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Temporary President: Mr. MINTY (South Africa)

President: Mr. HAMZE (Lebanon)

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¹ GC(51)/22.

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Abbreviations used in this record:

AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
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
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GIF	Generation IV International Forum
GNEP	Global Nuclear Energy Partnership
HEU	high-enriched uranium
INLEX	International Expert Group on Nuclear Liability
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
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
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SQP	small quantities protocol

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TranSAS	Transport Safety Appraisal Service
WHO	World Health Organization

– Opening of the session

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared open the 51st regular session of the General Conference.
2. In accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, he invited delegates to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

All present rose and stood in silence for one minute.

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT said during the historic 50th regular session of the General Conference, the Agency had rededicated itself to expanding and expediting the peaceful use of atomic energy for the next fifty years. During the previous year, it had been able to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity and had taken important steps to establish and administer safeguards to ensure that nuclear materials were not used to further any military purpose.
4. He commended the Director General for his wise and innovative leadership, which had made the Agency indispensable in order to achieve nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, against a background of the need to eliminate all nuclear weapons. All Member States should support the Agency and its Director General, enabling them to fulfil their statutory mandate.

1. Election of officers and appointment of the General Committee

5. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT invited nominations for the office of President of the Conference.
6. Mr. SHARMA (India), speaking on behalf of the Middle East and South Asia Group, proposed Mr. Hamze (Lebanon).
7. Mr. Hamze (Lebanon) was elected President by acclamation.
8. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT congratulated Mr. Hamze on his election and wished him every success in his task.

Mr. Hamze (Lebanon) took the Chair.

9. The PRESIDENT expressed appreciation to Member States, in particular those of the Middle East and South Asia Group, for the confidence they had placed in him by nominating him as President and commended his predecessor, Ambassador Minty of South Africa, for his outstanding efforts and wisdom in steering the work of the previous session of the Conference.
10. Over the previous two decades, the Agency had made unique achievements in all three pillars of its work. It had rightly earned the world's support and approval in its endeavours to promote "Atoms for Peace".

11. In developing countries, the peaceful use of nuclear energy was seen as a legitimate means of achieving the sustainable development goals of societies. The availability of energy and the diversification of energy sources remained the basis for any serious initiative to alleviate poverty, improve living conditions and prevent marginalized communities from succumbing to extremism and fanaticism, and from sliding into violence, which affected all. There was growing conviction of the need to establish mechanisms for development, including the use of nuclear energy, and future technological innovations were undoubtedly essential to mitigate hazards and increase economic benefits.

12. The need to enhance the effectiveness of nuclear verification and safety systems was increasing all the time, and required the establishment without delay of serious programmes for developing specialized national frameworks, the creation of a regional partnership and adherence to the regulations and rules of the Agency. States should also be aware of the importance of inculcating an appropriate culture and encouraging public acceptance of nuclear energy.

13. While recognizing the political interest in the Agency's role, he stressed the importance of the scientific and technical aspects of its activities, and drew attention to the Scientific Forum entitled "Global Challenges and the Development of Atomic Energy: the Next 25 Years", which would take place alongside the fifty-first session of the Conference. He looked forward to enhancement of the technical cooperation programme, which had demonstrated its ability to build effective partnerships among States.

14. Since its creation half a century previously, the Agency had adhered to the objectives of the United Nations system in promoting peace and international cooperation. His country, Lebanon, and the Arab Group of which it was honoured to be a member, had supported the Agency's programmes, reiterating on every occasion their commitment to international conventions designed to achieve peace and nuclear security in the Middle East. They continued to support the efforts of the Agency and the international community to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The commitment of all parties to adhere to the NPT was a fundamental step that could no longer be avoided, requiring the support and understanding of the international community.

15. With the opening of the 51st session of the General Conference, the Agency was moving into a new phase, which he hoped would meet the aspirations for sustainable investment in nuclear technologies and for serious commitment to their exclusively peaceful use. The Agency had made outstanding achievements thanks to the wise and courageous management of its Director General and his team, whom he encouraged to establish more cooperation programmes. He invited those countries that were in a position to do so to increase their financial contributions in order to make it easier for the Agency to achieve its objectives.

16. He recalled that, pursuant to Rules 34 and 40 of the Rules of Procedure, the Conference normally elected eight Vice-Presidents, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and five additional members of the General Committee — resulting in a General Committee of 15 members.

17. He proposed that the delegates of Egypt, Germany, Malaysia, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United States of America be elected as Vice-Presidents; that Ms. Feroukhi (Algeria) be elected as Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole; and that the delegates of Croatia, Cuba, the Holy See, Lithuania and Norway be elected as additional members of the General Committee.

18. The President's proposals were accepted.

19. The PRESIDENT further proposed that the General Conference deal with items 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 in that order, pending receipt of the General Committee's recommendation on the provisional agenda.

20. The President's proposal was accepted.

2. Applications for membership of the Agency (GC(51)/9, 10, 11, 12 and 23)

21. The PRESIDENT drew attention to documents GC(51)/9, GC(51)/10, GC(51)/11, GC(51)/12 and GC(51)/23 containing applications for membership by the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, Nepal and the Republic of Cape Verde respectively. The five applications had been endorsed by the Board of Governors, which had also submitted five draft resolutions for adoption by the General Conference.

22. He took it that the Conference wished to adopt the five draft resolutions.

23. It was so decided.

24. Mr. BIN AHMED BIN MOHAMMAD AL-KHALIFA (Kingdom of Bahrain), speaking under Rule 30, thanked the Conference for its unanimous decision to accept the Kingdom of Bahrain's application to become a member of the Agency. Membership of the Agency was consistent with Bahrain's conviction that the Agency had an important universal and international role to play, and with his country's wish to strengthen that role. Bahrain appreciated the efforts of the Agency in encouraging the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and in preventing its use in connection with atomic weaponry or other nuclear devices.

25. Bahrain, which had ratified the NPT on 3 November 1998 and the CTBT on 12 April 2004, looked forward to working together with other Member States to achieve the Agency's statutory objectives. He expressed appreciation of the important role played by the Director General and his staff, and commended, in particular, the Agency's work in implementing safeguards. He hoped that the Agency would effectively implement safeguards in the Middle East, in accordance with General Conference resolution GC(50)/RES/16, in view of their importance in consolidating and strengthening mutual trust in the region and contributing positively to initiatives regarding the establishment of the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

26. Bahrain, for its part, would sign a safeguards agreement within the framework of the NPT during the current session of the Conference. It would be initiating the necessary constitutional and legal procedures to accept the Agency's Statute, in order to contribute fully and effectively to the work of the Agency with a view to achieving world peace, security and prosperity.

3. Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations

27. Mr. DUARTE (United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs) read out the following message:

“I am pleased to send my greetings to the fifty-first session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. This is a fitting occasion for representatives of its 144 Member States to reflect on the Agency’s activities over the past five decades, and to consider the challenges ahead.

“The activities of the IAEA are more important than ever to advance safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, promote non-proliferation and disarmament, and reduce the risks of nuclear terrorism.

“Access to reliable and affordable sources of energy is essential for development. The growth in demand for energy will likely be highest in developing countries, several of which may turn to nuclear power to help meet this need. Yet concerns over dependency on foreign sources of supply continue to inhibit wider use of this technology. In response, the IAEA has long been a central forum for exploring multilateral frameworks for assuring supplies of nuclear fuel for peaceful uses, while promoting other such uses outside the energy sector.

“Reaping these benefits, however, requires new levels of international cooperation in addressing security and environmental challenges, especially from spent fuel and waste management, both very familiar subjects at the IAEA.

“In addition, the Agency is also facing many challenges relating to nuclear weapons. Future progress in disarmament may eventually lead to new roles for the IAEA, especially in the disposition of nuclear weapon material. With respect to non-proliferation, the IAEA is continuing its engagement with Iran and is once again implementing certain safeguards activities in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The Agency is promoting the Additional Protocol to strengthen safeguards, seeking greater transparency in export controls, and working to strengthen the physical security of nuclear material, thereby reducing the risk of nuclear terrorism.

“As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I look forward to working together with you in meeting the challenges ahead. We must redouble our efforts to revitalize the international disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, and rid the world of nuclear weapons. I am confident that your deliberations and decisions will help us reach that objective.

