

General Conference

GC(51)/OR.8

Issued: December 2007

General Distribution

Original: English

Fifty-first (2007) Regular Session

Plenary

Record of the Eighth Meeting

Held at the Austria Center, Vienna, on Thursday, 20 September 2007, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. MOHAMAD (Malaysia)

Later: Mr. HAMZE (Lebanon)

Mr. SCHULTE (United States of America)

Contents

Item of the agenda ¹		Paragraphs
8	General debate and Annual Report for 2006 (<i>continued</i>)	1–85
	Statements by the delegates of:	
	Brazil	1–12
	Australia	13–25
	Zambia	26–32
	Switzerland	33–47
	Peru	48–65
	Chile	66–85
20	Implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement between the Agency and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	86–96
21	Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East	97–129

¹ GC(51)/22.

Contents (continued)

Item of the agenda ¹	Paragraphs
8	General debate and Annual Report for 2006 (<i>resumed</i>)
	130–236
	Statements by the delegates of:
	El Salvador
	130–141
	Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
	142–157
	Singapore
	158–171
	Sri Lanka
	172–185
	Ecuador
	186–198
	Haiti
	199–207
	Zimbabwe
	208–216
	Republic of Moldova
	217–221
	Ethiopia
	222–228
	Palestine
	229–235

Abbreviations used in this record:

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ARCAL	Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CT	computed tomography
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HIFAR	High Flux Australian Reactor
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
INLEX	International Expert Group on Nuclear Liability
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
LDC	least developed country
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
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
OPAL	Open Pool Australian Light Water (reactor)
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

PATTEC	Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign
PCMF	Programme Cycle Management Framework
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PET	positron emission tomography
Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
R&D	research and development
RAIS	Regulatory Authority Information System
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SIT	sterile insect technique
SSAC	State system of accounting for and control of nuclear material
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
VIC	Vienna International Centre
WHO	World Health Organization

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

1. Mr. VALLIM GUERREIRO (Brazil) said that international cooperation in all peaceful applications of nuclear energy was extremely important and the role of the Agency in that regard was unique.

2. It was essential that an adequate balance be struck between the main pillars of the international community's commitments in the nuclear field: non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses. Those commitments were central to the bargain enshrined in the NPT and should be implemented with perseverance and tenacity. Brazil, together with other partners, had shown an unflinching dedication to the objective of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Proliferation was only an extremely serious international concern as long as there were still nuclear weapons to proliferate. Non-proliferation would remain elusive while those weapons continued to exist. It was a matter of great concern that the advances made in refining and strengthening the non-proliferation regime had not been matched by a corresponding serious effort towards nuclear disarmament.

3. The 51st session of the General Conference coincided with the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Ten years after that Treaty had been opened for signature, the prohibition of nuclear tests was still not a legal obligation. What was even more distressing was that there was no prospect of the Treaty entering into force. Indeed, in some quarters there was open opposition to the idea that nuclear tests should be forgone once and for all and an insistence that, for the sake of national security, that option should remain open. Some urged the view that a unilateral, voluntary and non-binding assurance of a moratorium was sufficient. That was not the case, in the same way as unilateral, voluntary and non-binding assurances by non-nuclear-weapon States about their peaceful nuclear intentions had rightly never been considered enough by the international community. The CTBT was the only treaty that would provide for a multilaterally agreed, universal verification system that could help stem the process of sophistication of nuclear arsenals. It would impose no new obligations on non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT.

4. The same applied to a future fissile material cut-off treaty. For non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT, the verification for such a treaty was already in place. Their existing comprehensive safeguards agreements under the NPT provided the necessary assurance that they would not produce nuclear material for purposes other than those permitted by the NPT. For nuclear-weapon States, however, the verification of such a treaty would entail the establishment of additional inspection measures. The insistence on excluding from a future mandate of the Conference on Disarmament any obligation to negotiate a verification mechanism came therefore as no surprise. While Brazil had agreed to commencing negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty without the explicit obligation to put in place a verification system, it would uphold the need for the international community to receive adequate assurances that the commitments made would be honoured.

5. Whereas there were no internationally agreed and verifiable measures relating to nuclear disarmament, there was an ever growing emphasis on increasingly intrusive measures to be taken by non-nuclear-weapon States, as well as attempts to restrict the exercise of their inalienable right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as though there existed in the NPT a legal hierarchy between different peaceful nuclear uses. The importance States attached to nuclear disarmament was decreasing by comparison with during the Cold War period, as if the demise of the geopolitical and ideological confrontation had given rise to complacency in relation to the possession of nuclear weapons. Nothing

could justify the existence of some 30 000 nuclear warheads, and yet the world was witnessing a proliferation of security doctrines whose practical effect was to extend the relevance of nuclear weapons well into the foreseeable future. Against that background, it was hardly reasonable to expect non-nuclear-weapon States to accept such imbalance and blatant discrimination forever. The international community should do its utmost to free the world of the scourge of nuclear weapons, which was the only way to ensure non-proliferation.

6. The intrinsic merits of nuclear energy were being recognized and nuclear power had established itself as an economically competitive and environmentally sound alternative to meet the growing demand for electricity. That development could be ascribed to a number of factors: the growth of the world economy, the increasing awareness of the man-made causes of global warming, and the enhancement of safety standards and safety culture worldwide. Brazil had its own contribution to make to that nuclear renaissance.

7. The Brazilian Government had decided to complete the 1300 MW Angra-3 nuclear power reactor between 2012 and 2014. It had also been decided that between four and eight new nuclear power plants, each with an estimated output of 1000 MW, would be operational by 2030. Moreover, the science and technology section of the Programme for Accelerated Growth, which had already been approved by Congress, provided for the completion of the pilot plant for the production of uranium hexafluoride in Aramar, São Paulo, and for the expansion of the uranium enrichment plant in Resende, Rio de Janeiro. Brazil also planned to increase production of radioisotopes to meet domestic demand.

8. With regard to the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications, his country supported the efforts to increase cooperation with the WHO in developing a joint programme of cancer prevention, control, treatment and research. The Agency's activities on the development of innovative nuclear technology could contribute to meeting growing energy needs in the 21st century. Brazil attached great importance to the use of nuclear energy in the management of water resources, an example of which was the IAEA-supported Guarani aquifer project undertaken by Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil.

9. His country shared the view that the prospect of non-State actors acquiring, accessing or using radioactive material was too daunting to contemplate. His Government was firmly committed to the relevant legal instruments in the security field and appreciated the Agency's cooperation in connection with the putting in place of measures to ensure the nuclear security of both the Pan American and Para Pan American Games. It was ready to share its acquired experience of nuclear security arrangements for major public events.

10. On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Goiânia accident, from 3 to 5 October 2007 Brazil would be holding an international workshop in cooperation with the Agency on remediation strategies and long-term management of radioactive waste after accidental radioactive releases to the environment.

11. The Agency's technical cooperation activities were of paramount importance and served to fulfil the organization's statutory objective of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and the mandate deriving from Article IV of the NPT. Brazil participated in the technical cooperation programme both as a donor and a recipient. It was one of the ten countries offering the greatest number of placements for fellows and scientific visitors and was among the ten greatest beneficiaries of fellowships under the programme. Experience in the country had shown that the knowledge shared was first adapted to the specific conditions of one developing country so it could later be used more efficiently by other developing countries. Brazil attached particular importance to ARCAL which helped the countries of the region reap concrete benefits from nuclear technology and was a good example of technical cooperation among developing countries.

12. Brazil welcomed the progress achieved in the cooperation between the Agency and ABACC under the Quadripartite Agreement. Guidelines had been established for joint safeguards activities at several nuclear facilities, and procedures for unannounced inspections and common use of safeguards equipment. That cooperation should be pursued in order to avoid duplication of effort and ensure the cost-effectiveness of safeguards activities.

13. Mr. SHANNON (Australia), congratulating the Agency on the 50th anniversary of its founding, recalled that Australia had been one of the small number of States that had drafted the Statute and was proud to have contributed to the Agency's important mission over its first half century.

14. The year 2007 also marked the tenth anniversary of the additional protocol. Australia had been very active in developing the Model Additional Protocol and had been the first State to bring an additional protocol into force in December 1997. That instrument was critical in enabling the Agency to provide assurances about undeclared nuclear activities and Australia encouraged all States that had not yet done so to accede to the additional protocol as part of the contemporary safeguards standard. It was working with the Agency and other countries to assist States in the Asia and Pacific region with the application of the additional protocol.

15. His country continued to encourage States not party to the NPT to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. The NPT had come under serious challenge in recent years, particularly from States that had pursued undeclared nuclear activities. The risk had also been demonstrated of a State gaining access to nuclear technology while an NPT member, then announcing its withdrawal in order to pursue nuclear weapons programmes. Such challenges underlined the need to work together to strengthen the Treaty and the non-proliferation regime.

16. Iran's continuing defiance of United Nations Security Council and Agency Board resolutions, and its long history of clandestine nuclear activity and safeguards non-compliance, gave rise to legitimate international concerns about the nature of its nuclear programme. Australia welcomed Iran's stated willingness to work with the Agency to address the outstanding issues and hoped that that shift in approach constituted a strategic decision to cooperate fully with the Agency in resolving those matters and implementing safeguards. However, resolution of the outstanding issues was not sufficient to restore confidence in the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. Iran would need to continue to build confidence regarding the scope and nature of its nuclear programme by implementing the additional protocol and meeting all its obligations under Security Council resolutions. Until it did so, there remained a basis for further Security Council action. Australia urged Iran to take the steps required to build confidence in its nuclear programme and consider carefully the far-reaching political and economic benefits that would result from such cooperation.

17. Australia had joined the international community in condemning the nuclear explosive test by the DPRK in October 2006. However, it had been encouraged by the progress made in 2007 towards resolving the DPRK nuclear issue. It welcomed the Agency's verification of the shutdown of the Yongbyon nuclear facility and the ongoing monitoring and verification arrangement in the DPRK. Those developments were important steps towards implementation of the six-party agreement of 13 February 2007 and the goal of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Australia encouraged the DPRK to continue its cooperation and encouraged all participants in the six-party talks to maintain a positive momentum with a view to the full and prompt implementation of their commitments.

18. His country strongly supported the Agency's work on international standards in the area of nuclear safety and security and encouraged all Member States to work towards the voluntary implementation of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its supplementary guidance. It supported the Agency's nuclear security activities, including through financial contributions to the Nuclear Security Fund. The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology

Organisation had worked with the Agency to strengthen controls over vulnerable radioactive sources in South-East Asia and the Pacific. The Agency's participation in the Asia-Pacific Seminar on Combating Nuclear Terrorism held in Sydney in May as part of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism had been welcome.

19. International exchange of knowledge helped build effective and efficient regulatory systems, which were a prerequisite for sustaining a high level of radiation protection and nuclear safety. Australia had been pleased to host an IRRS mission in June and July 2007; it looked forward to the publication of the report and stood ready to share the knowledge gained.

20. Australia welcomed the establishment of the International Steering Committee on Denial of Shipments of Radioactive Material and appreciated the further refinement of the action plan agreed upon in the second meeting in June 2007. It encouraged all Member States to support implementation of the plan to ensure the safe transport of all radioactive material, including fuel cycle material, radiopharmaceuticals and radioactive sources.

