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Plenary

Record of the Second Meeting

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President: Mr. MINTY (South Africa)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(50)/INF/8/Rev.1.

¹ GC(50)/21.

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Abbreviations used in this record:

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ARASIA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
Bangkok Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
G8	Group of Eight
GDP	gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
INDAG	International Nuclear Desalination Advisory Group
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
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
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OPANAL	Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PWR	pressurized water reactor
Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
Rarotonga Treaty	South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SAGTAC	Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation
SIT	sterile insect technique
SQP	small quantities protocol
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

6. Arrangements for the Conference

(a) Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items for initial discussion

1. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had recommended that the agenda for the current session consist of all the items on the provisional agenda set forth in document GC(50)/1. With regard to the allocation of items for initial discussion, the Committee had recommended that the items listed in that document be taken up for initial discussion as indicated there, account being taken of the slight re-ordering of items already considered that morning at the Plenary's first meeting.

2. The General Committee's recommendations were accepted.

(b) Closing date of the session and opening date of the next session

3. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had recommended that the Conference set Friday, 22 September 2006 as the closing date of the fiftieth regular session and Monday, 17 September 2007 as the opening date of the fifty-first regular session, which would be held in Vienna.

4. The General Committee's recommendation was accepted.

— Restoration of voting rights

5. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee, which had had before it requests from Georgia and Moldova for the restoration of their voting rights, had postponed consideration of the requests, and of any other such requests received, until its following meeting.

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2005 (resumed) (GC(50)/4)

6. Mr. AL-ATHEL (Saudi Arabia) welcomed the Republics of Malawi, Montenegro, Mozambique and Palau as new members of the Agency.

7. He congratulated the Agency and its Director General on having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Agency had been singled out for its achievements during the past half century in promoting the global use of nuclear energy for peace and development and opposing its use for military purposes. The Director General had been honoured for his courageous defence of the nuclear non-proliferation regime at a time when efforts to promote disarmament seemed to have reached an impasse and there was a growing risk of the spread of nuclear weapons to both States and terrorist groups. He also commended the use of the prize money to establish the IAEA Nobel Cancer and Nutrition Fund, which provided fellowships and organized training courses with a view to enhancing the supply of specialized human resources in developing regions. The Nobel Prize could be viewed both as an

honour and as a challenge to maintain a consistently high level of professionalism, neutrality and integrity.

8. He also congratulated the Agency on its fiftieth anniversary, in particular on its work in the area of safeguards, verification and the enhancement of nuclear safety standards in order to reduce the risks to people and property to the absolute minimum. Focusing on the three pillars of its mandate, the Agency had promoted access to peaceful nuclear science and technology applications and provided support for the global nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation regime. Member States had enjoyed scientific and technological support in areas including nuclear power, the nuclear fuel cycle, food production, human health, water resources, management of the marine and terrestrial environment, and industrial applications.

9. The Agency was the only international body with authority to verify States' compliance with their obligations and to ensure non-proliferation at the different stages of the nuclear fuel cycle. It had consolidated the safeguards regime, drawing conclusions regarding States' implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements under the NPT that were factual and accurate. However, some States that had signed voluntary offer INFCIRC/66/Rev.2-type agreements possessed and were developing military nuclear capabilities, compelling their neighbours to follow suit and undermining the foundations of security and stability in the region concerned.

10. The NPT was based on nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful nuclear cooperation. Yet the States that had attended the NPT Review Conference in 2005 and the World Summit in September 2005 considered that the international community had not shown sufficient determination to bolster the non-proliferation and disarmament regime and to ensure that the States parties to the NPT complied fully with their obligations in order to prevent the diversion of materials for military purposes. In that context, they had called for the universalization of the NPT and for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in order to meet the growing threat of nuclear terrorism.

11. While recognizing the sovereign right of States to withdraw from any treaty they had ratified and noting that certain obligations remained binding on parties even after such withdrawal, he expressed the hope that no party would invoke the prevailing circumstances as a pretext for withdrawing from the NPT. He called on the international community to exercise its joint responsibility to prevent any such development and urged States to redouble their efforts in support of unconditional and transparent global nuclear disarmament. He hoped that agreement would be reached on an international legal instrument banning the production of fissile material that could be used to manufacture nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.

12. Some 15 years after it had first been placed on the Conference's agenda, the item concerning Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat continued to be placed on the agenda of the Conference at the request of the Arab Members States of the Agency because of Israel's failure to comply with previous resolutions of the General Conference and the United Nations General Assembly, and the pursuit by successive Israeli Governments of policies that obstructed the peace process in the Middle East and thwarted all efforts to establish a zone free from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction. He noted in that connection that all Arab States were parties to the NPT. His own country, whose nuclear activities were confined to the areas of medicine and education, had acceded to the Treaty in 1989 and subsequently signed a safeguards agreement with the Agency. Saudi Arabia reiterated its call for the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East and urged the international community to make that goal a cornerstone of the peace process in the region. It had a duty to act against the threat to peace and security posed by Israel's possession of undisclosed military nuclear capabilities, since other countries in the region would otherwise feel compelled to acquire similar capabilities in order to restore military balance.

13. Ms. PLASSNIK (Austria) said that although the NPT remained the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation system, its integrity was being increasingly undermined as a result of serious non-proliferation concerns. The international community must make a concerted effort to enforce compliance with the Treaty's non-proliferation obligations.

14. There was a clear link between nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The only sustainable long-term approach to address the dangers of nuclear proliferation was to reduce the reliance on nuclear weapons. Consequently, the nuclear-weapon States must honour their commitments and take serious steps towards nuclear disarmament. For Austria, the strength and foundation of the NPT was the carefully crafted balance of the three pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In return for renouncing nuclear weapons, States were guaranteed access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, while the nuclear-weapon States were committed to the gradual elimination of those weapons. If non-compliance were tolerated or exceptions made, the system would be seriously undermined. Today, serious and credible efforts were required to overcome the differences that had characterized the disarmament and non-proliferation debate over the previous few years. Attempts should be made to find a new basic consensus on how to deal with the vital issues of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. No more opportunities could be wasted. In the light of the experience of the 2005 NPT Review Conference and the deep political divisions that had become so apparent, Austria, with the support of the European Union, was proposing that the first preparatory meeting for the next NPT Review Conference be held in Vienna in the spring of 2007. She hoped that NPT States parties would consider the proposal in a positive light.

15. Recent advances in nuclear technology had made it increasingly difficult for even the Agency to draw a precise line between civil and military capacity. Austria therefore welcomed the discussions initiated on the establishment of a multilateral system of assured nuclear fuel supply, which would enable States to exercise the nuclear energy option without having to master the entire nuclear fuel cycle, in particular enrichment and reprocessing.

16. The Agency's safeguards system was a key element of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The level of assurances that could be expected depended on the legal authority countries were prepared to assign to the Agency. The repeated cases of clandestine nuclear programmes that could not be detected by traditional safeguards measures had demonstrated the need for a strengthened safeguards system. The Agency must be able to provide full assurances of the absence of undeclared nuclear activity, and she called upon all States to conclude an additional protocol without further delay; such action was, in her country's opinion, a legal obligation for the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT.