“In that spirit, please accept my best wishes for a successful and productive conference.”

4. Statement by the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria

28. Ms. PLASSNIK (Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria) said that, when the first Agency officials had started work in August 1957 in Vienna’s Grand Hotel, they had broken new ground. They had been part of an organization with a novel mandate, designed for a new political era, and had taken office in a city at the centre of a divided Europe — very much a symbol of the times. Today the Agency, with its impressive track record, which included being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005, had become an indispensable institution in the global security architecture.

29. There were two areas in which the Agency currently assumed core responsibilities and urgently needed political support: the first concerned the establishment of a worldwide partnership to control

sensitive nuclear technologies, in particular enrichment and reprocessing, and the second related to the need to strengthen the Agency further as an instrument to contribute to international peace and confidence.

30. In his “Atoms for Peace” speech in 1953, President Eisenhower had proposed the creation of an atomic energy agency out of concern about the accumulation of nuclear weapons and the threat of their proliferation. When States had attended the first session of the General Conference in the Vienna Konzerthaus, the world had faced a nuclear arms race. Today, the imminent threat of nuclear war had moved backstage in people’s minds as a matter of immediate political concern. However, the international community could not afford to neglect the dangers of nuclear weapons being developed or traded on the black market, nor exclude the possibility of nuclear material ending up in the hands of terrorists.

31. The core issues of the late 1950s were still relevant: there were expectations about the peaceful use of the atom, in particular as a source of energy, and about the need to address safety and security issues that might arise from such technology, as well as from its abusive use for weapons.

32. Over the previous fifty years, the Agency had made vital contributions to many important projects related to the development agenda. Nuclear technologies had been developed to increase food production, fight diseases and manage groundwater resources. The Agency had also provided assistance in energy planning, advising more than 100 countries on the development of appropriate national energy strategies.

33. Despite a revival of interest in nuclear energy, many people across the globe continued to have strong and serious reservations about the issue. Concerns about the effects of nuclear radiation on health and the environment, accidents at nuclear power plants, and the possible misuse of nuclear materials and technology, had convinced a number of States to renounce nuclear power altogether. Austria was one of the countries to believe that the risks of atomic energy far outweighed the advantages. In view of the high environmental and financial costs over time and the lack of a sustainable solution to the nuclear waste problem, it did not consider that nuclear energy could make a valid contribution to the efforts directed against climate change.

34. Although every State had the right to choose its energy sources, States should be united on the need to address urgently and prevent the potential misuse of peaceful nuclear programmes or the development of nuclear weapons. The Agency had significantly contributed to containing the risks associated with nuclear energy by developing safety standards and monitoring instruments, such as the Model Additional Protocol. It was the duty of Member States to ensure that those standards were fully implemented.

35. There was also a need for a global partnership that enabled access to energy, while at the same time ensuring safety and security. Such a partnership must be based on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, and she welcomed the Director General’s report in that regard.

36. At the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, she had proposed a regime in which fuel cycle facilities would be placed under multilateral control. All transactions regarding nuclear fuel would be made through a ‘nuclear fuel bank’, ensuring that all countries received the fuel they required. Accordingly, there would be no need for States to develop national fuel cycles and technologies individually as all States could, through the Agency, share control over such facilities as partners.

37. History showed that such an approach could work. After the disastrous experience of the Second World War, the European States had agreed to multilateralize the production of war-sensitive industrial sectors. The decision to do so had been radical, but the prospect of lasting peace and trust

had made it worthwhile to offer shared control. Today, five decades of peace and ever-closer relations among a growing membership proved that the European Union's founders had been right. A divided continent had become a zone of freedom, peace and prosperity.

38. She would encourage States to engage fully in the debate over the coming months on a multilateral system for the nuclear fuel cycle, and to treat it for what it was: a fundamentally political issue, and a means to improve international security and stability that required first and foremost political will. If the proliferation of sensitive technology were to be avoided, technical parameters had to be established together with a genuine and sustainable global partnership of political determination.

39. Referring to international threats, the former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan had once said that the one area where there was a total lack of any common strategy was the one that might well present the greatest dangers of all: the area of nuclear weapons. Indeed, the non-proliferation regime was increasingly under pressure. Several States had developed nuclear weapons programmes and some now possessed such weapons — a direct challenge to the NPT system. There were other problems including black market proliferation, illicit trade, an alarming rise in military spending and the threat of nuclear terrorism. Most disappointing to a country like Austria was the stagnation in nuclear disarmament. The sheer number of weapons today — reportedly 27 000, of which 12 000 were actively deployed — remained so high that the vision of a world without nuclear weapons was far from becoming a reality.

40. In such a difficult situation, the Agency represented a positive constant and assumed its tasks with quiet reliability, proficiency and independence. It served as a forum for debate, a centre for technical expertise and a global nuclear watchdog. The recognition it had gained over the years and its reputation of trust were deserved, and owed much to the conscientious and insistent work of its Director General, his predecessors, and the many thousands of employees who had worked at the Agency over the previous fifty years. Not only did the Agency deliver as an independent monitoring and verification institution, it also contributed directly and persuasively towards international confidence building. Accordingly, it was in Member States' interest to let the Agency do its work, as it had done over many years, without outside interference.

41. In building a comprehensive strategy against nuclear weapons, Member States would rely to a large extent on the firm and solid foundation of the Agency. With political determination, an openness to new multilateral partnerships and the reliable, trusted help of the Agency, progress could be achieved over the coming years. The 'new age' of nuclear energy, if it were to come about, must also become an age of safety and security, and an age of cooperation and trust.

5. Statement by the Director General

42. The DIRECTOR GENERAL said that fifty years previously, the International Atomic Energy Agency had been entrusted with the mission of ensuring that nuclear energy would not become a cause for the destruction of humanity, but rather an engine for peace and prosperity.

43. If the Agency's history since that time were recalled, a number of milestones would stand out: the rapid expansion of nuclear power in the 1960s and 1970s; the landmark Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1970 — and the development of the Agency's comprehensive verification regime; the evolution of the technical assistance programme as a key vehicle for the transfer of nuclear science and technology to developing countries; and the development of international nuclear safety and security regimes. Throughout its history, the Agency had also faced a number of challenges and

painful experiences, necessitating change, adjustment and innovation: the 1986 accident at Chernobyl; the discovery of Iraq's clandestine nuclear weapons programme in the early 1990s; and the nuclear security challenge revealed in the aftermath of 11 September 2001.

44. In discussing recent developments and current challenges, it was important not to lose sight of the goals and ideals that had guided the Agency since its inception. They remained as relevant and meaningful today as they had been to the founders of the Agency.

45. He had spoken in recent years of rising expectations for nuclear power. However, forecasting was always difficult. The role of the Agency was not so much to predict the future as to do its utmost to plan and prepare for it. What seemed clear today was that there were three strong factors driving a renewed global interest in nuclear power: the steady growth in energy demand; the increasing concerns about energy security; and the challenge of climate change.

46. There were currently 439 nuclear power reactors in operation in 30 countries. Those reactors supplied about 15.2% of the world's electricity. To date, the use of nuclear power had been concentrated in industrialized countries. However, the pattern was quite different in terms of new construction: 15 of the 30 reactors currently being built were in developing countries.

47. The Agency had seen a substantial increase in requests for assistance with national energy studies. It was currently supporting studies in 77 Member States; 29 of those studies were exploring nuclear energy as a potential option.

48. Technological and institutional innovation, involving creative policy and infrastructure approaches, constituted a key factor in ensuring the long term sustainability of nuclear power. In some cases, a shared regional approach to nuclear power infrastructure, construction and operation might be feasible. A good example was the ongoing cooperation among the Baltic States on energy strategies, which currently included collaboration with Poland on plans to construct a nuclear power plant to help meet regional electricity demands.

49. With regard to technology innovation, he noted that the Agency's INPRO project had grown to 28 members. INPRO was now considering collaborative projects on specific technological issues that needed to be addressed for improved economics, safety, proliferation-resistance and other questions. It was also continuing to work closely with the GIF.

50. Given the fundamental importance of energy for development, it was important for the Agency to actively pursue the design and production of small and intermediate-sized reactors. Successful production of safe and affordable reactors in that size range would be essential if nuclear power was to be a feasible option for countries and regions with small electrical grids.