21. His country made a strong contribution to advancing peaceful nuclear applications. In April, the Australian Prime Minister had opened Australia's new research reactor, OPAL, which would be one of the top reactors in the world for scientific research. It was honoured that the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation had been designated an IAEA collaborating centre for neutron scattering applications and looked forward to hosting the Agency's International Conference on Research Reactors in Sydney in November, which would be followed by a regional meeting to share experience gained in planning the decommissioning of Australia's HIFAR research reactor.

22. His country made substantial contributions to the TCF and had always paid its share in full and on time. It was also engaged in a range of bilateral and regional nuclear cooperation activities. Australia was currently chairing the RCA and had recently provided extrabudgetary funding for three RCA projects aimed at improving regional radiological safety capabilities. It had also made very significant in-kind contributions through the transfer of Australian advanced technologies and the provision of human and physical resources to assist in enhancing technical capabilities and capacity in participating RCA States.

23. There was increased interest in nuclear power worldwide owing to the rising demand for energy, concerns about energy security and recognition of its potential to respond to the challenge of climate change. Australia was committed to efficient and diversified energy supplies, including zero and low greenhouse gas emission sources, and to ensuring that energy remained reliable, affordable and secure. It saw nuclear energy was an important component in that mix. As the country with the world's largest uranium reserves, Australia had a responsibility to develop its uranium industry in a sustainable manner. Although it did not currently have a nuclear power industry, the Australian Government had announced in April a new strategy to prepare for the possible expansion of Australia's nuclear energy industry, including the harmonization of existing uranium and nuclear energy legislation and consideration of new regulation needed for the future.

24. Australia had recently joined the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, which deserved broad support since its goal of enabling the safe and secure expansion of civilian nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, while minimizing proliferation risks, was in the interests of all countries. His Government had also made a firm commitment to participate in the Generation IV advanced nuclear reactor programme and was pursuing membership of the Generation IV International Forum.

25. Over the preceding year, his country had ratified a bilateral safeguards treaty with China and had signed a new safeguards agreement with Russia. Those countries' plans for expansion of nuclear power industries over the coming decades would have clear environmental benefits. His Government had also recently announced its decision, in principle, to allow the export of uranium to India subject

to several strict conditions, including India's conclusion of safeguards agreements both with the Agency and with Australia, its conclusion of an additional protocol, and a consensus decision by the NSG on an exception to its guidelines.

26. Mr. ZAMBEZI (Zambia) commended the Agency's continuing efforts to strengthen technical cooperation with Member States. The programme on radiological protection of patients provided a unique opportunity for the safe application of nuclear science and technology in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. Countries like Zambia would greatly benefit from such programmes, especially since its newly established cancer treatment facilities were now operational.

27. The Agency's safeguards work in all regions of the world deserved support and should remain comprehensive and non-selective.

28. Noting that the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was being held that very week, he called on the 44 States listed in Annex 2 of the CTBT to ratify the treaty to allow its entry into force as soon as possible.

29. Zambia had taken measures to address radiation protection issues, including further strengthening of its regulatory framework. That measure had been critical, especially given the increased use of nuclear techniques in the health field. Regulations were being developed in connection with the anticipated uranium recovery from copper mining. In addition, the country's radiation protection authority, which had formerly been attached to the Ministry of Health, had been converted into an independent and autonomous entity.

30. Zambia continued to build on the progress made with regard to infrastructure and human resources development through the Agency's technical cooperation programme. Developments since the preceding General Conference included the completion of the Cancer Diseases Hospital, which had been officially inaugurated on 19 July 2007 and was slowly reducing the number of cancer patients who were sent abroad for treatment.

31. His country supported technical cooperation within the framework of AFRA, which continued to bring on board specialized teams of experts that helped address the problems of Member States in the region using local capacities. Since the 50th session of the General Conference, Zambia had received further AFRA missions and local scientific and technical staff had participated in training courses, seminars, coordination meetings and programmes. He appealed to cooperating partners to maintain their financial support for AFRA to facilitate the full implementation of the various projects designed for the 2008–2009 cycle.

32. His Government pledged its full share of the TCF for 2008.

33. Mr. SCHALLER (Switzerland) said that, for the preceding 50 years, the Agency had worked diligently to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in the service of sustainable development in such areas as agriculture, health, seawater desalination and energy generation. In recent years, the verification component of the Agency's activities had acquired an increasingly political dimension. Since the 50th session of the General Conference, developments in the non-proliferation field had figured significantly in diplomatic agendas.

34. The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, held in May 2007 in Vienna, had reproduced the deadlock of the 2005 NPT Review Conference and the report it had adopted had been purely procedural in nature. The substantive debate had highlighted the rift between nuclear-weapon States that sought to emphasize non-proliferation, non-nuclear-weapon States that wished to focus on disarmament and other States that were worried about being excluded from access to nuclear technologies. That situation did not bode well for the second session of the Preparatory Committee which would be held in Geneva in May 2008.

35. The United States-India nuclear cooperation deal called into question the current nuclear non-proliferation system and jarred with several recent proposals aimed at restricting access to sensitive nuclear fuel cycle technologies. In that context, his delegation welcomed the IAEA report of 13 June 2007 entitled Possible New Framework for the Utilization of Nuclear Energy: Options for Assurance of Supply of Nuclear Fuel (GOV/INF/2007/11).

36. Regional issues had also attracted attention and the developments were generally encouraging.

37. Having read the latest report on implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran issued in August 2007 (GOV/2007/48), his country welcomed the agreement between the Agency and Iran on a work plan to resolve outstanding issues. While that plan might not resolve all aspects of the Iranian nuclear dossier, its rapid implementation should help restore the confidence of the international community in the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. Diplomacy remained the best way to resolve the problem, and he called on the parties concerned to return to the negotiating table without delay to prevent escalation which would have consequences for all countries.

38. The developments in the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue were very encouraging. The most significant recent events had been the agreement of 13 February 2007 within the framework of the six-party talks, followed by the return of the Agency to the DPRK and the closure of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities. At the negotiations held in early September in Geneva, agreement had been reached on a timeline for dismantling of all the DPRK's nuclear programmes. In the light of those developments, he called on all the participants in the six-party talks to work in a spirit of consensus that would facilitate the swift and complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

39. His country was satisfied with the Agency's Accounts for 2006 and supported the recommendations made by the External Auditor. It also welcomed the External Auditor's willingness to continue in office for the period 2008–2009.

40. At the 50th session of the General Conference, his country had requested that efforts be made to cover all expenses from the Regular Budget and that, after the exceptions made in preceding years, notably in 2003 for security at the VIC, increases in both the Regular Budget and the technical cooperation budget be limited to compensating for inflation. However, the proposed budget for 2008 took no account of such considerations.

41. While he did not wish to rekindle the discussions in the Board of Governors, which had resulted finally in an unsatisfactory consensus, he reiterated his country's request that all planned investments be integrated into the Regular Budget. Though his country had welcomed the idea of preparing a separate document on high-priority future investments, the allocation of funds for such purposes should be subject to rigorous planning and an indication should be given of the funding method in order to ensure transparent and predictable budgeting. Recourse to exceptional measures, such as the use of the cash surplus or extrabudgetary contributions, should be limited, since they undermined Member States' interest in participating actively in the management of the Agency.

42. Recently his country had been astonished by the impact of the dollar/euro exchange rate used by the Agency on its assessed contribution. The Agency should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the impact for the organization of applying that particular exchange rate.

43. Several of the comments made during the budget discussions in spring 2007 could be taken on board without waiting for the introduction of IPSAS. His country welcomed the proposal to establish a high-level working group to examine the issue of funding in the medium and long term.

44. Switzerland supported the Agency's promotional activities and attached the utmost importance to technical cooperation, in particular PACT. His country viewed its commitment to technical

cooperation as a duty that it intended to fulfil faithfully. It was also committed to maintaining a balance between the Agency's key functions, namely technical cooperation and verification activities.

45. He welcomed the Safeguards Implementation Report for 2006 and, in particular, the conclusions drawn with regard to the 153 States party to the NPT with comprehensive safeguards agreements in force. He also commended the improved effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system and urged the 31 States party to the NPT that had not yet concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency to do so promptly.

46. With regard to the Safeguards Statement at the beginning of the report, though the Secretariat's desire to produce a report in specialist language was understandable, for communication purposes it was important to highlight those States whose conduct was exemplary, namely the 32 States mentioned in paragraph 1(a). Given those States' commitment to safeguards and the conclusions drawn by the Secretariat, the Agency should be able to state that it was convinced of the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activities. The information contained in the Safeguards Statement was likely to be taken up by the media and it was in the interests of the Agency to convey a message that could be understood by a non-specialist audience.

47. The 22nd IAEA Fusion Energy Conference would be held in Geneva in 2008, 50 years after the Atoms for Peace Conference that had laid the foundation for international efforts to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear fusion energy. His country would do its utmost to ensure that the Conference and the commemoration of that historic event would be crowned with success.

48. Mr. HIGUERAS RAMOS (Peru) said that, as a founding member of the Agency, his country was committed to world peace and security, non-proliferation and disarmament, and had contributed actively to the Agency's objectives, namely the peaceful use of nuclear energy, regulation of its safe use and the application of verification, safeguards and physical protection measures. The international community now relied on the Agency both to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to counter the new threats of nuclear terrorism.

49. Peru firmly supported all efforts to achieve complete disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their delivery systems. It had unwaveringly supported measures to achieve disarmament, prevent proliferation, promote peaceful solutions to conflicts and improve mutual understanding and build confidence among members of the international community.

50. Disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation were a priority issue on the international agenda, but there was an imbalance between efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons through new initiatives, such as Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), and the failure of nuclear-weapon States to disarm.

51. Despite significant changes in the configuration of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, the efforts of certain State and non-State actors to obtain access to nuclear weapons constituted a threat to international peace and security.

52. Peru welcomed all decisions aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime. As a member of the Security Council it supported its initiatives to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by State and non-State actors, and it supported the application of the mechanisms of international instruments in force such as the NPT and international disarmament agreements.

53. The NPT was the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and was crucial to achieving the final objective of general and complete nuclear disarmament. Although Peru recognized the right of every State to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, that right was conditional upon strict compliance with commitments to non-proliferation and

application of the Agency's safeguards regime based on the NPT, an important instrument to which those States which had not yet done so should accede.

54. All regions should likewise follow the example of Latin America and the Caribbean and conclude an agreement modelled on the Tlatelolco Treaty.

55. The best guarantee of stability and peace was an international regime based on multilateralism and the consolidation of clear and predictable legal rules which allowed for firm, effective and legitimate action. The international situation showed that there was an urgent need to strengthen the Agency by expanding its verification and monitoring capacities and its other responsibilities.

56. His country was pleased at the progress made in resolving the DPRK nuclear issue. The Agency had verified the shutdown of the Yongbyon nuclear facility and was continuing to apply the ad hoc monitoring and verification arrangement with the cooperation of the DPRK.

57. The Agency's work to promote the transfer of nuclear technology should be strengthened. New challenges and realities necessitated a review of the Agency's future role in the field of the security of nuclear waste, illicit trafficking in nuclear material and the verification of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

58. Peru had signed an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement in 1999 and had been applying integrated safeguards since 2006.

59. The Peruvian Nuclear Energy Institute had continued with the implementation of a number of programmes, projects and activities aimed at giving added value to the production of goods and services, where nuclear technology offered comparative advantages. As in the past, Peru had participated actively in efforts to increase the contribution of nuclear energy to the socio-economic development of the country and it had worked to enhance the safety and physical protection of nuclear facilities and material, providing regional courses on the subject and undertaking initiatives to improve security-related activities. Those measures had received vital support from the Agency and from the United States Department of Energy.