17. The amended CPPNM would be an important tool in the fight against terrorism and nuclear non-proliferation, and she was pleased to report that she had just deposited Austria's instrument of ratification with the Director General. All States parties should ensure the earliest possible entry into force of the amendment to the Convention.

18. Nuclear security in the widest sense was a precondition for nuclear co-operation and trade. Those States supplying nuclear material had to be confident that it would not be misused for nuclear weapons programmes or acts of nuclear terrorism. In addition to comprehensive safeguards, appropriate physical protection, adequate measures to combat illicit trafficking and effective export controls had to be in place.

19. It was worrying to learn from the Nuclear Safety Review for the Year 2005, which her country had welcomed, that avoidable nuclear incidents continued to occur. The Agency should strengthen its activities to ensure the utmost transparency and exchange of information among all Member States.

20. Austria welcomed the Agency's efforts to strengthen the global safety regime, and was pleased that the fundamental safety principles covered both the radiation exposure of people and the release of radioactive material to the environment. The Agency's safety standards should become legally binding. While cooperation with the nuclear industry could provide useful input, the safety standards should not be guided by industry needs, but by the objective of protecting people and the environment.

21. Austria was not in a position to accept activities of the Agency in support of the development of new and innovative nuclear reactors. The Agency should, rather, be a driving force to enhance the security of any nuclear installation.

22. Several experts had predicted that a renaissance of nuclear energy was imminent, yet how could people be sure that a nuclear power plant respected the highest possible safety standards? In Austria's assessment, neither current nor future generations of nuclear power plants could overcome the main shortcomings of nuclear energy. Austria therefore continued to advocate a controlled phasing-out of nuclear energy and the focusing of efforts on energy production based on the principle of sustainability.

23. The excellent work of the Agency and its Director General had been rightfully recognized by the international community, with the award of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. Austria would continue to lend the Agency its full support, and looked forward to its forthcoming term on the Board of Governors.

24. Mr. KIRIENKO (Russian Federation) began his statement by reading out an address from President Putin:

“Greetings to the participants in the 50th anniversary session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

“Over the decades the IAEA has remained an organization that actively fosters international partnership in the field of the peaceful use of atomic energy and upholds the nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime.

“The decision to award the Agency and its Director General the Nobel Peace Prize was a confirmation of the IAEA's great role and importance. This award testifies to the effectiveness of the Agency's work.

“I consider that continued improvement, under the aegis of the IAEA, of the global nuclear power infrastructure will help effectively to enhance its security. This relates above all to the provision of nuclear fuel cycle services and also to strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, as was reaffirmed by the G8 leaders at the St. Petersburg summit in July 2006.

“I am sure that the IAEA will continue to make a significant contribution to the development of the peaceful utilization of atomic energy and will actively facilitate the development and introduction of ecologically safe and economically efficient nuclear technologies to meet humankind's growing energy needs.

“I wish that your work may be successful and fruitful.”

25. A reliable energy supply was essential for political stability and sustainable economic development. As the G8 leaders had stated at the recent G8 summit in St Petersburg that had focused on global energy security, energy was essential to improving the quality of life and opportunities in developed and developing nations. With fossil fuels dwindling, the challenge was to find new energy sources capable of meeting the anticipated growth in demand as well as modern technological and environmental requirements. Nuclear power was the most accessible and developed source of energy

for the future and already provided for some 17% of global electricity production effectively and reliably. The Russian Federation had adopted a comprehensive programme for the development of nuclear power, providing in particular for the construction of nuclear power plants with a capacity of no less than 2 GW per year. By 2030, nuclear power would account for more than 25% of the energy mix in the country.

26. There was a direct link between large-scale nuclear power development and the access of more and more countries to nuclear technologies, materials and equipment. That in turn raised questions about nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear and ecological security, competitiveness and risk reduction.

27. With the new challenges and threats facing the international community, the NPT was acquiring ever-greater significance, as was the role of the Agency as the only international organization with the authority to ensure a necessary balance between the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and compliance with the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Maintaining that balance was no easy task. More and more countries were choosing to develop nuclear power and showing an interest in nuclear fuel cycle technologies including enrichment and reprocessing. There was a danger that such dual-use technologies might be used not only for peaceful purposes, raising the question of how to guarantee countries access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and an assured nuclear fuel supply while at the same time preventing the proliferation of those dual-use technologies. To that end, the Russian President had put forward an initiative in January concerning the creation of a global infrastructure to ensure fair, non-discriminatory access to nuclear energy for all interested countries and parties provided that they respect non-proliferation commitments and standards. The key element of that infrastructure was a system of international centres to provide a full range of nuclear fuel cycle services under Agency control as well as training for specialists involved in the operation of nuclear power facilities.

28. An international centre providing uranium enrichment services under the auspices of the Agency was being established in Russia. Members of the centre would have an assured supply of nuclear fuel without the need to use or possess enrichment technology. The proposed initiative should in no way undermine the right of States to use or provide nuclear fuel cycle services as part of their own initiatives.

29. Russia welcomed the Agency's efforts concerning multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, the establishment of a system of assured supply of nuclear fuel, and its work in the area of innovative nuclear power systems. It also supported other nuclear fuel cycle initiatives proposed by Member States of the Agency including the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership put forward by the President of the United States, and the proposals by a group of major suppliers of enriched uranium regarding assured supplies.

30. Nuclear terrorism, which was closely linked to non-proliferation, was a very real threat. Russia was pleased to note that the leaders of the G8 had supported the global initiative to combat acts of nuclear terrorism put forward by the Presidents of Russia and the United States. That initiative was aimed at mobilizing efforts by States to meet their commitments under the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the CPPNM. Its implementation would strengthen and complement the Agency's work, and Russia was pleased that the Agency had expressed an interest in and support for the initiative.

31. Russia attached great importance to the Agency's efforts to increase the effectiveness of its safeguards activities and its ability to detect undeclared nuclear material and activities. Russia was interested in enhancing the effectiveness of the work of the Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification within the Framework of the IAEA Statute. The Russian Federation would continue to work with the Agency to strengthen the safeguards system.

32. The Agency's efforts to assist States in developing and strengthening their national regulatory systems for nuclear and radiation safety were welcome. The International Conference on Effective Nuclear Regulatory Systems held in Moscow in 2006, had been the first of its type to discuss the role, responsibility and functions of State regulatory bodies.

33. In November 2005, Russia had ratified the Joint Convention attesting to its readiness to help to achieve and uphold the highest standards in the area of waste management. Russia would continue to support the Agency's efforts to strengthen international cooperation in the area of nuclear and radiation safety, the safe transport of nuclear and radioactive materials and spent fuel management.

34. Russia welcomed the Agency's Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, and supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources and appreciated the work done by the Agency in that regard.

35. At the recent G8 summit in St Petersburg, the development of innovative nuclear power systems had been considered an important element for efficient and safe nuclear energy development. In that respect, Russia welcomed the results achieved in connection with the INPRO project. It would continue to provide support for the project, including financial assistance and called on all the countries involved to do likewise. The INPRO project and the Generation IV International Forum had become major initiatives to address issues associated with large-scale nuclear power development on the basis of international cooperation.