51. The expected expansion in nuclear power would drive a commensurate increase in demand for nuclear fuel cycle services and the need for an assurance of supply mechanism. That could also increase the potential proliferation risks created by the spread of sensitive nuclear technology, particularly if more countries decided to create independent uranium enrichment and plutonium separation facilities. Those trends pointed clearly to the urgent need for the development of a new, multilateral framework for the nuclear fuel cycle, both the front and the back end. With respect to the front end, some parties had proposed the creation of an actual or virtual reserve fuel bank of last resort, under Agency auspices, for the assurance of supply of nuclear fuel. The bank would operate on the basis of apolitical and non-discriminatory non-proliferation criteria. Others were proposing to convert a national facility into an international enrichment centre, and there were other proposals to construct a new, multinational enrichment facility under Agency control. The Secretariat had examined those proposals and their associated legal, technical, financial and institutional aspects. In June, he had

reported to the Board on 'options' for assurances of supply of nuclear fuel, which he trusted would be of help to Member States in considering that important issue.

52. Controlling nuclear material was a complex process; yet if no action were taken, it could be the Achilles' heel of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In his view, an incremental approach was the way to move forward, beginning with the establishment of an equitable system for assurance of supply. The next step would seek to bring any new operations for uranium enrichment and plutonium separation under multinational control. Over time, those multinational controls would also be extended to all facilities that already existed — to ensure that all countries were treated equally in terms of their nuclear capabilities.

53. The Agency directed much of its scientific activity to peaceful nuclear applications related to health, agriculture, industry, water management and preservation of the environment. For example, since the previous September, the fundraising efforts of the Agency's PACT programme had secured pledges, grants and donations amounting to over US \$3 million. In cooperation with its international partners, the Agency had continued to implement PACT Model Demonstration Sites to develop multidisciplinary cancer control capacity in Albania, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, the United Republic of Tanzania, Vietnam and Yemen. As those projects matured, they would serve as platforms for larger scale regional fundraising. As with many other PACT activities, Agency collaboration with WHO had been steadily expanded through the development of the sites.

54. For more than forty years, the Agency had benefited from an active partnership with the FAO through the Joint Division established in 1967. With more than 820 million hungry people in the world, efforts to enhance food security and safety and increase crop productivity had never been more relevant.

55. With thousands of new varieties of food crops released in dozens of countries over the past half century, plant breeding had been one of the real success stories of "Atoms for Peace". A recent regional project in Asia had used plant breeding to develop more than 20 new food crop varieties. For example, farmers in areas of Sri Lanka affected by the December 2004 tsunami were now growing a high yielding, salinity tolerant variety of mung bean, a nutritious type of green bean.

56. The safety and security of nuclear activities around the globe remained key elements of the Agency's mandate. With the renewed interest in nuclear power generation, comparable attention and commitment must be given to ensuring the nuclear safety and security infrastructure that must go with it.

57. The primary responsibility for safety rested with the operator of a nuclear facility or the user of a nuclear technique, as well as with the national government overseeing that operation or use. Technology could be transferred, but safety culture could not; it must be learned and embedded. For those countries embarking on nuclear power programmes, it was essential that they become part of the global nuclear safety regime and share responsibility for its sustainability.

58. The strong, steady safety performance of recent years was reassuring. However, complacency, an overemphasis on cost savings, the impulse to cover up problems, or even falsification were hazards against which both operators and regulators must constantly guard. The recurrence of events with those characteristics made clear that the promotion of a strong safety culture should always be viewed as a 'work in progress'.

59. The Agency's safety review services used the Agency safety standards as a reference point and played an important part in evaluating their effectiveness. In 2006 the Agency had begun offering, for the first time, the IRRS, which combined previous services ranging from nuclear safety and radiation safety to emergency preparedness and nuclear security. The Agency had conducted the first full-scope

IRRS in France in November 2006, covering all regulated nuclear and radiation facilities, activities and practices. It had also conducted IRRS missions to Australia and Japan in June 2007. With its modular approach, the IRRS was contributing towards a more active exchange of knowledge among senior regulators and harmonized regulatory approaches worldwide.

60. The Agency's nuclear security programme had maintained its rapid pace of programme delivery. Implementation activities in 2006 had increased considerably over the previous year, and the indications were that implementation would again be high in 2007.

61. Among other efforts over the past year, the Agency had assisted in improving physical protection at facilities in nine States, helping to fix weaknesses in security systems at those facilities. It had also begun a project to help improve the security of research reactors that were supplied through Agency assistance, and it had started to address the security of transports of radioactive materials. The Agency had also been able to assist 29 countries to improve their border detection capability.

62. The Agency had started a process of transitioning from a situation in which strengthening nuclear security had been addressed as an ad hoc reaction to the prevailing threat of nuclear terrorism to a situation in which nuclear security would be addressed in a normative, sustainable manner.

63. The nuclear non-proliferation and arms control regime continued to face a broad set of challenges. Effective verification must be supported by four essential elements: adequate legal authority; state-of-the-art technology; access to all relevant information; and sufficient human and financial resources.

64. It was now more than ten years since the Model Additional Protocol had been approved by the Board of Governors. Just over half of the 162 States with safeguards agreements currently had additional protocols in force. That included more than two thirds of the countries with nuclear material under safeguards. But he would not call that satisfactory progress by any measure. More than 100 States had yet to conclude additional protocols, and 31 States party to the NPT had not even brought into force their required comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency.

65. He repeated that without safeguards agreements, the Agency could not provide any assurance about a State's nuclear activities, and without the additional protocol, the Agency could not provide credible assurance regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activity. He therefore urged all States that had not done so to bring into force a comprehensive safeguards

66. At the invitation of the DPRK, an Agency team had visited that country in June to work out agreed modalities for verification and monitoring by the Agency of the shutdown and sealing of the Yongbyon nuclear facility. The modalities had been implemented in subsequent visits. As of 17 July, the Agency been able to verify the DPRK's shutdown of the Yongbyon nuclear facility.

67. He welcomed the return of the DPRK to the verification process and the active cooperation that the Agency team had received from the DPRK. The Agency looked forward to continuing to work with the DPRK as the verification process evolved.

68. Regarding the implementation of Agency safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran, he would make four points. First, the Agency had been able to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran. Iran had continued to provide the access and reporting needed to enable Agency verification in that regard. Second, Iran had provided the Agency with additional information and access needed to resolve a number of long outstanding issues, such as the scope and nature of past plutonium experiments. Third, contrary to the decisions of the Security Council, calling on Iran to take certain confidence-building measures, Iran had not suspended its enrichment-related activities, and was continuing with its construction of the heavy water reactor at Arak. That was regrettable. Fourth, while the Agency so far had been unable to verify certain important aspects relevant to the scope and

nature of Iran's nuclear programme, Iran and the Secretariat had agreed the past month on a work plan for resolving all outstanding verification issues. Those verification issues were at the core of the lack of confidence about the nature of Iran's programme and were what had prompted actions by the Security Council. Iran's agreement on such a work plan, with a defined timeline — in response to repeated requests by the Security Council and the Board of Governors — was therefore an important step in the right direction. Naturally, Iran's active cooperation and transparency was the key to full and timely implementation of the work plan. If the Agency were able to provide credible assurance about the peaceful nature of Iran's past and current nuclear programme, that would go a long way towards building confidence about Iran's nuclear programme and could create the conditions for a comprehensive and durable peaceful resolution of the issue.

69. Pursuant to the mandate given to him by the General Conference, he had continued his consultations with the States of the Middle East region on the application of full-scope safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East and on the development of model agreements as a necessary step towards the establishment of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone. The absence of such a zone reflected a major gap in the nuclear non-proliferation regime. However, he regretted to say that, as in the past, he had no progress to report on either front.

70. Fifty years previously, the Agency's technical cooperation programme — or the technical assistance programme, as it had then been known — had looked very different. Member States lacked basic nuclear capacities, and the programme focused on building up nuclear expertise and helping give birth to the institutions and facilities that would support the safe introduction of nuclear technology.