60. With Agency assistance, the Peruvian Nuclear Energy Institute and a number of other national institutions had successfully initiated cooperation projects aimed at improving the country's human resources, increasing water resources through the rational use of coastal aquifers in Máncora, boosting the production of grains and meat through the genetic improvement of quinoa and kiwicha and reducing the mortality of South American camelids, especially alpacas. New projects initiated with Agency cooperation covered such areas as the application of genomics to increase wool production in alpacas and improve the neonatal health of South American camelids, genetic improvement of quinoa and kiwicha, introduction of mutant varieties of barley adapted to climatic conditions in the Andes 5000 m above sea level, management of the Máncora aquifer to prevent seawater intrusion, training of human resources and support for nuclear technology.

61. His country appreciated the Agency's interest in its technical cooperation programme and valued the contribution the Agency made to national objectives through the supply of equipment, materials and inputs. Technology and knowledge transferred to Peru by Agency experts enabled the country to train its technical specialists locally. It was continuing to organize advanced courses on the use of nuclear techniques in biotechnology, materials science, medicine, nuclear instrumentation and other subjects. Over the preceding year, a number of training events had been held with Agency support on such topics as early diagnosis of *Helicobacter pylori* infection using nuclear techniques and physical protection of nuclear material and installations. Peru was prepared to host similar events. Contacts had also been established with Agency authorities, major research centres in the United States, and with countries in the region, with a view to holding a Latin American symposium in 2008 in Lima on optimization of the use of research reactors.

62. The Peruvian Nuclear Energy Institute greatly appreciated the cooperation received from the Agency's Secretariat.

63. In keeping with its commitment to strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, Peru had hosted a regional seminar in Lima in November 2006 on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

64. His country supported the work of INLEX and, in December 2006, it had hosted a regional workshop on liability for nuclear damage to promote adherence to a nuclear liability regime and to discuss difficulties, concerns and problems that States in the region might encounter with the regime.

65. It also fully supported ARCAL which helped establish cooperation links that had already begun to bear fruit at regional level. On 18 September, the five Andean nuclear institutions that had been at the origin of ARCAL, among them the Peruvian Nuclear Energy Institute, had been awarded the 2007 ARCAL Prize.

Mr. Hamze (Lebanon), President, took the Chair.

66. Mr. SKOKNIC (Chile) said that the Agency's and the Director General's achievements over the preceding year had demonstrated that the award of the Nobel Peace Prize had been a well-deserved and justified recognition of the organization's contribution to world peace. The progress made in the areas of non-proliferation, safeguards application, technical cooperation, and the implementation of nuclear technologies had contributed to the development and well-being of all Member States.

67. Global peace and security were best achieved through the application of international law. The most practical and consistent way of contributing to that objective was by ratifying the relevant international legal instruments, in particular those pertaining to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Chile was firmly committed to peace and respect for international law, as was demonstrated by its signature and ratification of the NPT and the Tlatelolco Treaty, which had made Latin America and the Caribbean the first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world. Chile had also ratified the CTBT and hoped that the conference on facilitating the entry into force of that Treaty which was being held that week would prompt the ten countries that had yet to ratify the Treaty to take the political decision the international community expected, allowing it to enter into force. His country was also a party to other international instruments pertaining to nuclear and radiological safety, emergency assistance, civil liability for nuclear damage and physical protection of nuclear material.

68. Strengthening the safeguards system was crucial and all States that had not yet done so should sign and ratify comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols. Chile had signed and ratified an additional protocol and had assiduously complied with its obligations, submitting all relevant declarations. The annual safeguards inspection visit to the facilities of the Chilean Nuclear Energy Commission had involved verification work pursuant to the additional protocol, with satisfactory results.

69. The Director General had attempted to reconstruct the history of Iran's nuclear programme and to determine its current scope in order to dispel any doubt as to its peaceful nature. In the Board of Governors, his country had called on Iran to cooperate in a full and transparent manner with the Agency and to submit all the required information, in line with to the various resolutions adopted by the Board and the United Nations Security Council. Chile appreciated the Agency's work in that area and welcomed the work plan that had been agreed with Iran. It hoped that that country would cooperate fully in its implementation. That was a first step in the right direction which should be followed by others that would enable the Agency to confirm the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities and would lead to the application of the additional protocol and the implementation of the

measures demanded by the relevant Security Council resolutions. Chile trusted that a spirit of dialogue and cooperation would prevail and that the issue could finally be resolved.

70. The efforts of the Agency and the participants in the six-party talks had resulted in considerable progress with regard to the implementation of safeguards in the DPRK. He expressed the hope that further progress would be made, leading to the complete abandonment by the DPRK of its military nuclear programme.

71. His country attached high priority to safety of transport of nuclear material and had insisted that the subject should remain on the Agency's agenda. The dialogue between representatives of coastal and shipping States that had been taking place within the framework of the Agency had proved very useful and should continue.

72. Chile had made progress in developing the peaceful uses and applications of nuclear technology within its available resources. The Agency's technical cooperation programme played an important role in that regard and had helped the country move on from the establishment of infrastructure and human resources to addressing issues of major economic and social impact. The country's current aim was to focus on strengthening and improving the regulatory framework for nuclear and radiological security, with the involvement of the two regulatory bodies established by national legislation, namely the Chilean Nuclear Energy Commission and the Ministry of Health.

73. In the context of implementation of the SIT, Chile shared the concerns of other Member States regarding the difficulty of acquiring and shipping high-activity sources such as the gamma irradiators used to irradiate pupae to combat fruit flies, a technique which had proved highly successful in Chile which had been free of fruit flies since 1995 and had been able to assist other States with similar problems.

74. The Agency's efforts to build Member States' local technetium-99m production capacity were commendable, given its importance as the most frequently used radioisotope in nuclear medicine. Chile was participating in an IAEA coordinated research project on the development of techniques for small-scale local molybdenum-99 production, to which the Argonne National Laboratory in the United States was making a valuable contribution, and it hoped to be able to produce its own molybdenum-99 before long for use in diagnostic examinations.

75. The Regional Strategic Profile for Latin America and the Caribbean had been elaborated and aimed at consolidating the Strategic Alliance between ARCAL and the Agency through ongoing consultations to optimize cooperation.

76. Chile had joined the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies with a view to exchanging experience with other regulators in order to enhance effectiveness and efficiency and incorporate best practices. Efforts to strengthen regulatory processes included stricter application of legislation, more, and more frequent inspections, and the restructuring of the courses on protection of workers exposed to radiation.

77. Although some Latin American countries allocated limited resources for R&D in the nuclear field, others had costly facilities like nuclear research reactors, some of which were underutilized. His country therefore welcomed the Agency's efforts to promote the shared use of reactors by establishing networks and facilitating contacts between universities and institutions in developed countries and reactor operators in Latin America. It hoped that a future mission to Chile would help identify opportunities for such cooperative arrangements.

78. His country had followed closely the Agency's pilot programme in South Africa to develop mobile hot cells for conditioning spent high-activity radioactive sources and it hoped that a similar initiative would be launched in Latin America shortly.

79. In the context of the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, Chile was considering the conversion of the RECH-2 reactor to low-enriched fuel. In May 2006, the conversion of the RECH-1 reactor had been completed and, based on that experience, it should be possible to convert the RECH-2 more swiftly.

80. Public opinion in Chile continued to be influenced by the memory of the radiological accident in 2005. The country was ready to make every effort avoid further accidents. While the probability of accidents was low, it was important to be prepared for radiological emergencies. Thus, a second IAEA-supported course on medical response to radiological emergencies would be held shortly and it was hoped that the number of participants would be greater than for the first course.

81. The Chilean Nuclear Energy Commission had submitted a technical cooperation project for 2009–2011 on upgrading of the radioisotope production laboratory at the La Reina Nuclear Centre, incorporating advanced occupational radiation protection concepts and good production practices. Furthermore, with its own resources and an investment of around US \$300 000 it was embarking on the improvement of the cyclotron production laboratories to bring them in line with international standards.

82. The Agency's long-standing technical cooperation with Chile had enabled it to achieve a high level of development in cancer diagnosis and therapy. It was now in a position to contribute experts and train doctors in public and private radiotherapy facilities in the use of teletherapy and brachytherapy and various nuclear medicine techniques, including PET and PET/CT.

83. The challenge of growing energy needs in the 21st century was widely recognized. The problems arising from population growth, rising energy and electricity consumption, volatility of fossil fuel prices, concerns over assurance of supply and growing global environmental concerns were difficult to resolve. Against that complex backdrop, nuclear energy was once again the subject of economic, political, scientific and technical analysis and debate. There was no easy answer to the legitimate question whether nuclear energy could help address some of those energy challenges both in developed and developing countries. In February 2007, the Chilean Government had established a working group composed of 12 independent experts specializing in different scientific fields to collect information on the advantages, cost and risks of nuclear energy. The working group had also been tasked to identify relevant studies which would facilitate the taking of an informed decision. The first report of the working group was due shortly and its recommendations would shape future action. Chile greatly appreciated the valuable support provided by the Agency.

84. Despite the increased transparency and credibility of the nuclear industry, controversial issues like nuclear safety and waste management still need to be addressed at the difficult level of public acceptance. To that end, more information should be made available on the beneficial uses and applications of nuclear energy. It remained to be seen how public perception could be changed in the light of the memory of the Chernobyl accident. Nevertheless, there were signs that public opinion on nuclear energy was slowly changing. A survey conducted in 2007 showed that, in those European countries that had worked hard to achieve transparency and credibility, the public had greater knowledge of the risks and benefits of major projects.

85. In conclusion, he commended the Agency on its work and the Director General on his impartial and dedicated leadership of the organization. His country appreciated the Agency's activities and would continue to support them.

20. Implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement between the Agency and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (GC(51)/19, L.3 and Add.1)

86. The PRESIDENT noted that the item had been included in the agenda pursuant to General Conference resolution GC(50)/RES/15 adopted the preceding year. The Director General had reported periodically to the Board on the issue during the intervening year and his report, contained in document GC(51)/19, summarized developments over that period. A draft resolution on the agenda item had been submitted in document GC(51)/L.3 and Add.1.

87. Ms. GERVAIS-VIDRICAIRE (Canada), introducing the draft resolution, said that it had been negotiated by a core group of countries in consultation with the Russian Federation and China and was now sponsored by 61 Member States. The draft resolution welcomed the progress made in the six-party talks and the return of Agency staff to the DPRK for monitoring and verification activities, but expressed deep concern about the nuclear explosive test proclaimed by the DPRK in October 2006. It expressed support for the six-party process and the Agency's efforts to achieve the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through the agreement on initial actions. Given the large number of sponsors and the fact that the draft resolution was supported by the five Agency Member States involved in the six-party talks, her country hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

88. The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(51)/L.3 and Add.1 without a vote.

89. It was so decided.

90. Mr. AMANO (Japan), noting that the Board of Governors had authorized the Director General on 9 July 2007 to implement the monitoring and verification arrangement in the DPRK foreseen in the initial actions agreed at the six-party talks, expressed appreciation for the Agency's prompt response to that decision, including the verification of the shutdown status of the Yongbyon nuclear facility. The implementation of the initial actions was a first step towards full implementation of the Joint Statement issued by the participants in the six-party talks in September 2005. Further progress in the talks was needed to achieve the disablement of all existing nuclear facilities, the provision of a complete declaration of all nuclear programmes in the next phase, and the abandonment of all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes. Japan would continue to work with its partners to achieve those goals.