36. One of the most significant events in 2005 was the preparation of a draft agreement on the establishment of an international organization for the implementation of the ITER project.

37. More attention should be paid to technical cooperation activities in the area of nuclear and radiation safety. The existing mechanism for formulating the TCF should be maintained, since it had demonstrated its effectiveness. Russia, for its part, was taking steps to ensure the payment in full of its contribution to the TCF.

38. Mr. SUN Qin (China) said that in an ever-changing world the Agency had adhered to the principles and spirit of its Statute and unceasingly improved its functions. Its achievements had been universally recognized with the award of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.

39. In the future, the Agency would continue to face arduous tasks and his delegation wished to make four proposals to enhance the Agency's sound development. First, the Agency should make greater efforts in the area of technical co-operation. His Government unreservedly approved the Agency's technical cooperation efforts and was pleased to note that the effectiveness and efficiency of the technical cooperation programme had been strengthened through measures including the establishment of the NPC mechanism and reorganization of the Department of Technical Cooperation. The promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was one of the Agency's two major responsibilities; however, safeguards were still given more priority than technical cooperation in the Agency's work - a situation that showed every sign of worsening. Moreover, the issue of insufficient funding for technical cooperation activities had not been fundamentally addressed, and difficulties were being experienced in the implementation of technical cooperation activities, in particular with regard to the provision of experts and training. Member States, notably the developed countries, should attach greater importance to the technical cooperation programme to ensure the smooth implementation of the Agency's statutory promotional activities.

40. Second, the Agency should continue its efforts to build and promote a nuclear safety culture. China welcomed the Agency's commendable achievements in contributing to the improvement of nuclear safety worldwide by strengthening the global nuclear safety mechanism, formulating and promoting nuclear safety standards, establishing and improving international legal instruments and

national regulatory structures, and providing safety review services and training. On 29 April, China had ratified the Joint Convention and would continue to support the Agency in its nuclear safety efforts.

41. Third, the Agency should continue to provide strong guarantees for nuclear non-proliferation and security. China welcomed, and would continue to support, the Agency's efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system. Opposing nuclear weapons proliferation was one of his country's fundamental foreign policies and, having ratified an additional protocol and joined the NSG, China had participated in all the nuclear non-proliferation mechanisms. Its export policies and non-proliferation measures were currently fully in line with international practice. His Government had always supported the Agency's efforts to strengthen nuclear security and had decided to join the Agency's illicit trafficking database. Prevention of a nuclear terrorist attack was an important part of the security work for the 2008 Olympic Games to be held in Beijing, and China would be drawing on the Agency's rich experience in that connection.

42. Fourth, the Agency must retain its objectivity and impartiality, and play an active role in settling matters of concern to the international community, such as the DPRK and the Iranian nuclear issues, nuclear fuel supply and nuclear terrorism.

43. China's rapid economic growth was placing increasing demands on energy supply. Nuclear power had been incorporated into the overall national plan for the development of the power sector. In March, the State Council of China had adopted the mid- and long-term (2005-2020) nuclear power development plan, which set out an energy strategy actively promoting nuclear power construction. Under that plan, China's nuclear power generation capacity would reach 40 000 MW by 2020, accounting for about 4% of total power generation, and another 18 000 MW of power generation capacity would be under construction. In order to achieve that goal, a series of PWR units would be constructed using proven and reliable technology, and although there would be cooperation with international partners, China was to play the major role. New and advanced nuclear power technologies would also be developed through independent research and development and international cooperation. In promoting nuclear power construction, China would adhere to the principle that safety and quality should come first. Construction and operational management capability would follow international practice, and regulations as well as a system of standards for nuclear power would be developed.

44. China had adopted a 'three-step' approach to long-term nuclear power development, involving a thermal neutron reactor, a fast breeder reactor and controlled fusion reactor. It was an INPRO member and ITER participant, and had already made a formal application to participate in the Generation IV International Forum.

45. Nuclear power development could not be achieved without an assured supply of nuclear fuel. China would be strengthening its domestic uranium prospecting, increasing its uranium output and setting up a stable, assured supply system for nuclear fuel. It was willing to cooperate with other partners in exploring overseas uranium resources.

46. The maintenance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and its denuclearization were in the common interests of people all over the world. Several rounds of six-party talks had been held, and positive results achieved - most notably, the joint statement issued during the fourth round of the talks setting forth the overall target for denuclearization of the Peninsula. The talks had proven an effective mechanism in promoting the normalization of relations between the DPRK and other countries, and an important forum for dialogue and consultation. External pressure would only exacerbate the situation, and China hoped that a positive political atmosphere would be created in order to resolve the issue. It appealed to all the parties concerned to exercise calm and restraint in the interests of progress, mutual

understanding and confidence. China, for its part, would continue to play a constructive role, and seek an early breakthrough for the resumption of negotiations.

47. China continued to support the Agency in playing a positive role in the Iranian nuclear issue. The peaceful settlement of the issue through diplomatic negotiation was in the interests of peace and stability in the Middle East, the international non-proliferation regime and the right of all countries to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in compliance with their NPT obligations. The parties concerned should demonstrate flexibility, make full use of diplomatic wisdom and choose dialogue over confrontation. They should take into full account the interests and concerns of all sides and adopt a pragmatic attitude in seeking a lasting solution.

48. Ms. GRABAR-KITAROVIC (Croatia) congratulated the Director General and the Agency on having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2005, which was the most fitting recognition of the unique role the Agency had played over the preceding fifty years.

49. Croatia particularly welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to achieve the universal application of a strengthened safeguards regime, as well as the Director General's active efforts to promote the acceptance of multilateral approaches to managing the proliferation-sensitive aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle.

50. Croatia was committed to furthering its productive relationship with the Agency, including by implementing its international obligations. Her country had been one of the first Member States to sign and ratify the Model Additional Protocol and the amendment to Article VI of the Statute. It had also recently deposited its instrument of approval regarding the amendment to the CPPNM, and its domestic procedure for amending the text of the SQP was approaching completion. Croatia had presented its second national report on the safety of radioactive waste management at the Second Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management earlier in the year. Croatia attached particular importance to strengthening national capacity for export control. In 2005 it had begun to participate in several informal non-proliferation regimes and had also recently informed the Director General of its support for both the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources.

51. Croatia valued highly its close and successful technical cooperation with the Agency, and appreciated the Agency's assistance and support in implementing various technical cooperation projects and research agreements. It was hoped that the proposed projects for the new biennial cycle that focused on health, the environment and capacity building, would be evaluated and that the CPF would be revised in 2007. Croatia had pledged its full share of the TCF target for the following year. The Agency's regional technical cooperation activities also had special value, and Croatia welcomed the growing number of foreign participants, at various events in the country. Croatian institutions had offered to act as a leading, or alternate leading, counterpart in preparation for several 2007 regional projects. Croatia was ready to strengthen its proactive role in that regard, since coordinated and effective regional measures contributed not only to maximizing the peaceful use of nuclear energy but also to confronting the growing risks of proliferation.