71. Today the picture had changed, due to the evolution of skills, infrastructure and needs in the Member States themselves. Several Member States were leaving behind their developing country status. The development of nuclear capacities and infrastructure in some regions had paved the way for South–South cooperation, stimulating an increase in regional self-sufficiency and an expansion in collective, specialized expertise. Opportunities for cooperative ventures — such as shared multinational management of common underground water aquifers, transborder programmes for the elimination of disease vectors such as insect pests, and jointly owned and managed nuclear power plants — were coming to the drawing board, adding new significance to technical cooperation. Those were positive trends.

72. After prolonged discussions, the Board of Governors had recommended in July a budget for 2008–2009. That process had once again highlighted the urgent need for adequate resources to ensure effective delivery of the Agency's programme as mandated by the Statute and as requested by its Member States. The Agency remained quite under-funded in many critical areas, a situation which, if it remained unaddressed, would lead to a steady erosion of its ability to perform key functions. That was not a sustainable approach to meeting the Agency's financial needs.

73. To remedy the untenable situation, he had tasked the Secretariat with conducting a detailed review of the nature and scope of the Agency's programme in the next decade in light of its statutory obligations, decisions of the Policy-making Organs and foreseen high priority activities, and of what resources would be needed to fund those activities. The study had been given the name '20/20', reflecting the effort to look ahead to the year 2020 with the clearest possible vision. He intended to set up a high-level panel of experts to review the report, including providing guidance on appropriate funding levels and mechanisms. The report and the recommendations of the panel of experts would be presented to the Board of Governors for consideration.

74. As he had stated in 2006, fifty years after the "Atoms for Peace" initiative, the time had come to think of a new framework for the use of nuclear energy — a framework that accounted both for the lessons learned and the current reality. That new framework should in his view include swift and

concrete action to achieve a number of elements: first, robust technological development and innovation in nuclear power and nuclear applications; second, a new multinational framework for the fuel cycle, both the front and the back end, to assure supply and curb proliferation risk; third, universal application of comprehensive safeguards and the additional protocol as the standard for nuclear verification, to enable the Agency to provide assurance about declared activities as well as the absence of undeclared activities; fourth, recognition of the linkage between non-proliferation and disarmament and of the need for concrete and rapid progress towards nuclear disarmament — through deep cuts in existing arsenals, downgrading of alert levels for deployed nuclear weapons and the resuscitation of multilateral disarmament efforts — starting with the entry into force the CTBT and the initiation of negotiations on a treaty that banned the production of nuclear material for weapons purposes and placed it under effective international control; fifth, a robust international security regime, in light of the diverse threats that the world faced; sixth, an effective and universal nuclear safety regime that was the cornerstone for any expansion in the use of nuclear power; and seventh, sufficient funding for the Agency to meet its increasing responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner.

75. Before concluding, he emphasized that with regard to all three pillars of Agency activity — technology, safety and security, and verification, international cooperation was key. The Agency had been fortunate to be based in a country that placed a high value on multilateralism and dialogue. It was no small compliment that that had become known as the Spirit of Vienna. Throughout the Agency's fifty years, Austria had been an exceptionally gracious host. He paid tribute, on behalf of the Agency and its Member States, to the fifty years of generous hospitality of the Republic of Austria, and in that connection, he welcomed the presence at the meeting of the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs, Ms. Ursula Plassnik, and thanked her for her inspiring and thought-provoking speech.

76. At the beginning of his statement, he had highlighted some of the challenges and achievements that stood out from a review of the Agency's history. If one were to step closer and review that history in greater detail, there would be many other challenges and achievements, less dramatic perhaps, but equally reflective of its commitment to the Atoms for Peace ideal. One might notice the progress and setbacks in achieving the Agency's verification mission and the development of the additional protocol. There had been the eradication of the tsetse fly in Zanzibar. One would note the assistance of international experts in helping country after country improve their radiotherapy and nuclear medicine programmes, the development of nuclear safety networks and a host of safety conventions, and the sharp increase in assistance to Agency Member States in tightening border controls, enhancing the safety and security of radioactive sources, and improving the radiation protection of patients.

77. And yet if one were to step even closer, one would see the day-to-day efforts of the Agency staff: scientists, engineers, support staff, lawyers, managers, technicians, specialists and generalists of every description, and also the day-to-day efforts of Member State representatives — those present today and in capitals, policy makers, scientists, diplomats and civil servants — working in support of Agency goals. Those efforts might be less dramatic. However, it was when the picture of the Agency's history was viewed in its totality that Atoms for Peace could really be understood. The Agency's mission was a continuous one, in good times and bad, and its professionalism, impartiality and independence were crucial both publicly and behind the scenes.

78. As he had said in Oslo, when the Agency had been honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize — another landmark in its history, “a durable peace is not a single achievement, but an environment, a process and a commitment.” It was with that understanding that the organization looked to the future.

7. Contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2008 (GC(51)/28)

79. The PRESIDENT noted that on 14 June 2007, the Board of Governors had recommended a figure of US \$80 million as the target for voluntary contributions to the TCF for the year 2008. Document GC(51)/28 had attached to it a table showing the contributions that each Member State would need to make in order to meet its share of that target.

80. The early pledging and payment of contributions to the TCF greatly helped the Secretariat in planning the Agency's technical cooperation programmes. All delegations in a position to do so were therefore urged to notify the Secretariat during the current session of the General Conference of the contributions that their Governments would be making to the TCF in 2008.

81. He would report at the end of the session, under a later agenda item, on the contributions that had been pledged up to that time. He hoped that he would be in a position to report favourably on the percentage of the 2008 target figure already pledged.

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2006 (GC(51)/5)

82. Mr. BOUOUNY (Tunisia), congratulating the Agency on its 50th anniversary, said that Tunisia had been one of the first States to ratify the Agency's Statute in 1957. His country gave high priority to scientific and technological development and was implementing an integrated national technological research and development programme. Expenditure on research and development had accounted for 1% of gross domestic product in 2004, a ratio that was expected to increase to 1.25% by 2009. Tunisia was also strongly convinced of the importance of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology. Its energy needs were steadily growing, and rising prices on international markets adversely affected its development efforts. In view of the country's limited fossil energy resources, Tunisia was looking for alternatives to traditional fuel sources and planned to launch a medium-power nuclear electricity generating plant by 2020.

83. Tunisia was also interested in using nuclear energy to produce drinking water because of its location in a region that needed to manage carefully its scarce water resources and make use of various desalination technologies. It therefore supported all the Agency's efforts to use small- and medium-sized reactors for that purpose.

84. Tunisia would continue to support the Agency in its efforts to establish an international regime based on principles of solidarity, peace, justice and equality, and called on all Member States to assist it in carrying out its mandate under the best possible circumstances.

85. During the current year, the Agency was continuing to fund 17 national projects in Tunisia; his country was participating in the implementation of 41 African regional projects and 7 interregional projects. The Agency had also provided training facilities for national staff in various peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology. Tunisia looked forward to the strengthening of such support under a country programme framework on peaceful uses of nuclear energy that it hoped to sign as soon as possible. In that context it also hoped to implement the technical cooperation programme that it had submitted for the period 2009-2011.

86. Tunisia consistently paid its share of the Regular Budget, its target for voluntary contributions and funding for national technical cooperation projects. It also continued to implement the agreed programme for the payment of arrears in respect of such projects. He was pleased to announce that Tunisia planned to pay its share of the target for voluntary contributions to the technical cooperation programme for the coming year.

87. Tunisia had completed the formalities required to accept the amendment to Article IV.A of the Agency's Statute. It had also taken the necessary constitutional steps to accept the amendment to Article VI and would inform the Agency of the completion of the formalities in due course.

88. Tunisia took a strong interest in joint Arab work in the context of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, which operated on the same principles as the Agency and which had its headquarters in Tunis. He therefore called for closer cooperation between the two Agencies.

89. Tunisia was participating in the implementation of 27 AFRA projects. It had also organized a number of training courses under AFRA's auspices and had enabled Tunisian experts to attend AFRA training courses and workshops.

90. The bilateral cooperation agreement on peaceful uses of nuclear energy between the National Nuclear Science and Technology Centre in Tunis and the French Atomic Energy Commission had been renewed at the end of 2006. During the past decade the agreement had resulted in a number of major projects, including the installation of an electronic accelerator radiotherapy unit and the training of a large number of Tunisian experts. He took the opportunity to thank the French authorities and the Agency, and expressed the hope that their productive cooperation would continue in the future.