91. The DPRK should also comply with Security Council resolution 1718 (2006) and its obligations under the NPT and its safeguards agreement, giving the Agency access to individuals, documentation, equipment and facilities as required. Japan, which had made a positive contribution to the Agency's monitoring and verification activities in the DPRK, trusted that the Agency would make full use of its knowledge and experience, inter alia in the ongoing monitoring and verification of the Yongbyon nuclear facility, and that the other parties concerned and Member States would contribute to its activities.

92. Mr. TANG Guoqiang (China) said that, thanks to the concerted efforts of China and the other parties concerned, the six-party talks had produced three documents: the September 2005 Joint Statement, the February 2007 initial actions text and the July 2007 framework consensus text. The DPRK had shut down and sealed its nuclear facility under an Agency monitoring and verification

arrangement. All working groups established within the framework of the talks were currently operational. Major progress had thus been made towards the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

93. The six-party talks had become an important platform for enhancing mutual understanding and trust, and promoting harmony in north-east Asia. The parties had engaged in candid dialogue and earnest negotiations, seeking to narrow their differences and build common ground. They now had to take advantage of the momentum achieved to strengthen communication and coordination and implement the agreements reached in a comprehensive and a balanced manner. He expressed the hope that the deliberations at the General Conference would assist in achieving that goal. Resolving the nuclear issue through dialogue was critical for the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and north-east Asia. China would continue to play a constructive role, working with all parties concerned, the international community and the Agency to bring about the denuclearization of the Peninsula.

94. Mr. PARK Hae-Yoon (Republic of Korea) welcomed the implementation by the Agency, in a timely, impartial and professional manner, of its ad hoc arrangement with the DPRK for monitoring and verification, and in particular the verification of the shutdown of the Yongbyon facility. The action taken constituted the first steps towards implementation of the agreement of 13 February 2007. His country trusted that the next phase, including the complete declaration of all nuclear programmes and the disablement of all existing nuclear facilities, would proceed in an expeditious manner. In that connection, he welcomed the DPRK's recent invitation to a team of nuclear experts to survey its nuclear facilities and discuss the disablement process.

95. The resolution just adopted reflected the progress made in addressing the DPRK nuclear issue. It expressed support for the six-party talks and stressed the importance of the commitment of all six parties to the full implementation of the 2005 Joint Statement. It further underlined the importance of cooperation between the Agency and the DPRK for effective implementation of comprehensive safeguards. The Republic of Korea, for its part, would continue to work closely with the Agency, the other participants in the six-party talks and the rest of the international community to resolve the DPRK nuclear issue and achieve enduring peace in the Korean Peninsula.

96. Ms. LACANLALE (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the ASEAN countries Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, said that the DPRK had announced at the recent 14th ASEAN Regional Forum that it would earnestly implement its commitment to make a full declaration of all nuclear programmes and to disable all nuclear facilities. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers had welcomed that announcement and the Agency's report verifying the shutdown of the Yongbyon nuclear facility. They had reiterated their support for the six-party talks and had welcomed the July 2007 agreement that the parties would fulfil their commitments in the Joint Statement of September 2005 and the agreement of February 2007 in line with the principle of action for action. The Ministers had also stressed that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was essential for maintaining peace and stability in the Asia and the Pacific region and had expressed support for a peaceful resolution of the issue through dialogue and negotiation.

21. Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (GC(51)/14, L.1 and Add.1)

97. The PRESIDENT said that item 21 had been included in the agenda pursuant to General Conference resolution GC(50)/RES/16 adopted the preceding year. Pursuant to paragraph 9 of that resolution, the Director General had submitted the report contained in document GC(51)/14. The

matter had been considered by the Board the preceding week on the basis of that report. In addition, Egypt had submitted a draft resolution contained in document GC(51)/L.1 and Add.1.

98. Mr. FAWZY (Egypt), introducing the draft resolution, said that its purpose was to support the Agency's safeguards activities under Article III of the NPT. The General Conference and the NPT Review Conferences had assigned high priority to the accession of all States in the Middle East to the NPT and to the placement of all nuclear activities in the region under comprehensive safeguards. When the Treaty had been extended indefinitely in 1995, the international community had adopted a resolution on the Middle East in which it had expressed concern at the continued existence of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in the region, which undermined the effectiveness of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the credibility of the safeguards regime as a whole.

99. Egypt had sponsored a similar draft resolution on many previous occasions and no significant amendment had been made to it for 14 years. At the preceding session, however, the draft resolution had been updated by amendments of form rather than of substance in order to preserve the existing consensus. Yet Israel had requested a vote and the consensus had been broken. Israel was the only country in the region that had not yet acceded to the NPT or implemented a comprehensive safeguards agreement, since it was determined to prevent international monitoring of its nuclear facilities.

100. Egypt had updated the draft resolution before the General Conference at the current session by adding two paragraphs. Paragraph 4 called on the States of the region not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons, and paragraph 6 urged the nuclear-weapon States to assist in establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. They were both taken from General Assembly resolution 60/52 adopted by consensus in 2006.

101. Egypt had engaged in consultations with Member States on the draft resolution during the preceding six weeks, and the Egyptian delegation to the General Conference had undertaken intensive consultations with other delegations during the preceding two weeks and with the Israeli delegation during the preceding week. Unfortunately, those consultations had not succeeded in securing a consensus because some States insisted on linking agenda item 21 to item 22 on Israeli nuclear capabilities and threat, which was unacceptable. He called on all Member States to support the draft resolution if it was put to the vote in order to demonstrate their commitment to the Agency's work and their willingness to comply with the obligations they had assumed in other international forums with respect to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. To avert the risk of proliferation in the Middle East, the international community must fulfil its responsibility to address all non-proliferation issues in the region in the light of existing international resolutions and without applying double standards. The way in which the General Conference voted on the draft resolution would send a message from the voting States to the States of the region regarding the seriousness of the international community and the credibility of the main nuclear-weapon States when it came to implementing the principles they claimed to uphold. He hoped that the message would be a positive one, convincing States that had acceded to the NPT and implemented comprehensive safeguards agreements that they had made the right choice, and making it clear that the international community, and the nuclear-weapon States in particular, met their obligations and took a strong line against States that flouted international disarmament norms and refused to assume any non-proliferation or safeguards commitments.

102. Mr. WIBOWO (Indonesia) said that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was a critical issue which needed to be addressed, as it was related to proliferation concerns. Indonesia was deeply concerned at the impossibility of establishing such a zone owing to the continuously defiant attitude and policy of a single country which refused to place its installations under Agency safeguards or to accede to the NPT. It was even more regrettable that that country's

belligerent policy found support among the Member States of the Agency. The persistent application of double standards in that regard was unacceptable.

103. The NPT Review and Extension Conference held in 1995 had expressed concern at the dangerous situation in the Middle East resulting from the presence of nuclear activities in the region that were not subject to safeguards. The NPT Review Conference in 2000 had requested Israel to accede to the NPT as soon as possible. Indonesia strongly believed that Israel's accession to the Treaty and the placement of its nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguards were crucial prerequisites for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and the promotion of mutual confidence and security in the Middle East.

104. He urged Israel to accept the application of full-scope safeguards to all its nuclear activities and to respond positively to the demands of the international community. Indonesia would continue to support the Director General to the full in implementing the tasks entrusted to him by all previous General Conference resolutions.

105. Mr. ABDULRAHMAN DOMRAN (Yemen) said that the idea of putting a resolution on international safeguards to the vote because of a lack of consensus was inconceivable, since the implication was that some Member States were opposed to the application of safeguards in the Middle East. Paragraphs 4 and 6 of the draft resolution were based on General Assembly resolution 60/52 and on the Agency's Statute, in particular Article III.A.5. He appealed to Member States not to vote against it.

106. Mr. KODAH (Jordan) said that his Government attached great importance to the application of Agency safeguards to all nuclear installations in the Middle East, and to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Israel should accede to the NPT and comply with its obligations, conclude and implement a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol, and submit all its nuclear activities to international monitoring and verification.

107. Mr. DANIELI (Israel) requested a roll-call vote on the draft resolution under Rule 72 of the Rules of Procedure.

108. Mr. DUARTE (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, requested a suspension of the meeting for consultations.

109. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would suspend the meeting for 15 minutes.

110. It was so decided.

The meeting was suspended at 5.15 p.m. and resumed at 5.30 p.m.

111. At the request of Mr. DANIELI (Israel), a roll-call vote was taken.

112. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first. In the absence of a representative of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the voting started with Tunisia.

113. The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines,

Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining: Albania, Angola, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia.

114. There were 53 votes in favour and 2 against, with 47 abstentions. The draft resolution was adopted.

115. Mr. SCHULTE (United States of America), speaking in explanation of his vote, said that his country had sought a consensus outcome on the resolution and was disappointed that one had not been reached. The United States believed that the resolution, which had been adopted without consensus the preceding year, could have commanded consensus at the current session with a little more effort. The United States hoped that a harmonious approach to the issue could be found in the future which would allow the important work of the General Conference to advance. His country's vote did not indicate any change in its substantive position on the issue.

116. Mr. BAIEDINEJAD (Islamic Republic of Iran) said it was regrettable that the resolution could not be adopted by consensus. It was based on elements that had all been approved in different forms and on different occasions by the international community. It was astonishing that such a non-contentious issue could not be supported by all Member States. That called into question the sincerity of the view expressed by some members that full-scope safeguards needed to be complemented by an additional protocol. Their position seemed to be a purely rhetorical one, aimed at extending discrimination in the Middle East.

117. A key element of the resolution was the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Unfortunately, despite major international efforts and the adoption of numerous resolutions on the issue, no tangible progress had been made in that endeavour. Operative paragraphs 4 and 6 of the resolution were essential in that regard. Iran hoped that the adoption of the resolution would pave the way for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

118. Mr. OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that he had voted in favour of the draft resolution because of his country's strong desire to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and to have all nuclear installations in the region placed under Agency comprehensive safeguards. Those aims could only be achieved if Israel acceded to the NPT and placed its nuclear facilities under safeguards. He had voted in favour although the bilateral talks between the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel had been suspended since 1996 and Israel showed no willingness to return to the negotiating table. Moreover, the Multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security had not met for more than 15 years.

119. The Syrian Arab Republic was greatly troubled at the fact that the Director General had been unable to make any progress in the consultations aimed at facilitating the early application of Agency comprehensive safeguards to the only State in the region that had failed to accept them, thereby impeding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. His country was also disappointed at the

attitude of activist States that might have been expected to support draft resolutions aimed at maintaining international peace and security and ensuring the universality of the NPT.

120. Ms. GERVAIS-VIDRICAIRE (Canada) said that her country was a strong supporter of the universality of the NPT and Agency comprehensive safeguards, which were one of the pillars of the multilateral nuclear non-proliferation regime and a legal obligation under the NPT. She called upon all States that had not yet done so to sign and bring into force a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency. Her country was also a strong supporter of the additional protocol and the establishment of a verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

121. It was disappointing that a consensus had not been reached on the adoption of the resolution. In past years, the resolution had enjoyed broad support and it was regrettable that the changes introduced had not been the result of a consensus approach. They included new language which significantly altered the focus of the resolution and unduly politicized a forum that had historically taken a more technical perspective on the issue. Canada was also disappointed that the changes did not address the vital issue of compliance with safeguards obligations.