52. The Agency played an indispensable role in tackling complex security threats in the changed global environment, in particular the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation and terrorism. The most successful way to deal with common concerns was through a strengthened cooperative approach and rule-based international order, regardless of the latter's inevitable shortcomings. Croatia appreciated ideas that had been formulated in that regard, notably the valuable report presented in June by the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission. In the deteriorating climate for arms control and disarmament, it was of essential importance to strengthen the integrity of the NPT and to reinforce the

Agency's activities in connection with the Treaty, in particular in the field of non-proliferation and verification. The international community had to be assured that all nuclear activities were exclusively for peaceful purposes. Efforts to secure a negotiated, peaceful solution to urgent problems of compliance and verification therefore needed to be pursued vigorously and consistently.

53. The world was at a crossroads and a clear message had to be sent about the path to be followed. There was no alternative to the course of active engagement, dialogue and negotiated agreement, leading to sustainable non-proliferation and genuine "atoms for peace".

54. Monsignor PAROLIN (Holy See) said that after 50 years, the Agency remained an invaluable point of reference for international cooperation in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and for development. The award of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize was well-deserved recognition of the important contribution the Agency had made in all areas of its activities.

55. Of all the challenges facing the Agency, the Holy See was most concerned with the problem of non-compliance with safeguards obligations under the NPT. That Treaty, which was the only multilateral legal instrument intended to bring about a nuclear-weapon-free world, must not be weakened.

56. The Holy See supported all efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's safeguards system. The conclusion by all States of safeguards agreements and additional protocols would reinforce the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime and increase international confidence in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Holy See likewise reaffirmed its support for the CTBT, and called upon all States that had not yet done so to accede to the Treaty without delay, particularly those States whose ratification was required before the Treaty could enter into force. It had also recently concluded with the Director General the exchange of letters to give effect to the standardized text and modified criteria for the SQP.

57. The importance of safety in nuclear facilities was shown by the tragic consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident 20 years previously, and all States that sought to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes must strive to ensure effective protection for their citizens and the environment.

58. In the light of the growing insecurity in the Middle East, he called upon all the States of the region to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols and to enter into a serious dialogue with a view to creating a region free from all weapons of mass destruction. The Holy See was also convinced that the current issues associated with Iran's nuclear programme could, and must, be overcome through diplomatic channels.

59. The Agency's technical cooperation programme, including the use of nuclear technologies in agriculture, hydrology, food security and medicine, had helped to improve the living conditions of many people. The Holy See encouraged the Agency to continue and strengthen its activities, in particular in improving child health, the fight against malnutrition, cancer management, radiation oncology and the use of nuclear techniques to improve the nutrition, health and wellbeing of people with HIV. Access to safe drinking water, which was a precondition for sustainable development, was another area of concern for the Holy See.

60. Mr. AHMAD (Pakistan) congratulated the Director General and the Agency on having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, in well-deserved recognition of their work and achievements in a complex and challenging international environment.

61. As one of the earliest members of the Agency, Pakistan was deeply satisfied to join the international community in celebrating the Agency's fiftieth anniversary, which coincided with the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission's golden jubilee. Fifty years ago, Pakistan did not have any nuclear facilities or trained manpower. It now had several training centres and a university for nuclear

sciences and engineering. Those institutions not only met the country's needs for technical manpower but also accepted foreign scholars, including through the Agency's technical cooperation programme. Pakistan had established the entire range of nuclear fuel cycle facilities; two nuclear power plants were in operation and a third was under construction. At the same time, Pakistan had established an extensive programme for the application of nuclear technology and radioisotopes in agriculture, hydrology and the medical and industrial sectors. Four nuclear agricultural research centres were engaged in research to help farmers to enhance the quantity and quality of their crops. The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission had established thirteen nuclear medicine and oncology centres that provided diagnostic and treatment facilities to several hundred thousand patients each year; six further centres were being built. Some 70% of patients received their treatment free of charge.

62. Pakistan was particularly grateful for the valuable assistance and cooperation it had received from the Agency in developing its peaceful nuclear programme. Pakistan, for its part, had been extremely cooperative with the Agency, and had never violated any of its obligations flowing from the agreements concluded with the Agency.

63. Pakistan had maintained an economic growth rate of some 6% over the previous several years. In order to maintain such growth, large inputs of energy were required and nuclear energy had an important role to play in that regard. Pakistan had launched an energy security plan that sought to increase the share of nuclear energy from 0.8 to 4.5% by 2030. The task was a daunting one for Pakistan given its limited resources, and the active cooperation of the Agency and assistance from other countries would be required if it were to be achieved. In that connection, he expressed appreciation for the assistance and cooperation extended by China. In the context of energy security, the special event on assurances of supply and non-proliferation being held on the margins of the Conference was of particular interest.

64. An important step towards ensuring the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear facilities was the establishment in 2001 of the independent Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, which had a fully functional mechanism for effective and continuous regulatory controls for the safe and secure operation of the country's nuclear installations, and also issued import and export licences for nuclear substances. Pakistan had been one of the first countries to pass legislation to control technologies, materials and equipment related to nuclear and biological weapons and their delivery systems. Legislation to control the export of related chemical materials had been enacted in 2000. His country would continue its efforts to enhance the safety and security of its nuclear establishments and appreciated the valuable assistance provided by the Agency.

65. Pakistan had greatly benefited from the Agency's technical cooperation programme, which had significantly enhanced his country's socio-economic development. In return, it had made efforts to contribute to Agency initiatives and provided expert services to some Member States through the Agency. It also participated in the Agency's advisory and expert groups, including INDAG, INPRO and SAGTAC. Pakistan welcomed the Agency's efforts to coordinate and disseminate information on the latest developments in nuclear power technology; further strengthening of the Agency's programme relating to nuclear knowledge management and information services would be useful.

66. In the present international political climate, it was understandable that the Agency focus on its regulatory and verification role. However, that work must not be carried out at the expense of the Agency's promotional activities, and a balance must be struck between the regulatory and promotional aspects of the Agency's work. In the broader context of the Agency's work, Pakistan attached great importance to the proposal to expand the Board of Governors and make it more representative. It urged Member States to consider the issue with an open mind and take early action.

67. The world was a global village where everyone was influenced by events occurring elsewhere. Some of the global challenges humanity was facing such as climate change, the increasing scarcity of fresh water and new risks to health, had potential grave consequences for the future. Fortunately, those challenges could be met effectively using the technological advances in the nuclear and the non-nuclear field. The Agency, with its proven record, was ideally suited to addressing those challenges. It should therefore take the lead in setting up a study group, in cooperation with Member States, to identify, prioritize and recommend relevant action.

68. Ms. SONJICA (South Africa) congratulated the Director General and the Agency on receiving the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. Such an award was a great recognition of the Agency's work and efforts to ensure the peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy, and would encourage the Agency to face nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation challenges with new resolve.

69. She welcomed the Republics of Malawi, Mozambique, Montenegro and Palau to membership of the Agency. The growing representation by developing countries in the Agency attested to the increasing relevance of nuclear energy and its potential contribution to socio-economic development.