91. Tunisia took the view that States that enjoyed the benefits of nuclear energy should also comply with the provisions of the NPT, conclude a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol with the Agency and accede to other relevant treaties, especially the CPPNM, the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention, the Early Notification Convention and the Assistance Convention. They should also comply with the Agency's other regulations and codes of conduct as well as with the resolutions of the General Conference and the Board of Governors and relevant resolutions of the Security Council, especially resolution 1540 (2004). In return, the countries concerned would have unimpeded access to nuclear energy to achieve their sustainable development goals. States that complied with the NPT were guaranteed the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to develop a diversified nuclear programme. The developed countries had a duty to assist others in achieving that aim.

92. The international community would not fully succeed in averting the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons by enhancing the effectiveness of the safeguards regime and thereby promoting international peace and stability unless such action was combined with vigorous efforts to ensure that all Member States of the Agency without exception acceded to the NPT. Tunisia reiterated its call for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in the Middle East, and urged the General Conference to take appropriate steps to achieve that goal, especially by placing all nuclear facilities, including those of Israel, under Agency safeguards.

93. Mr CRAVINHO (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the candidate countries Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Moldova and Ukraine, associated themselves with the statement that he was about to make.

94. The European Union expressed appreciation of the Agency's dedication and commitment to the promotion of "Atoms for Peace" through its activities as the focal point for nuclear cooperation and safety, and wished the Agency further success in the years ahead.

95. The most important challenges to non-proliferation currently being faced by the international community were non-compliance with the safeguards obligations stemming from the NPT and illicit trafficking of highly sensitive nuclear items. Those challenges had acute implications for all three pillars of the Agency's activities and for its current programme of work. The European Union was fully committed to the NPT — an instrument that was becoming ever more vital as threats increased. The European Union had committed itself actively to a positive outcome of the first Preparatory Committee meeting of the 2010 NPT Review Conference; it was essential that the current NPT review cycle produce tangible results that built on all three pillars of the NPT in order to preserve the integrity of the regime and to strengthen its implementation.

96. The prime objective of safeguards was to detect and to prevent the diversion of nuclear materials for use in nuclear weapons. As such, they were an essential tool in support of the political goal of sustaining an environment in which nuclear energy should be used for exclusively peaceful purposes, in accordance with the NPT. It was well known that some States with comprehensive safeguards agreements in force had still developed clandestine nuclear programmes, illustrating the limitations inherent in those agreements. The European Union considered that comprehensive safeguards agreements together with additional protocols constituted the current Agency verification standard. It was regrettable that, as of December 2006, 31 States Parties to the NPT had not yet brought comprehensive safeguards agreements into force and that more than 100 States had no additional protocol in force. The European Union therefore encouraged all States to sign, ratify and implement an additional protocol and to undertake the necessary steps to bring comprehensive safeguards agreements into force without delay.

97. The European Union fully endorsed the Director General's call for full cooperation from all States in tracing the supply routes and sources of nuclear technology and related materials. It attached the utmost importance to strong national and internationally coordinated export controls in order to tackle illicit trafficking and procurement networks, as well as the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors. The European Union urged all States with SQPs that had not yet done so to conclude an exchange of letters with the Director General to give effect to the standardized text and modified criteria in order to reinforce the safeguards system.

98. The European Union reaffirmed its understanding of the role of the Security Council as the final arbiter of international peace and security, in order to take appropriate action in the event of non-compliance with NPT obligations. In recent years, the Agency had had to address a number of challenges to the safeguards system that had put the non-proliferation regime under pressure. While much remained to be achieved in order to dismantle the DPRK's nuclear weapons programme, the European Union welcomed the recent developments in the six-party talks. The shutdown of the Yongbyon facilities and the implementation of the monitoring and verification measures by the Agency were significant first steps in order to achieve the dismantlement of the programme. The European Union underlined the importance of swift and full implementation of commitments contained in the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement. It also called upon the DPRK to implement Security Council Resolution 1718 (2006) and abandon promptly and dismantle completely the nuclear weapons-related programme in a verifiable and irreversible manner with a view to achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. In that context, the Union looked forward to the continued implementation of the ad hoc monitoring and verification arrangement between the DPRK and the Agency to shut down, seal and dismantle the Yongbyon facilities in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. The European Union was exploring possibilities of making a specific contribution to the Agency's monitoring and verification activities in the DPRK. It hoped that the DPRK would

return to the implementation of its comprehensive safeguards agreement under the NPT, and towards full compliance with Security Council Resolution 1718 (2006).

99. The European Union thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for their continuing professional and impartial efforts in implementing verification activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran and in trying to resolve the long outstanding issues relating to the nature and history of that country's nuclear programme. The Director General had rightly underlined the importance of Iran's compliance with international calls to build confidence; full implementation of the work plan could contribute to that objective. The Union hoped that the understandings between Iran and the Secretariat on the modalities of resolution of the outstanding issues would lead without further delay to the long-awaited answers from Iran. The Union was looking forward to the resolution of the outstanding issue of Iran's P-1 and P-2 centrifuge technology, as provided for in the work plan, and hoped that that issue would be completely resolved by the November session of the Board of Governors. The Union looked forward to the Secretariat reporting on that issue.

100. It was regrettable that Iran had not fulfilled the obligations established by Security Council resolutions 1696 (2006), 1737 (2006) and 1747 (2007) or taken the steps required by the Board. The Union deeply regretted, in particular, that Iran had continued, and even further developed, its enrichment activities, as well as the construction of the heavy water reactor at Arak. It welcomed the Director General's appeal for a 'double time-out' of all enrichment-related activities and of sanctions. The European Union would support the suspension of sanctions if the Agency verified that Iran had entirely suspended enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. It continued to support the efforts to find a negotiated long-term solution to the issue. A comprehensive package, which included active support in building new light water power reactors using state of the art technology, had been proposed to the Islamic Republic of Iran in June 2006 and again more recently. The door to negotiations remained open, with Iran having consistently been offered the option of re-entering negotiations.

101. Multilateralizing the nuclear fuel cycle was a challenging objective with roots already in the Agency's founding documents. The European Union welcomed the report concerning possible new frameworks for the utilization of nuclear energy: options for the assurance of supply of nuclear fuel, and had presented to the Secretariat a non-paper on the nuclear fuel cycle, which contained a set of criteria against which proposals could be assessed. It was of great importance not only to raise awareness of the issue, but also to build consensus, and a number of European Union Member States had presented individual contributions on the subject. Efforts should be pursued to develop access guarantees and establish relevant multilateral provisions without unduly interfering with market conditions.

102. A number of important developments relevant to nuclear energy had recently taken place in the European Union. In March 2007 the European Council had adopted a global plan of action on energy for 2007–2009; it had noted the European Commission's assessment of the contribution of nuclear energy in meeting the growing concerns about safety of energy supply and carbon dioxide emission reductions, while ensuring that nuclear safety and security were paramount in the decision-making process; confirmed that it was for each and every Member State to decide whether or not to rely on nuclear energy; stressed that that had to be done while further improving nuclear safety and the management of radioactive waste; and suggested that broad discussion on the opportunities and risks of nuclear energy take place among all relevant stakeholders.

103. The European Commission had also put forward an illustrative nuclear programme and indicated that greater harmonization of safety requirements for nuclear installations in the European Union was a prerequisite for the future development of nuclear energy. In July 2007, the European Commission had established a high-level group on nuclear safety and waste management. The

European Nuclear Energy Forum would begin its work in Bratislava, Slovakia, in November 2007, bringing together representatives from government, industry and civil society. Furthermore, a technology platform on sustainable nuclear energy would be launched by the European Commission in September 2007 to coordinate the needs of the European Union in terms of research infrastructure and technological development.

104. With regard to investments in the nuclear power sector, the European Investment Bank had indicated in July 2007 that financing might be requested for new generation capacity, in the nuclear fuel cycle and in research activities, subject to certain conditions and bearing in mind the right of individual Member States to determine their energy mix.

105. The European Union welcomed every effort made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency, and encouraged the Secretariat to develop a strong management and a clear definition of cross-cutting activities. The Agency needed financial and human resources to meet effectively its overall responsibilities related to technical cooperation. European Union Member States not only contributed a substantial share of the Regular Budget but also provided significant voluntary contributions to the TCF. The Secretariat should ensure that resources from the TCF were spent first and foremost in developing countries that had actually contributed to the Fund; the European Union called on all States to contribute in full, and on time, to the Regular Budget and likewise to make voluntary contributions.

