmes had been evaluated by the Agency's Office of Internal Oversight Services during the first half of 2005. The evaluation team's preliminary findings indicated that the Agency's overall country programme in

Ethiopia had been responsive to a number of the Government's needs and priorities. The evaluation confirmed that a major part of the Agency's assistance targeted areas and sectors with high socio-economic impact and critical importance for further economic development, stability and poverty reduction and had therefore been in line with the most important national strategies and plans of action.

80. Having engaged in the transfer of relevant nuclear technologies for peaceful applications, Ethiopia was now consolidating the capacities built through its cooperation with the Agency. Sustainable application of the acquired technologies demanded a continuous supply of trained scientists and technicians, which was best achieved by training the required manpower locally. The Ethiopian Government was currently undertaking a massive vertical and horizontal expansion of higher education throughout the country, including training in nuclear applications at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Courses in isotope hydrology, nuclear medicine and radiopharmacy were being offered at various faculties of Addis Ababa University. Preparations were also being finalized to open new short-term and postgraduate training programmes in those areas, including radiation protection and waste management.

81. As one of the Agency's founding members, Ethiopia was aware of its international responsibilities for global and regional security in controlling radioactive and other nuclear materials. The Government had accordingly submitted an official letter to the Agency expressing its commitment to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. The Government had already allocated the required budget for the design and construction of a central waste management facility that was currently lacking.

82. Ethiopia was in the process of ratifying the CTBT in line with its long-standing commitment to the NPT and ultimately to a world free of the nuclear threat.

83. Reaffirming the Ethiopian Government's full support for the Agency's promotion of safe and peaceful applications of nuclear technologies, he pledged that Ethiopia would continue to contribute its full share to the TCF, despite its financial difficulties.

84. Mr. ELWAZER (Palestine) said that the Palestinian Authority had established the Palestinian Energy Authority in 1995, one of whose principal departments was the Nuclear Energy and Radiation Protection Department. In addition to improving health services for the Palestinian people, it operated in the areas of environmental protection, agriculture, water supply and training in nuclear science and technology. The Department also gave priority to the establishment of a solid radiation protection and nuclear security infrastructure. It was grateful for the Agency's assistance in developing a legislative framework for radiation protection and in protecting Palestinian crops through sterile fruit fly technology in a joint project with Jordan and Israel. The success of such joint projects depended on Israel ending its economic blockade of Palestinian territory so that Palestine could enjoy their benefits to the full.

85. Palestine trusted that the Agency would support its technical cooperation project concepts for 2007-2008 relating to the second phase of the radiation protection infrastructure project, a laboratory to monitor environmental radiation, human resources development in the area of nuclear science, and enhancement of technological and human capacities in the mineral resources sector.

86. The Palestinian Authority also needed assistance to deal with the consequences of Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, which had left Gaza's infrastructure and economy in a state of chaos, not to mention the human and material losses sustained by the population over the past five years. The Authority looked forward to closer cooperation with the Agency in using nuclear technology to monitor and address the possible impact of environmental problems created by Israel.

87. Assistance was also needed to train specialists in radiation and nuclear emergency preparedness, since most of the Palestinian population and territory would be in the front line in the event of any radiation or nuclear accident occurring in Israel's secret nuclear installations, which it refused to declare despite international pleas and General Conference resolutions. Scientific reports and satellite images had shown that the Dimona reactor had entered a strategically critical phase, having reached the end of its assumed lifetime. According to experts, Dimona staff members and many people living in the vicinity of the site had contracted cancer. Moreover, Israel, the world's fifth largest nuclear power, had a stockpile of nuclear warheads that could hit distant targets. It was constantly seeking to increase its military nuclear capabilities, striking terror in the hearts of the Palestinian people, and it continued to refuse to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. Hence the question on everybody's lips was: why should Israel be allowed to possess nuclear weapons?

88. The UNEP Regional Office had warned of the radiation risk from the Dimona reactor. A memorandum circulated to the Arab States referred to the adverse effect of such radiation on human beings, animals and plants in the vicinity of the reactor, including Palestine and neighbouring Arab States. The memorandum urged those States to take steps to protect themselves against the risk. Hence the urgency of persuading Israel to sign the NPT, to allow international verification of its installations and to comply with relevant resolutions adopted by the international community.

89. In May 2005, the WHO had adopted a draft resolution submitted by Palestine by 95 votes to 8. It demanded that Israel halt its practice of dumping nuclear waste in Palestinian territory and requested the WHO Director-General to send a fact-finding mission to assess the X-ray-emitting detection equipment used by Israel at Palestinian border-crossing points, since many Palestinians had been exposed to unjustified radiation, and to investigate Israeli waste dumps in Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan. The resolution further called on Israel to guarantee the free movement of medical personnel, ambulances, patients and medical supplies during and after its withdrawal from Gaza.