70. The increasing recognition of the role that nuclear energy could play in meeting energy requirements in the 21st century had prompted a review of countries' energy policies. In view of the renewed international commitment to the expansion of nuclear energy, increased international cooperation was required to ensure safety and security and its use for peaceful purposes. South Africa was committed to the continuous review and strengthening of measures aimed at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including the Agency's safeguards system. However, real progress in protecting the world from the threat of nuclear weapons could only be achieved through concomitant progress in the area of nuclear disarmament. Only if States complied fully with their legal obligations in the areas of non-proliferation and disarmament could the peaceful uses of nuclear energy be brought to the benefit of all. There was growing concern that, while demands were being made for non-nuclear-weapon States to agree to new measures in the name of non-proliferation, concrete actions towards nuclear disarmament were being neglected. South Africa could not support unwarranted restrictions on the NPT's guarantee of access to nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes by States that were fully compliant with their obligations under the Treaty. The imposition of additional restrictive measures on some States parties to the NPT, while others were allowed access to such capabilities only served to exacerbate existing inequalities that were already inherent to the NPT and undermined one of its central bargains.

71. South Africa remained concerned about the lack of progress in finding a lasting solution to the DPRK's nuclear programme. It appealed to the DPRK to return to the NPT, to eliminate all its nuclear weapons and to place all its nuclear material and facilities under Agency safeguards.

72. With regard to the implementation of NPT safeguards in Iran, the recent preliminary discussions between Iran and the European Union High Representative were encouraging and, for the first time since August 2005, there seemed to be a real possibility of resuming negotiations with a view to resolving differences. South Africa would continue to support all efforts aimed at finding a sustainable, long-term agreement that took full account of the rights, obligations, concerns, needs and legitimate aspirations of all parties involved. The world could not afford a further major crisis in a region of high tension, conflict, and instability. If all parties continued to exercise restraint and show the necessary flexibility, any differences could be resolved without the need to resort to confrontation and coercive measures. South Africa hoped that all concerned would act in a manner that would build the necessary trust and confidence to normalize such a complex matter. The Agency remained the sole competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring Iran's compliance with its safeguards agreement. In order to preserve the Agency's integrity, authority and credibility in confirming the

peaceful nature of national nuclear programmes, all Member States had a responsibility to cooperate fully with the Agency in a proactive and prompt manner.

73. South Africa was a country with abundant natural resources, and was continuously seeking ways of maximizing their utilisation. Its integrated energy plan recognized the need for nuclear power to play a role in meeting national energy needs and in contributing to security of supply through diversity. Good progress was being made with the innovative pebble bed modular reactor and it was hoped that the demonstration plant would be completed by 2011, with the first commercial modules planned for 2013. The building of other baseload nuclear power plants using advanced versions of existing technologies was also under consideration, and a study of beneficiation of national uranium resources would be undertaken. A cost-benefit analysis would also be performed to determine which areas of the fuel cycle could be pursued. South Africa would be methodical in that process and would act within the confines of all its obligations.

74. In July 2005, the South African Government had approved the conversion of the SAFARI-1 research reactor at Pelindaba from HEU to LEU fuel. The Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa was progressing well with the establishment of technology for manufacturing LEU silicide fuel. The Agency's peer review team had made a favourable report on the demonstration of the borehole disposal concept for spent sealed sources, and the Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa had been contracted to design and construct a system for the safe handling of spent, high-activity radioactive sources.

75. Under AFRA, South Africa had continued to send experts to participate in missions in AFRA Member States, in such fields as the promotion of national and regional self-reliance in nuclear science and technology, the conditioning and safe storage of spent radium sources and the auditing of nuclear medicine and radiotherapy facilities. South Africa's appreciation of the Agency's assistance in support of the AFRA initiatives could not be overemphasized.

76. South Africa highly valued the Agency's technical cooperation programme, which had the potential to improve the lives of countless numbers of people and contribute to sustainable development. A new CPF for South Africa had been completed and her Government had set aside additional funding to scale up technical cooperation projects in the country with a view to ensuring their sustainability. The excellent support rendered by the Agency under its technical cooperation programme made an indelible contribution to her country's socio-economic development, and South Africa would continue to pay its assessed contributions to the TCF in full and on time.

77. South Africa attached great importance to skills development and was therefore pleased that the Agency's regional postgraduate course in radiation protection would resume the following year.

78. South Africa supported the Agency's initiatives to harmonize and strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety through active participation in the safety standards programme. It continued to participate actively in the four safety standards committees and the Safety Standards Commission. The Commission's recent endorsement of the Safety Fundamentals was a major step forward in harmonizing the Agency's Safety Standards Series. South Africa also welcomed the proposed revision of the Basic Safety Standards, given the need for consistency in international standards. Careful attention would however have to be given to the merit of any changes proposed during the revision process.

79. South Africa strongly supported the Convention on Nuclear Safety, and had studied in detail the conclusions made in the summary report of the Third Review Meeting of the Convention, with the objective of identifying future potential shortcomings in the South African context and, where necessary, implementing preventive measures.

80. The South African parliament had approved the country's accession to the Joint Convention, and in November 2005, the Government had approved the radioactive waste management policy and strategy.

81. To assist in strengthening regulatory effectiveness on a regional basis, South Africa was investigating the establishment of a regional nuclear safety regulatory forum that would seek to promote the strengthening of regulatory frameworks and infrastructure, as well as the harmonization of safety standards. South Africa supported the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, and supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources.

82. South Africa welcomed the report by the External Auditor on the Agency's accounts for 2005 and urged Member States to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full, so as to assure the implementation of the Agency's major programmes.

83. It was imperative that the Agency remain diligent in its efforts to ensure the continued development and the peaceful application of nuclear technology, taking into consideration the needs of under-developed areas of the world. South Africa remained fully committed to assisting in those efforts.

84. Mr. CAPPAGLI (Argentina) congratulated Malawi, Montenegro, Mozambique and Palau on becoming new members of the Agency and welcomed the new safeguards agreements and additional protocols that had been signed over the previous year.

85. The world was at a crucial stage in terms of the shared objectives that inspired the Agency's work. Argentina firmly believed in the right of all countries to develop the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including the fuel cycle, in compliance with their international obligations. Any attempt to alter the delicate balance of rights and obligations set forth in the NPT, calling into question the legitimacy of States' efforts to develop technologies for exclusively peaceful purposes could undermine the widely-accepted NPT regime. Any proposal for modification that could be interpreted as being unjust and sought to reallocate rights and obligations ran the risk of weakening the international non-proliferation regime that Argentina strongly supported. Such would be the case for any initiative seeking to curtail State sovereignty and the independent ownership and control of a key technological sector, such as the nuclear fuel cycle, thus restricting the potential benefits of those activities and technologies to a small number of countries. However, given the current challenges faced, continued efforts needed to be made to find solutions to the problems of proliferation in order to ensure that all those in compliance with their obligations under the NPT could reap the benefits of nuclear energy.