122. Mr. SHANNON (Australia) said that his country supported the strengthening of the Agency's role in the Middle East and the placing of all nuclear installations in that region under Agency safeguards. It also supported the establishment in the Middle East of an effectively verifiable zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and the universality of the NPT.

123. Australia had abstained in the vote because the resolution did not form part of the consensus package approach for Middle East nuclear issues adopted for many years by the General Conference. That approach provided the best means of pursuing the application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East. The breakdown of the consensus approach could only distract the Agency from the key issues it should be addressing.

124. Mr. DE CEGLIE (Italy) said that it was with regret that his country had chosen to abstain in the vote. Italy was strongly in favour of the establishment of a verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Unfortunately, the two new paragraphs had been added to the draft resolution too late to allow for sufficient negotiation.

125. Mr. FRANK (Israel) said that for 14 years, until the preceding year, his country had supported a consensus resolution on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East, based on the conviction that a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would eventually serve as an important complement to the overall peace and security of the region, strengthened by arms control. It had done so in spite of its fundamental reservations about the language and relevance of those resolutions, and had formally distanced itself from the modalities. With regard to the resolution just adopted, unnegotiated paragraphs had once again been introduced. Despite efforts to reach an agreement, it had become clear that the sponsors were not prepared to negotiate any part of the draft resolution. The inevitable conclusion had been that there was no interest in consensus. Israel was of the view that, if consensus was not important to the sponsors, the resolution had no intrinsic value. Regrettably, it had therefore had to vote against it.

126. The fundamental goal in the Middle East, as in other regions, was to achieve regional peace, security and stability, not arms controls per se. The basic premises underlying lasting regional security and the arms control process were the enhancement of security margins and adequate consideration of threat perceptions of all participating States. Any steps diminishing security margins should be mutually implemented. In addition, the participation of all States in the region in such a process was a prerequisite for any meaningful progress, as non-participants continued to pose an undiminished threat, making genuine regional cooperation impossible.

127. An effective approach in the face of current regional political realities was a step-by-step approach. The process should begin with confidence- and security-building measures which should be carefully selected so as not to detract from the security margins of any State. Such a gradual approach to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone was based on the vast experience gained in similar processes in other regions. The way to build security was to aim high but start modestly and proceed carefully, since confidence building was a long and enduring process.

128. Israel questioned the statements made by some of its neighbours, some of which did not even recognize Israel's right to exist. Such statements were not in accordance with the responsibility and mission of the Agency and also undermined confidence building, making the road ahead even more torturous.

129. To sum up, Israel's policy and vision had not changed, but the resolution had lost its value and relevance. Israel held to the vision of transforming the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, but it could be under no illusions about the current regional context. It never gave up hope for a better future of reconciliation, security and peace in the Middle East.

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

130. Ms. INTERIANO (El Salvador) said that she was pleased to be able to participate in the General Conference following the recent establishment of the Permanent Mission of El Salvador in Vienna, which attested to her Government's wish to participate more actively in the work of the international organizations based in Vienna, including the Agency.

131. El Salvador was a strong supporter of all initiatives and instruments promoting nuclear non-proliferation and was convinced that a multilateral approach was the only way to encourage a political dialogue in the interests of peaceful co-existence and security.

132. Her country fully supported the Agency's activities, in particular those related to safeguards, verification of non-proliferation commitments and promotion of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Tlatelolco Treaty, to which her country had been party since its entry into force in 1969, had provided a model for the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones and had made a significant contribution to disarmament efforts, stating in its preamble that militarily denuclearized zones were not an end in themselves, but rather a means for achieving general and complete disarmament at a later stage.

133. She called on States to redouble their efforts with a view to establishing other nuclear-weapon-free zones, in order to build a collective security structure conducive to mutual, regional and international confidence. Such a structure was essential for the prevention of nuclear proliferation, the reduction of nuclear arsenals and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

134. Efforts should also continue to be made to strengthen the verification and control regime for nuclear weapons to prevent them falling into the hands of non-State actors with unforeseeable consequences for international peace and security. It was also imperative that negotiations continue with a view to achieving significant progress in disarmament and strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

135. The moratorium on nuclear testing should be maintained pending the entry into force of the CTBT. Collective efforts should be made to ensure that that Treaty entered into force as soon as possible and she urged the international community to work towards general and complete disarmament in order to promote international confidence.

136. She welcomed the fact that, by the end of 2006, additional protocols were in force in 78 States.

137. Her country also welcomed the Agency's efforts relating to the safe transport of radioactive material, and the establishment of the International Steering Committee on Denials of Shipment of radioactive material.

138. The peaceful use of nuclear energy had led to the development of medical techniques and treatments that had saved millions of lives around the world. El Salvador attached great importance to the Agency's technical cooperation projects, which contributed significantly to the sustainable development of all countries, particularly the most vulnerable; and to the ARCAL programme. Her country's priorities were shared by other States in the region and included the fight against cancer, preservation of the environment, renewable energy and radiation safety. The regional and national projects implemented by the Agency had served to complement her Government's efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

139. A national liaison agency had been established to ensure that all activities undertaken with the Agency were consistent with national development priorities. El Salvador was collaborating with the Agency within the framework of South-South cooperation through the designation of national experts in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in such areas as geothermics and nuclear instrumentation. In the cancer field, it had taken joint action with the Agency to modernize the public health system with the involvement of central government, private enterprise and local non-profit organizations.

140. The Ministers of Health of Central America and the Dominican Republic had recently met in El Salvador and discussed such issues as the feasibility of establishing a subregional policy for combating of cancer and quality control of medicines for public hospitals. The Agency's cooperation in that regard would be appreciated.

141. Lastly, she congratulated the Agency on its fiftieth anniversary and expressed the hope that continued progress would be made with respect to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the benefit of humankind.

Mr. Schulte (United States of America) took the Chair.

142. Mr. UZCÁTEGUI DUQUE (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) recalled that his country's pacifist tradition was enshrined in its constitution, which stipulated that the State should prevent the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons. His country's Magna Carta also called for the promotion of nuclear disarmament, peaceful cooperation among nations, the democratization of international society and ecological balance.

143. Aware that it was the right and duty of every generation to protect its natural resources for its own benefit and the benefit of future generations, the Venezuelan authorities had drafted, with the assistance of the Agency, regulations for the safe transport of radioactive material which it was hoped would be approved shortly. The country was also cooperating closely with the Agency on the national radiological emergency response plan and a study of liquid waste from the aluminium industry.

144. Similarly, it had been receiving Agency assistance for projects in such areas as health, environment, industry, agriculture and radiation safety, including a human resource training programme in radiotherapy and nuclear medicine.

145. With a view to strengthening technical training in isotope hydrology at a regional level, Venezuela had made available to countries in the region a human resource training course at the Inter-American Centre for Environmental and Land Development and Research, which received 30 to 40 Agency fellows a year.

146. As the international community was aware, Venezuela was particularly attached to the integration of States in Latin America and the Caribbean, strengthening of South-South relations and promotion of solidarity among all peoples. Both the Agency and ARCAL were of assistance in working towards those goals.

147. In May 2007, Venezuela had hosted the eighth meeting of the ARCAL Technical Coordination Board, attended by the 20 member countries of the Agreement, plus Spain as an associated State and France as an observer. The participants had approved the Regional Strategic Profile, a guide for the technical cooperation programme for 2007–2013.

148. At the eighth meeting of the Board of ARCAL Representatives, held on 18 September 2007, Venezuela had been elected to the chair that body. Also, the first ARCAL Prize had been awarded to the countries that had originated the Agreement, namely Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, the aim being to stimulate interest in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy as an effective means of contributing to development.

149. Nuclear science and technology ought to be used as tools to achieve social and economic progress and be seen as areas for strengthening cooperation, solidarity and peaceful coexistence, rather than political discrimination.

150. Venezuela had repeatedly defended the principles of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as it was convinced of the need to eliminate all nuclear weapons, that being the most effective way of addressing the many challenges posed by their very existence. The practical actions it had taken in that regard included its ratification of the NPT and the CTBT. Moreover, two seismological stations had been installed in Venezuela as part of the international monitoring system established under the CTBT.

151. The facts showed that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts needed to be stepped up in order to make faster progress towards the objective of a world free of such weapons. Though it was obvious that the existence, and the horizontal and vertical proliferation of such weapons not only did not increase security but actually reduced the chances of achieving lasting and sustainable peace, military doctrines were being applied which still contemplated the use of nuclear weapons, added to the possible reasons for their use or justified the need to make them even more sophisticated.

152. Firmly convinced that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts should be multilateral, simultaneous and non-discriminatory, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela rejected the suggestion that certain countries' nuclear weapons posed no threat while those apparently held by other States placed the world in mortal danger. In that context, he noted that any attack, or threat of attack, on nuclear facilities — even when they were under construction — jeopardized peace and confidence, and the survival of the human race and the environment. International peace and security should not depend on privileges and discrimination, since any peace founded on such a basis was weak.

153. The international situation was both complex and uncertain in view of the threats and challenges to peace, security and economic and social development. A lack of trust seemed to prevail which affected the ability of international organizations to reach a consensus or agreement on the important issues of global disarmament and security. Efforts therefore needed to be stepped up to make progress towards the adoption of agreements on nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances. However, to achieve those goals, which were aspired to by all peace-loving countries, it had to be

accepted that national security could not exist in isolation, or be invoked in order to weaken or undermine the security of other States.

154. The construction of an international system focused on peace, justice and development had to be based on unlimited respect for the standards and principles of international law. Discriminatory practices which undermined the principle of equality among States, whereby some countries were required to comply with their obligations under international agreements while others were exempted, were out of touch with current realities. The efforts of some States to combat unproven attacks by other States should not be used as a pretext to violate the inalienable right of all countries to engage in research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination.

155. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela noted with concern that the Security Council had usurped the Agency's powers in dealing with the issue of the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. That interference undermined the Agency's authority and credibility, and the independence that all agencies and bodies in the United Nations system must enjoy. The Agency remained the appropriate technical forum for reaching a peaceful, negotiated solution with the Iranian authorities. He thanked the Director General and his team for insisting on a diplomatic solution and welcomed the agreement recently reached with Iran. Venezuela also welcomed the peaceful solution arrived at in the case of the nuclear programme of the DPRK.

156. His country had consistently backed initiatives to establish of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in the interests of peace and stability in the region. For that to succeed, it was vital that Israel, like the majority of States, including all Arab States, adhere to the NPT and allow the Agency to apply safeguards to its nuclear facilities. That had become even more pressing since the Israeli Government had publicly acknowledged that it possessed nuclear weapons.

157. In conclusion, he wished the Agency success over the next 50 years of its existence.

158. Mr. LEE (Singapore), said that, as the Agency celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, its role was undiminished because access to reliable and adequate sources of energy was essential for development. As concerns about global warming caused by greenhouse gases grew, the increased recognition that nuclear energy was carbon-free compared to fossil fuels would result in an increase in its use. At the end of 2006, 435 nuclear power reactors had been in operation worldwide, generating 16% of the world's electricity. Although, to date, use of nuclear power had been concentrated in industrialized countries, 17 of the 29 reactors currently under construction were in developing countries. The Agency would need to keep pace with the changing trends in nuclear power, the expanding applications of nuclear technology, and emerging proliferation concerns.