90. He urged the General Conference to give serious attention to the Israeli nuclear threat to the countries of the region and to regional and international security and peace, and to adopt strongly worded resolutions calling on Israel to apply Agency safeguards immediately with a view to creating a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

91. The Palestinians, just like their Israeli neighbours, longed for stability and peace, but they were beginning to lose hope that Israel would allow them to exercise their right of self-determination and establish an independent Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem — especially since its unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, leaving the Strip as one big prison for its people, closing the borders with Egypt and preventing people from using the airport or from building a harbour. Israel still controlled the airspace over Gaza and had begun to use its terrifying F-16 aircraft on one pretext or another, although the Palestinian Authority had announced that all national and Islamic factions had declared their commitment to the Cairo agreement on a period of 'calm'. It was therefore incumbent on the international community, particularly the Quartet, to take swift action to prevent the situation in the region from deteriorating and to urge Israel to adhere to the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings, return to negotiations on the internationally supported Road Map, and refrain from unilateral action and creating facts on the ground. Peace was a strategic choice for the Palestinian people, but unfortunately Israel had resumed its policy of destruction, targeted killings, arbitrary arrests, confiscation of land, building and expansion of settlements, and continued construction of the separation wall on confiscated Palestinian land although it had been condemned by the International Court of Justice. Israel was also seeking to separate Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, pursuing a policy of displacement and Judaization. All those policies would wreck the peace process, and the Israeli Government's policy of destroying Palestinian civil society institutions and

infrastructure on trivial pretexts would crush his people's dream of building a brighter future in an independent Palestinian State.

92. Lastly, he stressed the need to rid the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, as a prerequisite for international security and peace.

93. Mr. BELEVAN-MCBRIDE (Peru) said that during the past year, his country had continued to participate in numerous Agency activities directed towards increasing the contribution of peaceful applications of nuclear energy to the socio-economic development of Member States, enhancing safety in the utilization of nuclear energy and further strengthening the regime for preventing the misuse of nuclear energy for non-peaceful and other illicit purposes. In Peru's opinion, it was imperative that Member States continue to cooperate in endeavouring to achieve a balance between, on one hand, the legitimate right of all countries to use nuclear energy and engage in nuclear R&D for strictly peaceful purposes and, on the other, the need to promote all legal measures for preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to create truly effective mechanisms for combating the illicit trade in nuclear technologies that could be used in acts of nuclear terrorism.

94. All countries could benefit — and were indeed benefiting — from peaceful applications of nuclear energy. In the case of developing countries, the benefits were particularly important in areas such as health care and agriculture and even in industry. The technical cooperation activities of the Agency were essential in that connection, and Peru would like to see them expanding.

95. His country remained strongly committed to the activities being carried out within the ARCAL framework and welcomed the decision of Haiti to ratify ARCAL, as a result of which ARCAL would finally enter into force and — it was to be hoped — would attract more support from outside the Latin American and Caribbean region.

96. Turning to safeguards, one of the pillars of the Agency's work, he said that Peru was rigorously fulfilling all the obligations arising out of its comprehensive safeguards agreement and the additional protocol thereto. As a result, the Agency had been able to conclude that there were no undeclared nuclear activities taking place in Peru, and approval had been given for the introduction of integrated safeguards there.

97. By contrast, many countries had still not concluded safeguards agreements with the Agency — a matter of great concern to Peru, which was continuing to promote the conclusion of such agreements in all relevant forums.

98. Peru was also very concerned about the meagre results of the 2005 NPT Review Conference and particularly about the failure to seriously advance the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation. All NPT Parties had a responsibility to help advance that cause, but perhaps some of them more than others. Peru was convinced that, if the nuclear Powers began demonstrating, through meaningful actions, their determination to fulfil their NPT obligation to reduce their nuclear arsenals, the other NPT Parties would be more prepared to do everything possible to strengthen the NPT regime.

99. In that context, his delegation greatly regretted the fact that the outcome document of the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly made no clear reference to disarmament and non-proliferation. In its opinion, an important — perhaps unrepeatably — opportunity had been missed of exploiting the symbolism of the United Nations, humankind's most successful venture directed towards the attainment of world peace.

100. One of the Agency's statutory tasks was to establish standards and issue guides relating to nuclear safety and nuclear security and to promote their application. His delegation was pleased that the Agency was continuing to revise such standards and guides periodically, and that it was now seriously concerning itself also with the radiation protection of the environment.

101. Peru, which was supporting the work of INLEX, had great expectations for the regional course on nuclear liability which it was due to host in 2006.

102. Peru attached great importance to the Agency's emergency response system, but it would like the system to be able to respond not only to incidents occurring on land — within national jurisdictions — but also to incidents occurring at sea — outside the jurisdiction of any country.

103. Given countries' obligations arising out of various conventions to provide assistance in emergencies, Peru also attached great importance to the establishment of harmonized procedures, based on strict confidentiality, for the advance notification of governmental authorities regarding shipments of large quantities of nuclear fuel or highly radioactive waste. In that connection, it welcomed the progress made in implementing the Agency's Action Plan for the Safety of Transport of Radioactive Material.

104. Peru had participated very actively in the third Review Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, held in April 2005, and also in the conference which had, in July 2005, adopted important amendments broadening the scope of the CPPNM. In addition, as a member of the Board of Governors, it had supported the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification. Its involvement in the decision-making which had taken place on those occasions demonstrated how individual Member States could help to create the basis for greater safety and security in the utilization of nuclear energy and for greater sharing of the benefits now and in the future.

105. The previous day, he had read a newspaper report about how an Agency expert team had assisted in the decommissioning of a research reactor and the return of its highly enriched uranium fuel to the country of origin. The operation, which had been supported by the two largest nuclear Powers and by the government of the country where the research reactor was located, illustrated what could be achieved through international cooperation in endeavouring to bring about a more secure world in which the inalienable right of countries to engage in peaceful nuclear activities was respected and the peaceful nature of nuclear activities was reliably verified.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.