86. The most important development in Argentina's nuclear activities over the previous year had been the Government's decision to resume nuclear activities in the country and the adoption of measures to strengthen the operational capacity of the country's nuclear energy sector. A nuclear plan for the short and medium term, which focused on the large-scale generation of nuclear power and nuclear technology applications in the health sector and industry, had been developed. The nuclear option would be consolidated through the completion of the Atucha II nuclear power plant, the extension of the life of the Embalse nuclear power plant, the conduct of preliminary feasibility studies regarding the construction of a fourth nuclear power plant in Argentina, and the construction of a prototype of the CAREM reactor. The nuclear plan further aimed at improving the management of the nuclear fuel cycle: technological capacities for design engineering would be strengthened; enrichment activities at the Pilcaniyeu plant resumed; uranium mining revived; and the production of heavy water at the Arroyito plant resumed. The resumption of enrichment activities would not only place Argentina among those countries that possessed such technology, but also enable it to meet the demand for LEU for its research and power reactors, and for reactors exported to third countries.

87. Argentina had always been firmly committed to the use of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes and to non-proliferation. It was party to several legally binding instruments, which provided the international community with assurances regarding the peaceful nature of national nuclear programmes, such as the NPT, and the Tlatelolco Treaty. Argentina was also a member of the NSG and had concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements. Strict national legislation governed the transfer of sensitive nuclear technology, equipment and materials.

88. With regard to applications of nuclear technology in particular in the field of health, he said that an image diagnostics centre would be opening shortly in Buenos Aires. Its state-of-the-art equipment would make it one of the most advanced centres in South America for oncology, cardiology and neurology. The centre would offer assistance to the public, carry out medical science research and train highly qualified nuclear medicine specialists.

89. The National Atomic Energy Commission was currently reorganizing its science and technology programmes into four broad thematic areas: nuclear energy, nuclear applications, security and the environment, and research and non-nuclear applications. The programmes would cover projects and developments with respect to power and research reactors, the nuclear fuel cycle, spent fuel and radioactive waste management, nuclear energy applications, and relevant research and development.

90. Argentina would continue to participate actively in joint international efforts to develop new generation reactors and fuel cycles with greater operational safety that produced much less radioactive waste and ensured that there was no risk of nuclear weapons proliferation. One such example was the Agency's INPRO project, to which Argentina had provided cost-free experts and extrabudgetary contributions.

91. In line with the conclusions of the 2004 Global Threat Reduction Initiative International Partners' Conference, Argentina was converting the core of the RA-6 reactor – the only HEU research reactor in operation in Argentina – to LEU. The return to the State of origin almost all uranium enriched to 90% had been initiated and was due to be completed in 2007.

92. Argentina remained open to establishing and strengthening cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, both multilaterally and through active participation in the Agency's technical cooperation programme and ARCAL. It sponsored courses, workshops and scientific meetings, trained fellows and foreign visiting scientists, and made experts and lecturers available to the Agency. Furthermore, it had concluded bilateral cooperation agreements on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with over 30 countries.

93. Argentina attached particular importance to the efforts of the Agency and its Member States to strengthen international cooperation with respect to nuclear and radiation safety, and the safe transport and management of waste. The progress made with regard to fostering a safety culture was particularly noteworthy. He drew attention to steps taken regarding information and communication networks for nuclear and radiation safety and to the efforts to strengthen national regulatory infrastructures for the control of radioactive sources. The Ibero-American Forum of Nuclear Regulators, which Uruguay had recently joined, also carried out a number of relevant activities.

94. With regard to radiation protection, the twelfth International Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association would be held in Buenos Aires in 2008. The Congress had been declared an event of national interest and would provide an opportunity to raise awareness of international safety standards. His Government hoped that the Secretariat would lend its support to the event to ensure a successful outcome.

95. The Agency's cooperation activities in the area of physical security helped to promote coordination of relevant national and international efforts. In implementing those activities however, the Agency should bear the different treatment to be given to nuclear and non-nuclear radioactive materials, and the importance of dealing with the issue in a balanced manner so as to avoid any negative impact on peaceful nuclear activities. It was important that the Agency gave priority to those areas and activities clearly defined in its Statute, and in particular the problems associated with orphan sources and high-risk sources.

96. The Agency's verification system was an effective mechanism to provide the international community with assurances of the peaceful nature of nuclear programmes. However, Argentina would encourage the Secretariat to strive for greater efficiency in the application of safeguards, and noted that a profound cultural change was required for the adequate design and implementation of integrated safeguards. He reaffirmed the importance of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, noting that cooperation between ABACC and Agency would continue to be consolidated for the more effective and efficient application of safeguards in connection with the Quadripartite Agreement. The fifteenth anniversary of ABACC in July 2006 had been an incentive to continue working towards that goal.

97. The efforts of the Agency and its Member States with regard to education and training in radiation protection and nuclear safety were essential. Argentina had recently requested an Agency expert mission with a view to qualification as regional education and training centre for Latin America and the Caribbean, which would allow it to share the experience gained by running postgraduate courses in radiation protection and nuclear safety for more than 25 years. His Government had already begun to implement the plan of action set out in the mission's final report. It was willing to work towards the development of a long-term agreement with the Agency to support the continuing provision of regional postgraduate courses and facilitate the introduction of other specialized courses and a range of training activities.

98. Mr. SAEED (Sudan) commended the Agency on the strategy it had developed over the previous 50 years to serve the interests and meet the needs of its Member States, and on its unstinting efforts to promote safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, thereby helping to achieve at least five of the eight Millennium Development Goals relating to environmental sustainability, combating disease, reducing hunger and poverty and ensuring maternal and child health.

99. The NPT was a key international instrument aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and strengthening cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. All parties to the Treaty must therefore comply to the full with their obligations in order to preserve international peace and security. They should also promote awareness of their non-proliferation obligations under Articles I, II and III of the Treaty and of the provisions relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy set out in Article IV.

100. The Conference on Nuclear Power for the 21st Century convened by the Agency in Paris in March 2005 had been a turning point in terms of people's perception of nuclear energy as the key to meeting the energy needs of a large number of developed and developing countries and ensuring sustainable development. Developing countries that were introducing a nuclear power programme faced a major challenge in establishing an appropriate infrastructure. Sudan hoped to obtain the requisite support in that regard.

101. His country recognized the alienable right of all parties to the NPT to use and produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to undertake research without discrimination. It noted with satisfaction Iran's constructive cooperation with the Agency with a view to reassuring the international community about the nature of its nuclear programme, and encouraged both Iran and the international

community to pursue diplomatic negotiations transparently and in good faith to ensure that Iran's nuclear programme did not deviate from its peaceful path.

102. Sudan considered that the establishment of NWFZs was an effective means of ensuring non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and complete disarmament. It therefore supported the Agency's efforts to apply safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East as a necessary step towards the establishment of such a zone in order to protect the countries of the region from the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons. All States in the Middle East were parties to the NPT except Israel, which had clearly no intention of permitting the application of comprehensive Agency safeguards to its nuclear programme – a position that constituted a serious threat to the countries of the region. He called on all States, especially those possessing nuclear weapons, to bring pressure to bear on Israel to accede to the NPT and urged the international community and the Security Council to compel Israel to comply with United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and Agency resolutions urging it to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. Israel should furthermore announce its intention to abandon its nuclear armament programme and present a full description of its existing arsenal and nuclear materials to the Security Council and the Agency with a view to the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East.