159. Singapore recognized the importance of nuclear safety. Not only was it crucial to set the highest standards in nuclear safety and security; more importantly, effective implementation was needed. The various international legal instruments, conventions, codes of conduct, safety guides and standards which existed should serve as building blocks for a global nuclear safety regime. His country supported the Agency's efforts to provide the relevant benchmarks in nuclear safety through the various instruments adopted, peer reviews, assistance and review missions. Its work in the area of nuclear safety provided the framework and impetus for States to cooperate in promoting a strong nuclear safety regime. Singapore also supported greater regional cooperation in the area of nuclear safety and security to complement and strengthen international and national efforts.

160. In addressing the issue of safety of nuclear installations, the importance of transboundary emergency preparedness and the response capabilities of States could not be overemphasized. Singapore attached great importance to such initiatives as the Agency's Incident and Emergency Centre and the bilateral networks operating alongside regional networks through which Member States could share their emergency response plans. The Asian Nuclear Safety Network had included

emergency preparedness and response in its discussions for 2006 and the setting up of a caucus on nuclear energy safety within ASEAN had been proposed.

161. The establishment of such a caucus would be timely as more countries in the region, such as Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar and Malaysia, had indicated an interest in or were pursuing nuclear energy programmes to meet growing energy needs. The search was also under way for alternative, carbon-free and sustainable energy sources. Given the importance of the issue, the ASEAN Energy Ministers, at their annual meeting held in August 2007 in Singapore, had endorsed in principle the establishment of a nuclear energy safety subsector network to discuss nuclear safety issues, one of whose key tasks would be to put in place a credible and robust regional nuclear safety regime, which should help promote acceptance of nuclear energy as a viable energy source by enhancing public confidence. ASEAN looked forward to working closely with the Agency in developing a regional framework for collaboration and cooperation and adoption of best practices.

162. Advances in the use of radiation techniques in medicine necessitated greater attention to the safety of such applications. Singapore continued to contribute to radiation protection by hosting scientific visits and providing fellowship placements and training courses on nuclear medicine and radiation protection.

163. In promoting nuclear safety, nuclear security should not be neglected. Threats to global security included terrorists with no qualms about resorting to the use of nuclear devices and material, and even more vigilance was required to protect nuclear material and installations. His country remained committed to supporting efforts to combat terrorism in all its forms and at all levels, and it had hosted the pilot IAEA subregional workshop on illicit nuclear trafficking information management and coordination in July 2007. He welcomed the development of the Safety Fundamentals series, the Agency's updated Nuclear Security Plan for 2006–2009, and the increased use of the Nuclear Security Fund to expand Agency activities in that area, together with the various measures undertaken by the Agency to enhance States' ability to detect the sources of radiological threats and take the necessary countermeasures.

164. Singapore remained committed to the full and effective implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) by stepping up domestic controls and international cooperation against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It continued to review its strategic goods control list, which would incorporate the full lists of controlled items under the four multilateral export control regimes as of January 2008. It had signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in December 2006.

165. The Agency safeguarded the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, that right had to be exercised in compliance with States' non-proliferation obligations under the NPT and Agency safeguards, and with the utmost transparency. The Agency's safeguards system had to be able to respond to new challenges within its mandate in a credible and effective manner, and its verification regime should continue to play a central role in providing the necessary safeguards assurances. As a means to ensure credible and effective safeguards, Singapore continued to advocate the universalization of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols. He urged Member States which had not done so to undertake such commitments as soon as possible. Singapore had signed an additional protocol in September 2005 and had invited the Agency to conduct an IAEA SSAC Advisory Service mission in December 2006 to help in making the necessary preparations for ratifying the additional protocol and concluding a small quantities protocol. Pursuant to that mission, legislative measures had been taken to facilitate that process.

166. The Agency had dealt with several cases which gave rise to proliferation concerns in recent years. His country was encouraged by the ad hoc arrangement for monitoring and verification agreed

between the Agency and the DPRK. The Agency had been able to verify that the DPRK had shut down various installations at the Yongbyon nuclear facility and the 200 MW(e) nuclear power plant at Taechon. Nevertheless, it remained deeply concerned that the DPRK had chosen to remain outside the NPT and urged it to return to the Treaty, accept full Agency safeguards, and dismantle any nuclear weapons programme in a prompt, transparent and verifiable manner.

167. The implementation of NPT safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran was another issue of concern. He urged Iran to extend its full cooperation to the Agency and resolve all outstanding issues by fully implementing the requirements of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1737 (2006) and 1747 (2007). Iran's right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes was not inconsistent with its responsibility to restore international confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. The Director General's report of August 2007 had indicated that, while the Agency had been able to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran, Iran had not suspended its enrichment-related activities and had continued with the operation of its pilot fuel enrichment plant, the construction and operation of its fuel enrichment plant, the construction of the IR-40 reactor and the operation of its heavy water production plant. Singapore remained hopeful that diplomatic efforts would lead to a peaceful and sustainable long-term solution to the issue.

168. The proliferation risks deriving from the sensitive aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle had sparked discussions on new approaches to assure supplies of nuclear fuel for all States with nuclear power programmes. It was essential to find a balanced approach to curbing proliferation activities while upholding the right of States to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes. The notion of assurance of supply and reliable access to nuclear fuel, including international supply guarantees with Agency participation, was an important topic that warranted further consideration. A multinational approach to the nuclear fuel cycle was the way forward.

169. Singapore welcomed the Agency's continued assistance to Member States in harnessing nuclear science and technology to achieve socio-economic development. The Agency had an important role to play in facilitating international cooperation to ensure that the successful application of nuclear technology would have a meaningful impact on socio-economic growth in developing countries, thereby contributing to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Nuclear technology had brought benefits to developing countries in the area of human health, industrial applications, animal production and health, food quality and safety, and water resources management. Singapore remained fully committed to supporting the Agency's activities related to nuclear science and technology.

170. Expressing satisfaction at the expansion of the Agency's technical cooperation programme in recent years, he commended the Agency for establishing partnerships with international and regional development organizations. His country remained committed to the technical cooperation programme and looked forward to continued cooperation with the Agency and other Member States. Singapore was hosting several regional training events under the RCA.

171. A comprehensive and effective technical cooperation programme required adequate, steady and sustainable funding, and Singapore would continue to pay its contributions on time and in full.

172. Mr. ABEYWICKREMA (Sri Lanka) said that, as a developing Member State, his country attached importance to the Agency's mandate which embraced the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under the three pillars of technology, peace, and safety and security. The balanced, impartial and non-politicized pursuit of those objectives was an important contribution to international peace and security and sustainable development.

173. Access to reliable and adequate sources of energy was essential for development. Given the rapidly increasing demand for energy worldwide, particularly in developing countries, nuclear power was an attractive option. Sri Lanka appreciated the initiative taken earlier in the year by the Agency

and the Republic of Korea in organizing a regional seminar on considerations to launch a nuclear power programme. Nuclear energy was gaining recognition as a source of energy free of greenhouse gases. Developing countries required the assistance of financial institutions to introduce nuclear power to help them meet the Millennium Development Goals. However, the advantages of nuclear energy over energy produced from fossil fuels needed to be balanced against possible disadvantages, in particular in the areas of safety and security.

174. The application of nuclear science and technology to enhance food security and human health and improve the sustainable and integrated management of water resources was of direct benefit to developing countries such as Sri Lanka and contributed to the central objective of achieving national development goals. His country was following the progress of the Agency's PACT programme which it hoped would be of tangible benefit to cancer patients, medical specialists and policy-makers working on cancer prevention and management. The Government of Sri Lanka appreciated the initiative taken by the Agency in selecting his country as a model recipient country in the Asia and Pacific region under the PACT programme. It would be holding a meeting of stakeholders in the field in the first half of 2008. Furthermore, in a country that needed to address the challenges of malnutrition, especially among children, the IAEA Nobel Cancer and Nutrition Fund was of special relevance to Sri Lanka.

175. The Agency verification programme was at the centre of multilateral efforts to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons. As a minimum verification requirement, Sri Lanka called for the universalization of Agency comprehensive safeguards agreements.

176. His country supported the Agency's activities related to nuclear security, in particular measures to prevent nuclear terrorism. The Agency's work in that area was part of a wider spectrum of action. The International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, adopted under the chairmanship of Sri Lanka, would encourage cooperation among States, which was crucial to defeating terrorism. Sri Lanka was also a partner nation of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism announced by the Presidents of the Russian Federation and United States of America. Given the nature of the threat, nuclear security activities benefited all States, including those without large nuclear programmes.

177. Over the years, the operational success of the Agency and the increasing relevance of its mandate had raised expectations regarding what it could and should deliver. The nuclear renaissance, including the increased demand for nuclear energy, growing international awareness and concern about nuclear safety and security, and the need for nuclear-based solutions to support national development objectives and combat hunger, disease and poverty, had encouraged Member States to ask more of the Agency.

178. The availability of adequate funding to cope with the increasing expectations of Member States had been an important topic of discussion in the Agency during the course of the preceding year. Sri Lanka strongly supported the Agency in maintaining its competence and enhancing its capabilities in all areas of its work. As a developing Member State which faced important development challenges in many areas, including health care, agricultural production, poverty and technical capabilities, Sri Lanka believed that a balance had to be maintained between the verification and promotional aspects of the Agency's work. That meant ensuring equal priority for all Agency activities, and in the budgetary allocations to the three pillars of its activities. His country looked forward to the proposed comprehensive study on the financial requirements of the Agency. Despite budgetary constraints, Sri Lanka had paid its 2006 contributions to the Agency in full, including its full share of the TCF.

179. Sufficient, adequate and predictable resources for the TCF were a matter of high priority. An increasing number of developing Member States were seeking support from the TCF, while a high

volume of projects remained unfunded. Under the compromise embodied in the budget package proposal of 2003, any increase in the Regular Budget of the Agency should be matched by a corresponding increase in the TCF. The 2008 Regular Budget had increased by 4.2%, 2.8% to compensate for inflation plus 1.4% for a programme increase over 2007. The lack of an indicator to measure price adjustment in technical cooperation activities was an obstacle to the satisfactory application of the concept of balance in financial allocations for the Regular Budget and technical cooperation activities.

180. His country had benefited from the Agency's technical cooperation programme, acquiring the capability to use nuclear technology in the fields of health, agriculture and industry. Its technical cooperation projects were designed to address such issues as improvement of radiotherapy services in cancer hospitals, diagnosis of infectious diseases using molecular diagnostic techniques, assessment of pesticide contamination of surface water and groundwater with a view to judicious application of agrochemicals, improvement of livestock productivity and the safety of livestock products, ensuring the safety and sustainability of dams used for irrigation and hydroelectric power, and the development of radiation safety infrastructure, including radiological emergency preparedness, food preservation, radiation processing, environmental studies and refurbishment of nuclear instruments.

181. Sri Lanka appreciated the Agency's continuing efforts to improve the radiation protection infrastructure of Member States. It was enhancing its capability to respond to radiological emergencies. Its national disaster management plan gave priority to radiological emergency preparedness planning and preparedness for dam emergencies. The Agency's support had been encouraging and his Government intended to request enhanced support through technical cooperation programmes as a matter of priority. Sri Lanka appreciated the Agency's efforts to promote the use of information technology for technical cooperation project management. The experience gained should enable further improvements to be made in the use of information technology as an effective tool for communication between the Agency and technical cooperation stakeholders. The Agency might consider developing infrastructure to deliver training material and conduct meetings with the help of information technology in a cost-effective manner.