106. Enhanced coordination among all relevant parties was important to ensure an effective and sustainable impact on human health, agricultural development, the environment and other areas. The European Union endorsed the encouragement from the External Auditor to improve interaction with United Nations organizations and other institutions, and welcomed the progress made in that regard by the Agency, a positive example of which was PACT.

107. The European Union attached the utmost importance to a high level of nuclear safety worldwide. Although safety was mainly a national responsibility, its implications went beyond national boundaries; its continuous improvement must be a priority for all Member States, and international cooperation on the issue was crucial. The European Union appreciated the Agency's activities in fostering a global nuclear safety regime and, in particular, efforts to update and extend the Agency's safety standards.

108. The European Union commended the Agency's efforts to improve nuclear and radiological emergency preparedness and response, and called on all States to become contracting parties to the Early Notification Convention and Early Assistance Convention as soon as possible. It supported the Agency's work to improve nuclear installation safety; all States with nuclear facilities should make use of Agency expertise and consider peer-review missions such as OSART and IRRS. The European Union welcomed work on improving the safety of research reactors, in particular through implementation of the relevant code of conduct. The Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention, with their respective peer review mechanisms, constituted important tools for establishing and maintaining a high level of nuclear safety. The European Union called on all States that had not yet done so to accede to them without further delay.

109. The European Union stressed the importance of the safety and security of radioactive sources and was committed to following the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources in accordance with the European directive on the control of high-activity sealed sources and orphan sources. The European Union urged all Member States to declare their political commitment to the Code of Conduct. Safety and security were of the utmost importance when transporting radioactive material within or across the borders, and the European Union noted with appreciation the Agency's work in that area and recognized the usefulness of the TranSAS in promoting the strict application of

the Transport Regulations. The European Union also looked forward to the continuing work of the INLEX Group.

110. Highly effective levels of safety, safeguards and security in all aspects of nuclear applications were an indispensable condition for the exercise of the inalienable right of all Parties to the NPT to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It was indisputable that the right to peaceful use could be exercised only by NPT States Parties and in accordance with NPT obligations.

111. The Agency's education and training programmes which met the needs of both developing and developed countries and the Agency's role as founding supporter of the World Nuclear University deserved wholehearted recognition and support. The European Union commended the Agency for the development of projects in the field of nuclear reactors and fuel cycles, which might improve safety, non-proliferation, and the minimization of radioactive waste. The Agency played a unique role through INPRO in bringing together all interested Member States to consider jointly innovations in nuclear reactors and fuel cycle systems.

112. The CPPNM was one of the instruments that underpinned the international nuclear security framework; the European Union urged all parties to ensure that the amendment to the Convention entered into force as soon as possible, and called upon all States that had not yet done so to adhere to the Convention, as well as to its amendment.

113. The European Union was the major donor to the NSF, and had adopted joint actions in support of Agency activities in the area of nuclear security and verification. It had also been providing assistance to third countries for the enhancement of the security and safety of their nuclear facilities and for the protection of highly radioactive sources, as well as for combating illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive materials.

114. The European Union supported the conversion of surplus nuclear weapons material into nuclear fuel for civilian use, the physical protection of nuclear sites, and the assistance to countries to enhance their export controls. It had provided technical assistance covering nuclear safety and nuclear security to the successor States of the Soviet Union and the European Union candidate States under the TACIS and Phare programmes, and the geographical scope of that assistance was now being broadened under the Instrument for Stability, the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation, and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, which had replaced the Phare programme and TACIS.

115. The European Union attributed the utmost importance to the fight against terrorism, and strongly supported all measures aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring nuclear, biological, chemical and radiological weapons and their means of delivery. It welcomed the General Assembly's unanimous adoption of the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which had entered into force on 7 July 2007, and urged all States to sign and ratify it as soon as possible. The European Union encouraged the Secretariat to implement those provisions of the Convention that had particular relevance for the Agency. In that context, the European Union noted with appreciation the fact that the Agency was participating in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism through its ongoing activities and technical expertise.

116. The Agency was the world's focal point for nuclear cooperation and nuclear safety and had an indispensable global role in nuclear verification. Competence, commitment, independence and neutrality had been the Agency's criteria in responding to the requests of the international community, and the European Union reiterated its full support to the Agency.

117. Mr. AGHAZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the 51st regular session of the General Conference was an excellent opportunity for the Islamic Republic of Iran to give details of the discrimination it had suffered during thirty years of injustice. Before the Islamic revolution, United

States research and planning institutes had been about to conduct studies with a view to producing 23 000 MW of nuclear electricity in Iran. Construction of the Bushehr power plant had begun and contracts for building two more plants and supplying them with fuel had been concluded with France. Moreover, it had been decided that Iran would be provided with a considerable amount of yellowcake processed in the United Kingdom. In other words, a race had begun to build nuclear power plants in Iran and to develop increasingly technical cooperation in order to meet the country's future energy needs.

118. Since the revolution, cooperation, including that to complete the Bushehr plant, had ceased. France had terminated its activities regardless of its contractual obligations. It had confiscated 50 tons of uranium hexafluoride due to be delivered to Iran, its main legal owner; equipment worth billions of dollars bought by Iran for the Bushehr plant had been allowed to decay in Italian and German ports; and Siemens had refused to deliver the fuel needed to operate the plant. It had been decided to discontinue cooperation, and any country that cooperated with Iran in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was put under pressure. Although it complied with the NPT, Iran had faced sanctions, proof of the double standards applied by some Western countries to nuclear energy.

119. Four years after the Iranian nuclear issue had come to international attention, it was evident that certain Western countries were not interested in the removal of ambiguities about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, but were rather adhering to the cessation and privation policy. Over those four years, Iran had been subjected to increasing unilateral pressure through abuse of the international media and other tools. As proof of its goodwill, Iran had taken successive positive steps towards cooperation, but its flexibility had been met only with hostile demands for the cessation of all nuclear activities. Whereas Iran had cooperated with the Agency, which had taken a technical and professional approach, some Western countries had behaved in an illegal and deceptive manner, imposing restrictions and sanctions against his country. Moreover, Iran had received no appropriate response to its proposal to reassure the international community by establishing an international consortium to participate in the country's uranium enrichment programme.

120. Iran had reached an agreement with the Agency on modalities for removing ambiguities regarding its nuclear agenda. Nevertheless, one country was making irrational attacks on Iran, in defiance of the Agency and the international community. Iran had done all it could to create an atmosphere of dialogue and fruitful negotiations with the West and would continue to do so. Yet certain Western countries would not allow any other sovereign States, including developing countries, to own modern nuclear technology; they preferred to confront Iran rather than try to understand it. In doing so, they had rejected logical interaction with a great nation that had thousands of years of civilization. Iran would not forget their discriminatory behaviour. For three decades the West had lost a golden opportunity to cooperate with Iran, and instead had shown its people nothing but hostility, something even Western intellectuals and scientists were forced to acknowledge.

121. In the fifty years since the confrontation with certain Western countries over the nationalization of its oil industry, Iran had taken major steps towards independence, development and advanced technology, and would continue on that path with pride. It would eventually be vindicated because the discriminatory policies were bound to fail. The Iranian nation hoped that those States would draw from lessons of the past and choose the path of cooperation, as there was no alternative to logical, honest and rational interaction. No country could stand in the way of a great nation such as Iran, as it was not afraid of paying the price of upholding its strength. Iran interpreted all threats and intimidation as signs of its enemies' weaknesses.

122. The Islamic Republic of Iran was developing peaceful nuclear technology to meet part of its energy needs, and would never renounce its inalienable and legal right to benefit from that technology. Iran had always sought lasting regional and global peace and stability, and would continue to conduct

its nuclear activities in a transparent, lawful and responsible manner. Having chosen the reasonable path of negotiation, interaction, and non-discriminatory long-term cooperation to achieve a comprehensive agreement, Iran hoped that other parties would do likewise.