103. He welcomed the Agency's partnership with international and regional development organizations to promote African development in the areas of agriculture, trade, human resources development, combating malaria, the tsetse fly and HIV/AIDS, science and technology and infrastructure development. He stressed, however, that more financial resources and technical skills and further coordinated efforts were needed to combat malaria, an activity to which Sudan gave high priority. Molecular methods in conjunction with the use of isotopes had proved successful in the early detection of asymptomatic disease vectors. Such techniques had helped to prevent the spread of malaria during the dry season in villages used for pilot projects. He hoped that the Agency's experiments in applying the sterile insect technique to malaria would also be successful.

104. Another obstacle to economic and social development in Africa was trypanosomiasis. The Agency's technical and practical assistance to African States in establishing tsetse-free zones by using the sterile insect technique was highly appreciated. He also commended the Agency's strategic partnership with the African Development Bank in eradicating the tsetse fly and thanked the Agency for its sponsorship of the bilateral agreement on tsetse fly eradication between Sudan and Ethiopia.

105. As the average number of cancer cases had been steadily increasing in Sudan, the Agency's support for the country's anti-cancer programme and the training of human resources would be appreciated, as would its continued support for the project to establish a national radiotherapy network.

106. He praised the Agency's achievements in promoting cooperation among African countries through the Model Project on radiation protection, and enhancement of capacities through the coordination of legislation and human resources development. He trusted that further support would be provided through the proposed projects.

107. He welcomed the partnership between the Agency, the UNDP and the GEF in support of the countries sharing the Nubian sandstone aquifer system, and expressed the hope that those joint efforts would result in the rationalized use of water resources. He also welcomed the Agency's work in connection with an action programme for the integrated management of the aquifer and expressed the hope that its work on the use of isotope hydrology techniques to define the characteristics of the aquifer would prove successful. Sudan supported the relevant national and regional plans of action concluded by all parties in December 2005.

108. His country hoped that the Agency would complete its consultations with the UNDP regarding the use of isotope hydrology techniques in water resources management in support of the Nile Basin Initiative (involving Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) aimed at determining the water balance in Lake Victoria, the Upper Nile Basin and the Blue Nile Basin.

109. The AFRA agreement had proved highly successful in areas such as human resources development, food security, health, and nuclear security and safety. Sudan strongly supported its programmes for nuclear knowledge management and coordination of nuclear science curricula. AFRA also played an important role in streamlining and coordinating technical cooperation frameworks among African countries involved in the implementation of regional projects under major programmes supported by the Agency. In view of the similarity between AFRA's programmes and those of NEPAD, some kind of arrangement should be made for cooperation.

110. Sudan had established an Academy of Sciences specializing in fields including nuclear science. It had begun to implement a master's programme in medical physics, which would be of valuable assistance to the country's nuclear medicine and radiotherapy services, as well as a diploma in nuclear science which would serve as a basic qualification for those wishing to obtain a master's degree and a doctorate in nuclear science.

111. Mr. KAMWI (Namibia) acknowledged the immense contribution that the Agency had made over the past fifty years towards safeguarding world peace and developing nuclear technologies for the improvement of the socio-economic condition of peoples around the globe.

112. Namibia welcomed the establishment of a platform for collaboration and cooperation with Member States under the CPF, and stressed the importance of integrating the CPF into national development plans. Namibia's CPF was currently under review, at a time when its Third National Developmental Plan, which defined the strategy for attaining the Vision 2030 goals, was also being elaborated. The CPF was playing a pivotal role in helping realize the objectives of the Second National Developmental Plan and had contributed towards achieving those of Vision 2030 and the targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

113. Nearly ten years had elapsed since the establishment, through collaborative efforts with the Agency, of a radiation therapy centre for the treatment of cancer. During that period, an average of 500 patients, who would otherwise have not had access to such treatment, had been treated annually. An estimated 2 000 persons contracted cancer in Namibia every year, and the service must be strengthened and expanded to the heavily populated northern regions. The high cancer incidence rate identified was an indication of good diagnostic capabilities through the application of radioisotopes.

114. Malaria was the prime cause of illness in Namibia. The Agency's efforts to improve malaria diagnostic techniques and develop the SIT for the eradication of malaria-transmitting mosquitoes would complement existing tools to control the disease.

115. Namibia was encouraged by the Agency's efforts to increase the capacity of Member States to use nuclear techniques in developing and assessing nutrition intervention programmes for HIV/AIDS management, particularly for children. It hoped to draw from the Agency's expertise and the experiences of other Member States to make the initiative a viable option for its National AIDS Control Programme.

116. Food security was a high priority in Namibia's national development plans, and a number of challenges had still to be met. In ensuring food security, priority had been given to improving agricultural productivity, enhancing accessibility to water for the population in rural areas and preventing environmental degradation, which was due mostly to intensive livestock production. The Agency had made a significant contribution to capacity-building for the integration and applications of

isotope techniques in the agricultural sector. That capacity must be strengthened and sustained in order to attain the Vision 2030 objectives. The northern part of the country still needed to be freed from epizootic diseases among livestock, mainly contagious bovine pleuropneumonia and foot and mouth disease, giving the inhabitants access to international beef markets. The Agency had assisted in the establishment of diagnostic facilities at the Central Veterinary Laboratory in Windhoek. A similar capacity level was planned for Ondangwa, in the north. Namibia would host the coordination meeting to review the project and devise work plans for the control of contagious bovine pleuropneumonia.

117. Namibia expressed appreciation for the enormous contribution being made under the AFRA, ARASIA, ARCAL and RCA regional agreements to the peaceful application of nuclear technology for socio-economic development, and trusted that adequate funding would be allocated in that regard.

118. Namibia valued the collaboration with the Agency on the sustainable utilization and management of land and water. It hoped that the use of nuclear techniques through existing projects would accelerate the development and adoption of improved soil, water and nutrient management practices to support crop and livestock production. The use of isotope hydrology techniques to promote the understanding and management of underground water resources was highly appreciated. Isotopic investigations in the Oshivelo and Stampriet aquifers had been concluded, and considerable success had been achieved in developing local capabilities and creating awareness of the potential of isotope hydrology techniques. As a result, activities were being expanded, and new and similar projects were currently underway in the Platveld, Kalahari, Hochfeld and Cuvelai Basin aquifers. Namibia would also consider the merits of sea water desalination using nuclear energy as a way of addressing its water-resource needs within the CPF context.

119. Of equal importance to food security was the country's fisheries and marine resources. Phase I of the regional project to contribute to the sustainable development and management of the marine coastal environment had been successfully concluded. A task force had mapped out future activities under Phase II of the project.