182. The Agency's continuing efforts to improve the self-reliance and sustainability of national nuclear institutes had been helpful to Sri Lanka in exploring new avenues utilizing market-oriented technologies. Given the importance of food security, and against the backdrop of climate changes and their adverse effects, Sri Lanka urged the Agency to strengthen its capability to assist Member States with the use of nuclear technology for preservation and phytosanitary treatment of food and for responding to pandemics.

183. His country also appreciated the Agency's work in the field of nuclear knowledge management and preservation. Increasing the availability of information and communication technology provided an ideal platform for launching projects in that area. Sri Lanka attached high priority to nuclear knowledge management and would like to extend its support through in-kind contributions for hosting of regional events.

184. Sri Lanka had become a party to the RCA in 1976 and had actively participated in its programmes, which had been instrumental in the establishment of end-user-oriented national programmes on the use of nuclear technology, above all in the health care, agriculture and industrial sectors. The technical assistance provided by the Agency had been crucial to the initiation of those programmes and his Government had provided support to make them sustainable and of long-term benefit to the Sri Lankan people. His country strongly endorsed the Agency's approach in fostering regional cooperation agreements, which were effective mechanisms for addressing a range of transboundary issues, including safety and security.

185. His Government had allocated funds to establish the first government-owned multi-purpose gamma irradiation facility and the project has been given high priority in Sri Lanka's development programme. The Agency had contributed to the project by providing expert services during the planning stages and Sri Lanka hoped for further collaboration in the areas of manpower development and technology transfer.

186. Mr. MOREJÓN-ALMEIDA (Ecuador) said that, on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, tribute was due to the Agency and to the Austrian Government for its generosity in hosting the IAEA and numerous other international bodies and conferences. Half a century had gone by since the first General Conference and, during that time, the international community had witnessed the consolidation of an organization that carried out its work with commendable professionalism, impartiality and independence. However, further efforts were required to build a safer and more just world where nuclear technology was used for the benefit of humanity rather than destruction.

187. Ecuador's unwavering commitment to non-proliferation was based on the principles and values that had always inspired its foreign policy. It belonged to the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area and it had consistently opposed in international forums non-peaceful nuclear programmes conducted by any country. His country actively promoted the conclusion of international agreements in that area and called for compliance with the obligations deriving from those instruments.

188. His country was pleased to have been elected to serve on the Board of Governors for the period 2007–2009 and thanked GRULAC for its support. The endorsement of Ecuador's candidature represented a vote of confidence and his delegation would assume its responsibilities with the interests of the region and the international community at heart, in order to help strengthen the Agency and ensure that its efforts to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy produced concrete results. Ecuador supported the Agency's statutory activities both in words and in action and firmly believed that a balance needed to be maintained between the main pillars of its activities.

189. Establishing regulatory frameworks for nuclear security was crucial. In the light of the potential consequences of the accidental or malicious use of nuclear material, radioactive sources or nuclear technologies, it was essential that States exercise control over them. His country welcomed the efforts to establish a legal framework consisting of various international instruments and had supported the adoption and implementation of those instruments. The Ecuadorian Atomic Energy Commission had contributed to the strengthening of the national security regime for radioactive material during transport and temporary and final storage. The Commission had implemented the RAIS-3 system for digital registration of sealed sources, allowing an inventory to be kept of all radioactive material in the country. Ecuador hoped for Agency support to put in place customs portal monitors to detect illicit movement of material.

190. His country was also in favour of an international regime for the safe transport of radioactive material which covered liability for damage to human health and the environment, or economic losses resulting from nuclear accidents or incidents. Communication between States regarding the movement of radioactive material prior to shipment, especially by sea, was also crucial. Measures needed to be taken to promote and maintain mechanisms for dialogue between coastal and shipping States.

191. Ecuador recognized the Agency as the competent authority to verify and ensure compliance with safeguards agreements concluded with Member States pursuant to the NPT and the Agency's Statute. The universal application of the Agency's safeguards system was of great importance, including in countries which remained outside the regime. Being a party to the NPT should not be seen as an option, but rather as a priority of the international community to ensure global and regional security. The major powers had a moral obligation to work towards that goal. In that connection, the

establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was both necessary and appropriate and he urged all countries to promote the convening of a forum on that issue, as had been recommended by the General Conference in 2000 in its decision GC(44)/DEC/12. The lack of progress in that regard was regrettable.

192. Ecuador was firmly committed to the safeguards system, as demonstrated by its hosting of a regional seminar on strengthened safeguards, small quantities protocols and additional protocols in Quito in April 2006. Following that event, one country had concluded an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement and six others had amended their small quantities protocols.

193. His country believed in the inalienable right of all States party to the NPT to develop research, production and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, provided that they met their obligations under the Treaty diligently, promptly and in a fully transparent manner. It attached great importance to diplomacy as a means of resolving international conflicts in a consensual manner and was therefore in support of a negotiated solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. It had repeatedly called on Iran to comply with the resolutions of the Board of Governors and United Nations Security Council in order to create an atmosphere of transparency and confidence and dispel any doubts about its nuclear programme. The fact that the Agency had been able to confirm that Iran had not diverted declared nuclear material, and that Iran had provided additional information to resolve various outstanding issues, including the scope and nature of past plutonium experiments, was encouraging. Ecuador welcomed the work plan and the modalities for resolving the outstanding issues agreed with the Agency in August 2007, which offered another opportunity for Iran to dispel any doubts and gain the trust of the international community, which had been undermined by Iran concealing activities for 20 years. He called on all countries to give the Agency the time it needed to find a solution to the issue that would satisfy the hopes of the Iranian people and reassure the international community of the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities.

194. His country favoured a peaceful solution to the DPRK nuclear issue and supported the six-party talks. It hoped that the DPRK would abandon its military nuclear programme and return to the NPT and the Agency's safeguards system. It welcomed the shutdown of the Yongbyon nuclear facility and the Taechon nuclear power plant under Agency monitoring and called on the Government of the DPRK to continue cooperating with the Agency.

195. Given the growth of nuclear energy and demand for nuclear fuel cycle services, and the proliferation risks that entailed, his country welcomed the debate on options for assurance of supply of nuclear fuel, which should be examined closely. Ecuador was ready to support the most viable initiatives which both prevented proliferation and guaranteed access to nuclear power.

196. Efforts to establish a legal and institutional framework for verification, safeguards and security would be in vain without international cooperation for development — there could be no security without development. Nuclear energy was a driving force for peace, security and cooperation, and cooperation was a valuable contribution of modern States and international organizations to the progress of humanity and law. By granting cooperation legal standing, a new international legal order had been established based on a commitment to the well-being of individuals and societies. The duty to cooperate had become a principle of contemporary international law.

197. Thus, it was important to strengthen the Agency's technical cooperation activities. The work of the Agency's Department of Technical Cooperation was to be commended. Ecuador had made a special contribution to technical cooperation by hosting the coordination meeting for regional project RLA/0/029, on capacity building for the development of sustainable energy, held in Quito from 19 to 21 March 2007. IAEA-supported projects in Ecuador had helped promote sustainable social development. His country also attached great importance to ARCAL.

198. Ecuador had made great efforts to meet its financial obligations to the Agency's Regular Budget and the TCF. It also continued to support the Ecuadorian Atomic Energy Commission in its efforts to bring nuclear legislation into line with Agency standards.

199. Mr. MYRTIL (Haiti) said that currently only two member countries of the Caribbean Community, Jamaica and Haiti, were receiving Agency technical assistance and the Agency should consider sending information and outreach missions to the region. Haiti would be willing to offer its help.

200. Mindful of the Agency's efforts to promote sustainable development, and despite the financial difficulties his country faced, the Government of Haiti had paid off its arrears in contributions to the Regular Budget amounting to over US \$300 000 and had paid all its debts and met its obligations to the TCF in 2007. It would also be meeting its financial obligations in 2008 and urged all other States to follow its example. As the President of the General Conference had said, members paying their contributions would help the Agency increase its technical assistance to Member States.

201. For almost five years, technical cooperation between Haiti and the Agency had been proceeding very well, both in terms of the quality and quantity of projects for which Haiti received technical assistance, and at the level of human resources training. Haiti was working with the Agency on projects relating to energy planning, radiotherapy, water resources management, agriculture and nutrition. With a view to systematizing and rationalizing its efforts in the long term, his country would soon be elaborating a strategic plan for its nuclear sector, which should help the Government maintain sustainable development in strategic sectors for economic growth such as water, energy, health, environmental protection, agriculture, etc. In recent years, Haiti had also been benefiting from its increasingly active participation in regional projects, including those under ARCAL. Under the project on re-establishment of radiotherapy services, the Government had asked the Agency to send a PACT integrated mission to perform a systematic evaluation of Haiti's cancer control needs.

202. He thanked the Deputy Director General for Technical Cooperation, and the staff of the Division for Latin America in the Department of Technical Cooperation, for the assistance they had given his country in the peaceful use of nuclear techniques. However, Haiti believed that the Agency should pay special attention to LDCs as they, more than other countries, needed isotopic and nuclear techniques not only to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals but also to achieve economic growth and sustainable development. For three years, at the General Conference the Haitian delegation had emphasized the need for the Secretariat and the Board of Governors to pay greater attention to LDCs to allow them to catch up in terms of nuclear knowledge and to benefit more efficiently and effectively from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. He also appealed to the members of the Group of 77 and donor countries to pay more attention to that issue. At the 52nd regular session of the General Conference, Haiti was planning to table a draft resolution that would take into account the wishes of the LDCs with respect to the special technical cooperation they were entitled to. Thus, for LDCs the maximum number of projects should not be limited to five. Furthermore, given that the problems the LDCs faced in the nuclear field were not the same as those of emerging nations or developed countries, the Secretariat should consider setting up a special unit to consider and propose specific solutions to their problems.

203. Recalling his country's commitment to the fight against terrorism, in particular nuclear terrorism, he said that Haiti was more committed than ever to the fight against weapons of mass destruction. It had already signed and ratified an additional protocol and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, and it was about to ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, in line with United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

204. The Haitian Government was contemplating setting up a nuclear safety authority whose role would be not only to ensure radiological security but also to prevent and suppress nuclear and radiological terrorism and illicit trafficking in nuclear material. Haiti thus fully supported the Agency's nuclear security programme and its efforts to establish a nuclear security plan. It also supported the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

205. He called on all States that had signed and ratified the NPT to comply with it fully, as international peace and security depended on it.

206. The Haitian Government had taken note of the Agency's efforts to improve efficiency, but efficiency could not be increased without substantial investment in an integrated information system. The report by the MANNET consulting group, which had examined the Agency's management processes, indicated that the Agency was displaying signs of organizational stress. Since the cost of reforming the management process would be high, at around €24 million, Member States should give the Secretariat financial assistance to enable it to carry out that initiative. Haiti would do all it could to help.

207. Having listened with interest to the statement made by the representative of the Dominican Republic, Haiti was ready to cooperate with that country in the study of transboundary aquifer management, environmental protection and radiation protection through bilateral projects.

208. Ms. MUTANDIRO (Zimbabwe) said that her country attached great importance to its technical assistance and cooperation programme with the Agency and acknowledged the immense benefits it had derived therefrom, particularly under its current CPF for 2005–2009. The growth in the Agency's membership and the phenomenal expansion of its technical cooperation programme over the past 50 years was eloquent testimony to its critical role in helping developing countries address their development challenges through the peaceful and safe application of nuclear energy. The Agency's activities were also fundamental to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially with respect to combating hunger and poverty, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating disease and ensuring environmental sustainability.