123. Mr. NAKAGAWA (Japan), having congratulated the Director General and staff on the 50th anniversary of the Agency, said that his country had experienced a powerful earthquake in the Niigata Prefecture on July 16 2007. The Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant, located very near the epicentre, had been violently shaken. Although the operating reactors had been shut down safely as designed and there had been no effect on the surrounding environment, some of the plant's non-safety-related structures, systems and components had been affected. More detailed inspections by the Japanese authorities were being undertaken and the seismic safety of each unit was being re-evaluated.

124. As one of the countries most prone to earthquakes in the world, Japan had a duty to share the lessons learned from its experience internationally and to contribute to the further enhancement of safety measures. His country had therefore decided to receive an Agency expert mission during the preceding month. He expressed gratitude for the prompt report based on the mission's detailed observations. Japan would provide relevant information and share lessons learned at the forthcoming senior regulators' meeting. His country also planned to hold an international experts' workshop; it was determined to continue to do its utmost to enhance international nuclear safety.

125. The introduction of nuclear power was expected to expand worldwide to meet increasing energy demands and to combat global warming. In May 2007, the Japanese Prime Minister had announced the "Cool Earth 50" initiative on climate change. Under that proposal, Japan would promote international efforts to expand the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear power, and to provide assistance in areas including infrastructure development for the introduction of nuclear power to developing countries, with a view to establishing an effective international post-2012 framework.

126. When introducing or expanding the use of nuclear energy, it was essential to ensure fully nuclear non-proliferation, safety and security. The Agency's role in that regard had become even more important and the publication of the document concerning milestones in the development of a national infrastructure for nuclear power was laudable and timely. International cooperation, either through bilateral or multilateral information exchange and the sharing of experience, or through international organizations, should be promoted to make effective use of the knowledge and results gained through nuclear science and technology. Japan's technology and experience could be usefully shared to maintain and strengthen nuclear non-proliferation, safety and security. In the coming year, Japan would start to develop safe, reliable and cost-effective next-generation light-water reactors. It would also continue to participate actively in international forums such as the GIF, the GNEP and INPRO, and to promote international cooperation on the development of Generation IV reactors and small and medium-sized reactors, which contributed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and nuclear non-proliferation. On September 16 2007, a statement of principles had been signed at the GNEP Ministerial Meeting attended by a number of new partners. Cooperation under that new framework would start shortly.

127. In cooperation with the Agency, Japan assisted countries planning to introduce nuclear power such as Indonesia, Kazakhstan and Vietnam in developing infrastructures to ensure non-proliferation, safety and security.

128. Japan actively supported cooperation through regional frameworks. It made a considerable contribution to the RCA and also supported the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia, a framework to facilitate voluntary cooperation among the countries in the region through equal partnership. It played an important role in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy in Asia.

129. As a citizen of the only country to have suffered atomic bombings, he believed that nuclear weapons should never be used again. If used with caution and reason, nuclear energy could promote more comfortable and affluent living. Japan had strictly limited the use of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes since the enactment of its Atomic Energy Basic Law in 1955 upon the introduction of nuclear power. Since then, it had gained international confidence through strict implementation of its safeguards agreement concluded with the Agency in 1977, the early conclusion of an additional protocol, and the implementation of integrated safeguards. Expanded utilization of nuclear energy was expected, as the progress towards starting the industrial operation of the Rokkasho large-scale commercial reprocessing plant had shown. Japan continued to uphold its established policy on the peaceful use of nuclear energy through the strict application of safeguards.

130. The international community currently faced a number of serious challenges, such as the nuclear issues concerning the DPRK and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and the threat of nuclear terrorism. Nuclear proliferation was a threat to international peace and security, and there was a pressing need to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT had been held in Vienna from 30 April to 11 May 2007, and had been chaired by Japan. Despite some difficulties, there had been common recognition of the need to promote all three pillars of the NPT. The Committee appeared to have made a good start towards ensuring the success of the 2010 Review Conference.

131. The strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system was vital in order to reinforce the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and would be most realistically and effectively achieved through the universal application of the additional protocol. Japan had been conducting various activities in that regard, focusing on the Asian region. Recent examples included the Agency Regional Seminar for Asia/Pacific on Multilateral Verification of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Undertakings: IAEA Safeguards Agreements, Small Quantities Protocols and Additional Protocols held in Sydney in July 2006, and the high-level national seminar in Hanoi, Vietnam on the additional protocol. He was pleased to note that the number of countries that had concluded additional protocols had risen from 39 to 83 over the previous three years. He encouraged those States that had not yet concluded an additional protocol to do so as soon as possible.

132. The nuclear test announced by the DPRK in October 2006, and its build-up of ballistic missile capabilities, constituted threats to the peace and security not only of Japan but also of the entire international community, and represented a serious challenge to the NPT regime. He called for the progressive implementation of Security Council resolution 1718 (2006). The initial actions agreed at the six-party talks, including the shutdown of the Yongbyon nuclear facility, had been implemented. Discussions of the next phase were underway. Japan continued to work actively within the framework of the six-party talks towards a peaceful resolution of the outstanding issues with the DPRK, including abductions, and nuclear and missile issues, and achieving a normalization of relations with the DPRK. Moreover, Japan had made a positive contribution to the Agency's monitoring and verification activities in the DPRK.

133. Iran's pursuit and expansion of uranium enrichment-related activities in defiance of calls from the international community was regrettable, and he expressed hope that Iran would cooperate with the Agency to resolve the outstanding issues. However, that step alone would not be sufficient to eradicate all the international community's concerns regarding Iran's nuclear programme; Iran had to make further efforts to restore the confidence of the international community by responding sincerely to the requirements set forth in the relevant Agency Board resolutions and Security Council resolutions, including the suspension of uranium enrichment-related activities and the heavy water-related programme, as well as the ratification and implementation of the additional protocol. Japan continued to work with the international community to achieve a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the issue.

134. Japan had been one of the countries to have presented proposals regarding assurances of nuclear fuel supply, with a view to contributing to the development of a possible new framework that was effective and acceptable to Member States. His country appreciated the Director General's report based on those proposals in June 2007, and looked forward to taking part in the substantive discussions on the issue at the Agency.

135. It was imperative that the international community collectively address the issue of nuclear security in order to counter the threat of nuclear terrorism. Japan welcomed the entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, to which it had become a State Party in August 2007. It was also conducting internal consultations with a view to an early conclusion of the amendment to the CPPNM. In November 2006, Japan had hosted an Agency meeting on strengthening nuclear security in the Asian countries, utilizing its contribution to the NSF. It would continue to participate actively in the Agency's activities in that field.

136. The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism announced by Presidents Bush and Putin in July 2006 acknowledged the importance of the Agency's role and activities in the field of nuclear security. Japan had consistently supported that Initiative and had participated actively as an initial partner. It would continue to cooperate with the international community regarding measures against nuclear terrorism, taking into account the important role of the Agency in that area.

137. High-level policy dialogue and peer review among the regulatory authorities of countries with advanced nuclear safety regulations were useful in order to promote nuclear safety. Japan had received an IRRS mission the preceding June, and had been pleased to share the results of the review with nuclear power user countries and to contribute to enhancing nuclear safety internationally. The results of an evaluation of comprehensive checks on power generation facilities conducted in Japan had been compiled in April 2007 with a view to strengthening safety regulations to prevent the recurrence of data falsification at such facilities. His country would continue to do its utmost to ensure nuclear safety.

138. The safe transport of radioactive material was essential for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Pursuant to the right to freedom of navigation under international law, Japan had conducted such transport, and would continue to do so, while employing the most stringent safety measures in accordance with international standards. It also engaged in dialogue with shipping and coastal States, building confidence and enhancing mutual understanding. His Government hoped that the usefulness of such constructive dialogue as well as the Agency's valuable activities in that area would be further recognized in other international organizations such as the United Nations.

139. The role of the Agency in ensuring international peace and security was increasing, and various ways of ensuring continuing support for the Agency's activities should be considered against the background of the serious budgetary constraints of donor countries. Japan would closely follow the study of the budgetary requirements for the forthcoming ten years and the work of the high-level panel of experts proposed by the Director General. He urged the Secretariat to make efficient use of the budget through project prioritization and cost reduction, taking full advantage of its management know-how.

140. Mr. BODMAN (United States of America) began his statement by reading out a message from President Bush:

“To those gathered for the 51st General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, please accept my best wishes for a successful meeting.