120. Namibia was becoming one of the world's largest uranium mining countries. That activity and the ever-increasing use of sealed radioactive and other sources of ionizing radiation called for stringent controls and monitoring to avoid or minimize the radiological risks associated with nuclear technology applications. Namibia had committed itself to internationally recommended radiation safety standards, such as the International Basic Safety Standards and the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. It was confident that the provisions of those instruments would be accommodated in the national legislative framework and that the Agency would continue to support Namibia in the development and implementation of its regulatory infrastructure, which would help to ensure the safety and security of all sources and activities involving ionizing radiation.

121. Namibia was preparing to meet its obligations under international treaties and conventions within the scope of the Agency mandate. Preparations included the creation of an institutional infrastructure to fulfil those obligations in accordance with the provisions of the Atomic Energy and Radiation Protection Act. Legislation was in place that would enable Namibia to be in compliance once it had acceded to the relevant instruments.

122. The success of Namibia's development goals depended on the financial and human resources at its disposal. His delegation acknowledged the role that the Agency and donor Governments had played in developing its core group of specialists in nuclear applications, and was confident that the Agency would continue to allocate adequate resources to technical programmes to enhance Namibia's capabilities to apply nuclear technology effectively in order to attain the Vision 2030 goals.

123. Namibia would continue to meet its financial obligations to the Agency in full and on time. It was, however, concerned about the lack of funding of activities related to nuclear science and

technology, and urged the Director General to explore possibilities for resource mobilization to ensure that work in those fields was carried out. The Agency should also make concerted efforts to inform the international community about its initiatives in the area of socio-economic development.

124. Mr. HADHRI (Tunisia) congratulated the Agency and its Director General on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and welcomed the decision to use the prize money awarded to the Agency to set up the IAEA Nobel Cancer and Nutrition Fund.

125. Tunisia had been one of the first developing countries to establish an integrated national research and development and technological modernization programme. In 2004, 1% of the country's GDP had been earmarked for research and development, and it was hoped to increase that figure to 1.25%. Modern scientific and technological advances were being adapted, with the assistance of international bodies, for use in Tunisia's development programmes.

126. During the current year, the Agency was financing 13 national projects in different sectors and Tunisia had participated in the implementation of 41 regional and 7 interregional projects. He hoped that the Agency would extend its customary support to the proposed technical cooperation projects for 2007 and 2008. Tunisia had also begun work on its CPF for peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the period 2007-2011 and hoped to produce a final version in consultation with the Agency with a view to its adoption at the earliest possible opportunity.

127. Soaring energy prices in world markets were seriously impeding development efforts. Tunisia, which had limited stocks of fossil fuels, was therefore seriously thinking of switching to alternative energy sources. It was convinced of the need to build a medium-sized nuclear power plant by 2015 and hoped to reach agreement on cooperation with the Agency in that regard.

128. Tunisia was seeking to consolidate technical cooperation with friendly countries in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to that end hosted the headquarters of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, which served the joint interests of the Arab States. He renewed his call for closer cooperation and a scientific partnership between the Agency and its Arab counterpart with a view to assisting the latter in implementing its programmes, whose objectives coincided with those of the Agency.

129. Tunisia also continued to cooperate with African States, particularly under the AFRA Agreement, and was currently participating in the implementation of 16 projects. It had so far hosted two workshops during 2006 and planned to host five more later in the year. It continued to place its human resources and scientific and research facilities at the disposal of African trainees and had so far hosted nine recipients of Agency fellowships. It was prepared to welcome more trainees in the future.

130. Tunisia consistently sought to honour its obligations to the Agency by paying its contributions to the Regular Budget and the TCF and its share of national participation costs. It had completed the constitutional formalities required for ratification of the amendment to Article XIV.A of the Agency's Statute on 12 June 2006 and expected to complete the formalities in respect of the amendment to Article VI within weeks.

131. Full enjoyment of the benefits of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and sustainable development should go hand in hand with action to ensure the safety and security of radioactive sources and nuclear materials, support for the efforts of the Agency and the international community to avert the risks of nuclear proliferation, and appropriate steps to prevent nuclear terrorism while respecting relevant provisions of international law that guaranteed every country's right to benefit from nuclear energy. Tunisia, which had concluded a safeguards agreement and an additional protocol, reiterated its request for assistance from the Agency in establishing a State system of accounting for and control of nuclear materials to enable it to keep a record of such materials as well as materials used for non-nuclear purposes.

132. Like other Arab countries, all of which were parties to the NPT, Tunisia supported the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, in the Middle East. However, Israel's continued defiance of the international community by refusing to join the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards constituted a permanent threat to peace in the region. Tunisia was deeply concerned about that situation and called on the General Conference to urge Israel to ratify the relevant international treaties, to cooperate with the Agency and to open its nuclear installations to Agency inspection in order to lay the foundations for a just and lasting peace in the region.

133. Mr. VARGAS CARREÑO (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean) referred to the main provisions of the Treaty of Tlatelolco establishing the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone, to which all 33 Latin American and Caribbean States were parties. Pursuant to Additional Protocol II to the Treaty, China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America had undertaken not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the Contracting Parties of the Treaty. That guarantee of nuclear security for the region was of enormous importance, but further progress could also be made if the nuclear powers withdrew or modified those parts of the interpretative declarations in respect of the Treaty that they had formulated in other circumstances several decades previously.

134. The Treaty of Tlatelolco had inspired the Treaties of Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba and Semipalatinsk establishing of NWFZs in other regions. In all, some 115 States were parties to the five NWFZ treaties. OPANAL was confident that such zones could also be established in other regions.

135. The existence of the NWFZs had given rise to the need for mutual cooperation on a common policy towards the nuclear-weapon States, the United Nations General Assembly and various disarmament fora, and the Agency in particular. In that connection, he drew attention to the first Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones that had been held in April 2005 in Mexico City, at which the parties to the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, and Mongolia, had drafted a declaration setting out their positions and agreed to establish a coordination and cooperation mechanism. Many of the viewpoints set out in the declaration referred specifically to the important role that the Agency played.

136. The commitments into which the Contracting Parties had entered under the Treaty of Tlatelolco would be meaningless without an effective system for monitoring, safeguards and verification. While reaffirming the inalienable right of all States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, OPANAL underscored the Agency's important contribution in verifying that nuclear energy was used exclusively for peaceful purposes. It reiterated its support for the Agency's role in applying and verifying the international safeguards regime provided for in both the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the NPT, as well as for the efforts to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards regime, including the Model Additional Protocol.

137. OPANAL sought to intensify its cooperation with the Agency, which had been ongoing since 1972. It was important for the safeguards and verification system to function as smoothly as possible, so that nuclear safety and security could be ensured while regional interests were preserved. The regional seminar on verifying compliance with nuclear non-proliferation commitments held by the Agency in Quito, Ecuador, in April and attended by OPANAL, testified to the latter's growing cooperation with the Agency.

138. OPANAL also called on all States to contribute to the Agency's technical cooperation activities that had made valuable contributions in the areas of human health, food and environmental protection, in particular for developing countries.

139. Lastly, OPANAL actively supported the Agency's initiatives to confront the growing danger that non-State actors might gain access to nuclear weapons. The best way of preventing such an eventuality was through the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.