209. Zimbabwe had not been spared by the alarming global rise in cancer cases. Effective control of cancer called for comprehensive strategies for diagnosis and therapy which were often beyond the means of most developing countries, Zimbabwe included. Her Government commended the Agency's activities under the PACT programme and its positive contribution to a comprehensive global strategy for cancer therapy. The Agency's support had significantly boosted her Government's endeavours to establish a sustainable and comprehensive national cancer care service, which had been extended through the rehabilitation and upgrading of radiotherapy treatment facilities and training of requisite personnel. Further support was envisaged under the proposed programmes for improved teaching in medical physics and radiation oncology. Her delegation joined others in calling for increased support for the Agency's activities in that critical area.

210. Her country appreciated the Agency's programmes aimed at improving nutrition standards in developing countries, particularly given the high global incidence of HIV/AIDS, and it looked forward to the commencement of the Agency-backed programme to determine the nutritional needs of HIV-negative infants born to HIV-positive mothers.

211. Nuclear applications had had a notably positive impact on enhancing agricultural productivity and raising the income of farmers in developing countries through improved and more resistant crop varieties, nuclear insect control techniques, livestock disease management, the development of sustainable water resources and soil nutrition. The Agency's programmes in food agriculture had contributed significantly to mitigating hunger and poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability.

212. Zimbabwe was benefiting from Agency assistance with the development of drought-tolerant and disease-resistant grain legumes, combating of desertification and isotopic assessments of groundwater. It applauded the Agency's support for the improvement of veterinary diagnostic laboratory services and the proposed feasibility studies on the use of the SIT to eradicate tsetse in the north-west of the country, which would allow agricultural and livestock development in that part of Zimbabwe.

213. Within the regional context and AFRA, the Agency had facilitated the participation of Zimbabwean nationals in capacity-building programmes for human resources development and knowledge management for nuclear applications, including in the industrial and agriculture sectors. Zimbabwe looked forward to further enhanced cooperation and assistance from the Agency beyond the current CPF, with concepts for 2009–2011 already under consideration.

214. Her country commended the assistance the Agency was giving to the African Union's PATTEC initiatives to eradicate tsetse flies on the African continent. It also welcomed the studies currently being undertaken by South Africa within the Southern African Development Community to integrate the SIT in an area-wide, integrated pest management programme in the northern part of the country as well as in southern Mozambique. Helping affected African countries to eradicate the tsetse fly using SIT techniques would address a major impediment to Africa's socio-economic development.

215. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones strengthened international peace and security and was a fundamental step towards the attainment of the objectives of non-proliferation and disarmament. Zimbabwe had signed and ratified the Pelindaba Treaty and it encouraged the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where they did not yet exist, particularly in the Middle East.

216. Zimbabwe recognized the Agency's critical role in promoting international peace and ensuring the stability of the NPT. There was a compelling need to uphold the inalienable right of Member States to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. The Agency was the sole competent authority responsible for verifying the compliance of State Parties with their NPT safeguard obligations. It was to be hoped that, in addressing challenges that might arise in the future in the areas of international security and disarmament, the supremacy of multilateralism and diplomacy within the framework of the United Nations Charter would prevail.

217. Mr. APOSTOL (Republic of Moldova) said that his country, like many in the region, paid great attention to the implementation of international conventions it had ratified, and to the safe use of nuclear technologies in medicine, industry and other important branches of the national economy.

218. During the preceding year, Moldova had adopted a new law on the safe conduct of nuclear and radiological activities, pursuant to which a single regulatory authority had been created. Bringing its legislative framework into line with Agency and European Union standards was the next step in ensuring the safe implementation of peaceful nuclear and radiological activities in the country.

219. In 2005, Moldova had signed its CPF which identified the priority areas for cooperation as nuclear applications in human health, radiation processing, radiation safety, emergency preparedness and radioactive waste management. The project on the establishment of a national radiation processing centre was the second large and ambitious ongoing national project in Moldova and it would make a significant contribution to the development of such branches of the economy as pharmaceuticals, medicine, food and science. His country was grateful to the Department of Technical Cooperation for the support it had given with the establishment of its regulatory authority and the implementation of ongoing national and regional projects. It was also grateful to the United States of America for the bilateral support it had given for the establishment of the inventory of radioactive sources and implementation of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

220. A draft law on acceptance of the amendments to Articles VI and XIV.A of the Agency's Statute had been submitted to the Government for approval. Furthermore, the ratification of the amendment to the CPPNM and the signing of the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Agency were expected in the near future.

221. In its first half century, the Agency had, with the support of its Member States, played an indispensable role in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear technology and in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and had become one of the most dynamic international organizations. The Republic of Moldova would continue to support its activities.

222. Mr. KEBEDE (Ethiopia) said that the year 2007, as well as marking the Agency's fiftieth anniversary, marked the new millennium in the Ethiopian calendar. On that occasion, the Ethiopian people and Government had renewed their commitment to meaningful change based on sustainable socio-economic development and strengthening of peace and security in the country. Nuclear energy could play an important role in that process.

223. Ethiopia was engaged in a number of technical cooperation projects with the Agency, of which the most important was the one which aimed at eradicating the tsetse fly, and the devastating disease trypanosomosis which it transmitted, from 25 000 km² of land in the Southern Rift Valley using the SIT. Over 240 000 km² of fertile agricultural land in the west and south of the country were infested with five species of tsetse fly. The project comprised three major components: suppression of the existing fly population; the establishment of a centrally operated sterile insect production plant; and field operations using SIT technology. Two of the six modules of the tsetse fly rearing and irradiation facility had been inaugurated in February 2007. The tsetse fly colony already amounted to over 147 000 flies. The first pilot release of flies had taken place with an encouraging survival rate of 95% 2–3 weeks after release. With a view to intensifying activities, negotiations were in progress between the Ethiopian Government, the Agency and the African Development Bank for the purchase of an industrial irradiator for the new centre. The project enjoyed the support of many development partners, such as the FAO, the African Development Bank, the OPEC Fund for International Development, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security and the governments of China, Japan and the United States. His country was very grateful for the support provided for the project.

224. Thanks to the Agency's technical assistance, his country had been able to build up a modest national infrastructure for nuclear medicine, radiotherapy and isotope hydrology. A cobalt therapy machine had recently been acquired under a cost-sharing agreement between the Ethiopian Government and the Agency for the only radiotherapy centre in Addis Ababa, which was serving over 77 million people. An average of 400 cancer patients per year were being treated by that centre, out of an estimated 115 000 new cancer cases. To narrow the gap between demand and supply, it was planned, with Agency collaboration, to expand radiotherapy and nuclear medicine services to five university hospitals around the country. He urged the Agency and Member States to provide greater technical and financial support for that endeavour.

225. With the Agency's assistance, his country had succeeded in building up the basic capacity required to generate useful isotopic data. An isotope hydrology laboratory had been set up at Addis Ababa University, a national groundwater database had been established and staff had been trained. Thus, with the financial and technical support of various international organizations including the Agency, the basic infrastructure was being put in place for the implementation of the Ethiopian Groundwater Resource Assessment Programme which was part of the Government's 15-year water sector development programme.

226. His country was also participating in a number of regional projects supported by the Agency, which had enabled it to build basic capacity and generate useful data in the areas of mutation breeding

of indigenous crops, energy planning, non-destructive testing and molecular detection of drug resistance in malaria and tuberculosis. He commended the role played by AFRA from the inception of projects to ensuring the sustainability of their results. The efforts under AFRA to strengthen technical cooperation among developing countries and to devise national and regional strategies for human resources development in nuclear science and technology deserved to be encouraged.

227. His country had been developing new project concepts and proposals through the PCMF. That Web-based tool had been considerably improved since the 2007–2008 programme cycle. Ethiopia had also recently finalized its second CPF for the period 2007–2012.

228. Ethiopia remained committed to the peaceful application of nuclear technologies, with due respect for global, regional and national security and safety. The most important mission of the Agency and its Member States in the next half-century would be to create a nuclear-weapon-free world through nuclear disarmament and the implementation of all relevant guiding principles and treaties, including the CTBT. His country had ratified the CTBT and had begun the formal process of ratifying the additional protocol to its safeguards agreement and the Pelindaba Treaty. It also recognized the need for adequate and predictable resources for the Agency and regularly paid its annual contributions to the Regular Budget and the TCF.

229. Mr. ELWAZER (Palestine) said that the Agency had assisted the Palestinian Authority in the area of radiation protection and through the financing of three technical cooperation projects for 2007–2008 on strengthening of and support for environmental radiation monitoring, strengthening of radiation protection, and training of human resources in nuclear science and technology.

230. The Nuclear Energy and Radiation Protection Department of the Palestinian Energy Authority had put forward a number of project concepts for the 2009–2011 cycle, which it hoped would be approved. They related to the building of national emergency preparedness and response capabilities, strengthening of radiation protection, establishment of a Palestinian radiation map, and support for training in radiation protection.

231. The Palestinian Authority hoped that the Agency would cooperate with it in protecting the Palestinian environment from the risk of radiation from Israeli nuclear reactors, especial the ageing Dimona reactor which was reportedly in a dangerous condition, with the result that there had been several radiation incidents. Dimona was located only 40 kilometres from Palestinian territory and therefore constituted a major risk. The Agency had been informed that Palestinian doctors who were members of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War had recently reported an increase in the number of cancer cases in the southern West Bank region which were thought to be due to radiation leaks from the Israeli Dimona reactor. The Agency had been requested to verify the research findings because Palestinians were increasingly worried about such leaks, which could have catastrophic consequences in the future for the region as a whole. In that context, he also expressed the hope that the Agency would give priority to developing Palestinian emergency preparedness capabilities.

232. It was imperative for all countries in the Middle East to apply comprehensive Agency safeguards forthwith to all their nuclear activities as a confidence-building measure. Noting that all States except Israel had acceded to the NPT, he said that global experience in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones with Agency support should serve as an incentive for the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, a goal to which Palestine gave top priority. The international community should bring pressure to bear on Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards at the earliest possible opportunity. As the NPT was the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, it was to be hoped that the international community would strive for its universality and devote equal attention to its three basic components: nuclear

disarmament, the right of non-nuclear State Parties to obtain and develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

233. He drew attention to the recent deterioration in the economic situation of the Palestinian people, especially in the Gaza Strip, where more than one and a half million people were suffering under a harsh blockade owing to the closures imposed by Israel. Moreover, the Israeli Government had declared the Gaza Strip a “hostile entity” and was threatening to deprive its people of water, fuel and electricity. The imposition of such collective punishment would have a disastrous impact and would also adversely affect efforts to revive the peace process with the ultimate aim of ending the current conflict and realizing the aspirations of the Palestinian people for an independent State with its capital in Jerusalem, together with the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

234. The Palestinian Authority was looking forward to the meeting planned for November 2007, under United States auspices, with a view to reviving the peace process; however, the goals of the meeting needed to be clarified. The question was whether it was to be a peace conference or an ephemeral event where no practical decisions were taken to achieve the desired goals. It was also important to invite all parties concerned, including Syria and Lebanon, since only a comprehensive, just and lasting peace could finally banish the spectre of war from the region.

235. He expressed support for the agreement reached between the Agency and the Islamic Republic of Iran on resolving the outstanding issues regarding Iran’s nuclear programme and expressed the hope that it would prove successful. In that connection, he noted that the NPT recognized the right of all State Parties to build and develop their nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes.

The meeting rose at 8.20 p.m.