“Every nation has a responsibility to the cause of peace, and we must continue to work together to ensure that countries that uphold their non-proliferation obligations can access peaceful nuclear energy; while preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

“In order to keep critical resources from terrorist networks and proliferant States, we must implement the best methods to safely and securely store, transport, and dispose of nuclear material, and the IAEA has a key role to play in these efforts. The United States will continue working with our international partners to reduce nuclear proliferation and the threat of terrorism by advancing global security.

“To address the growing need for energy in developing countries, President Vladimir Putin and I announced the Declaration on Nuclear Energy and Nonproliferation this past July. This joint effort complements the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership announced last year and reflects our common goal to make nuclear energy available for peaceful purposes to states that meet their nonproliferation obligations and commitments to the international community.

“Our nations look forward to offering viable alternatives to developing the sensitive technologies of the nuclear fuel cycle.

“Fifty years ago, the IAEA was established to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and oversee peaceful nuclear energy around the world. Today, this important agency continues to confront the threat of international nuclear terrorism and nuclear proliferation. As you celebrate five decades of service, I applaud the IAEA for your global leadership and commitment to building a more secure and prosperous world. Best wishes for a successful conference.”

141. Clean energy and security were two issues that transcended national boundaries and interests and presented challenges as well as opportunities. Modern civilization and economic wellbeing required adequate and reliable supplies of energy. In the next 25 years, global energy consumption was expected to rise by over 50%, with 70% of that growth occurring in emerging economies. However, half the world's people had no access to reliable or modern forms of power and were thus condemned to economic insecurity, underdevelopment and poor living standards. Swift and decisive action was needed to meet the demand for energy in ways that slowed the increase in greenhouse gases and pollution, while enabling economic growth. The common global strategy must include measures that encouraged efficiency, conservation, innovation and a greater use of clean, renewable and alternative sources of energy.

142. Sun and wind, while abundant, were intermittent sources of energy: nuclear power was, at present, the only mature technology which could supply large amounts of power, without the emission of greenhouse gases, to meet the expected growth in the demand for energy. However, that same power had the potential for massive destruction when used in weapons. New cooperative efforts were needed to reaffirm countries' commitment to extending the peaceful applications of nuclear energy, confronting attempts at proliferation and strengthening international non-proliferation agreements and controls over nuclear technology and materials.

143. The previous day, he had hosted a ministerial meeting of the GNEP, at which 16 countries had signed a statement of principles establishing the Partnership's goals. The Partnership was committed to promoting nuclear energy as a clean source of power, reducing proliferation risks and addressing the burden of nuclear waste. It aimed to offer approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle that provided significant non-proliferation advantages by ending the production of separated plutonium, drawing down plutonium and spent fuel, and assuring reliable fuel services. It invited other States with the same vision to join it in expanding the civilian use of nuclear power.

144. No State could deal effectively with the challenges of energy demand, nuclear proliferation and nuclear waste on its own. Energy markets, and the consequences of energy choices, were global. Enduring solutions would require common approaches, shared aims, cooperation and consistent, unwavering effort. There must be a reliable supply of nuclear fuel for civilian use: his Government commended the proposals by the Agency's Secretariat and some Member States to introduce alternative supply arrangements and reserves of nuclear fuel. The United States of America would shortly begin downblending 17 tonnes of HEU to create a commercial reserve of nuclear fuel. In the Declaration on Nuclear Energy and Non-Proliferation, the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation had called upon all supplier States to assist recipient countries with the supply of nuclear reactors, training and financing. The Agency's role in infrastructure development was a vital one: his Government was to invest US \$1 million in training and assistance projects for the infrastructure milestones identified by the Agency for the safe and secure development of nuclear power. In order to prevent illicit programmes such as those in the DPRK and Iran, all countries must insist on complete transparency and compliance with the resolutions of the Security Council and the Agency's Board of Governors. Real penalties must be imposed on countries that evaded their obligations.

145. It was essential to ensure security for weapons-grade uranium and plutonium and for nuclear facilities. Security upgrades for fissile materials under the Bratislava Initiatives launched by the United States of America and the Russian Federation should be completed by late 2008. The two countries had undertaken to remove from defence use or eliminate approximately 870 tonnes of HEU and 68 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium - enough nuclear material to make over 42 000 nuclear weapons. By 2012, the United States of America would have reduced its stockpile of nuclear weapons to half of its 2001 level, and it had already almost doubled the rate at which retired nuclear weapons were dismantled. He could announce today that it was shortly to remove an additional nine tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium from its defence stocks, which would be reprocessed for use in commercial nuclear reactors in the United States of America.

146. The Agency's safeguards must be robust and capable of addressing proliferation threats. In 2008, the United States Department of Energy planned to launch a next generation safeguards programme, which would ensure that modern technology, the best scientific expertise and adequate resources were made available to meet the Agency's expanding responsibilities.

147. Any country using or aspiring to use nuclear power must introduce national controls and regulations for its safe and secure use. Any incident, whether arising from terrorism, human or mechanical error or the failure of safeguards, would erode public confidence and seriously damage the future of nuclear energy.

148. The United States of America sought universal adherence to and full compliance with international non-proliferation requirements. Where capacity-building mechanisms existed, such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Proliferation Security Initiative, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the nuclear emergency conventions, and the Agency's nuclear security and safety programmes, his Government encouraged participation, leveraging of resources and coordination of assistance.

149. In order to facilitate nuclear trade and promote fair competition, an international nuclear liability regime was also required: his country was working towards ratification of the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage of 1997, and urged other Member States to do likewise. With political vision, will and cooperation, the prerequisites for the safe and secure expansion of nuclear energy in the 21st century could be established and sustained.

150. Ms. GÖNCZ (Hungary) said that her country had celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Agency with a solemn event in Budapest that had been attended by some of the key figures who had cooperated with the Agency over the past fifty years, including many current and retired high-level officials. In those fifty years, her country had learnt how to transform experience into constructive power. New challenges now had to be faced, such as the continued quest for nuclear knowledge and capacity building, and the changing requirements in terms of nuclear safety and security. The Agency should seek new ways of disseminating nuclear knowledge and maintaining non-proliferation efforts while identifying new ways to increase nuclear verification activities.

151. The threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery continued to pose a pressing global security challenge in the twenty-first century. Strengthened multilateral cooperation was required in order to uphold the relevant international treaties and export control regimes. The proliferation trends over the previous year had given cause for alarm, and her country shared the concerns expressed by the delegate of Portugal speaking on behalf of the European Union regarding Iran's failure to take the necessary steps required by resolutions of the Board and the Security Council to suspend its enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. Those steps were indispensable if Iran were to re-establish international confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

152. The good results achieved in the six-party talks concerning the DPRK's nuclear programme would send a positive signal to the international community. Hungary continued to support the process aimed at achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. Developments relating to the North Korean nuclear issue had highlighted the importance of the early entry into force of the CTBT.

153. Hungary had welcomed the entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and she was pleased to report that her country had ratified the Convention in April 2007. Moreover, recognizing the international security challenges posed by new forms of terrorism, Hungary had recently decided to become a partner nation to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

154. Comprehensive safeguards agreements and the additional protocol should constitute the current verification standard. Hungary had been one of the first States with significant nuclear industries to ensure the application of such measures, and it supported all efforts to aimed at further strengthening the Agency's safeguards system.

155. Hungary had taken a close interest in the challenging issue of multilateralizing the nuclear fuel cycle. Mutual understanding between all parties concerned could be enhanced by addressing concerns over the proliferation-sensitive parts of the nuclear fuel cycle, and reducing the risk of proliferation. Hungary would be interested in participating in relevant discussions and international efforts.

156. Hungary attached great importance to the Agency's technical cooperation activities, and took a proactive approach in implementing national technical cooperation projects. Technical cooperation had been remarkably successful in the Europe region, and Hungary welcomed the Agency's intention to shift the focus from national projects to regional ones. However Member States in the same region had different needs. In Europe, resources saved as a result of decreasing demands from some Member States should be used for those countries in the region where needs were growing. Technical cooperation was a key element of the Agency's success. The Hungarian Government had, despite its budgetary constraints, made serious effort to meet its voluntary contributions, and she encouraged other States to follow Hungary's example.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.