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Record of the First Meeting

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Temporary President: Mr GHISI (Italy)

President: Ms MACMILLAN (New Zealand)

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¹ GC(53)/24.

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Abbreviations used in this record:

AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
G8	Group of Eight
HEU	high-enriched uranium
IIASA	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
LEU	low-enriched uranium
MOX	mixed oxide
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
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
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

– Opening of the session

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared open the 53rd regular session of the General Conference.
2. In accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, he invited delegates to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

All present rose and stood in silence for one minute.

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT said that the current General Conference would be the last during the mandate of Mr ElBaradei. He paid tribute to the exceptional integrity, professional skills and vision with which Mr ElBaradei had led the Agency. The Agency had had many achievements over the last twelve dramatic years, but perhaps the one that best symbolized them all was the Nobel Peace Prize of 2005. Wishing Mr ElBaradei success and happiness, he expressed the hope that as Director General Emeritus he would continue to give the Agency the benefit of his vast experience.
4. He extended his warm congratulations to Ambassador Yukiya Amano for his designation as the new Director General and wished him every success for his appointment during the General Conference and his forthcoming tenure of office.
5. For him personally, the 2008 General Conference had had its share of frustrating, satisfying and hopeful moments. Frustrating because, in the end, his time had been almost completely absorbed by only one of the many important issues on the agenda; satisfying, because the General Conference had reached constructive conclusions in the full spectrum of its activities, while on the more sensitive and controversial issues a whole range of opinions had been voiced and exchanged; hopeful, given the great importance which Member States attached above and beyond existing divergent political views to the fulfilment of all aspects of the Agency's mandate.
6. The global challenges which humanity was facing made the Agency's mission of "Atoms for Peace" more vital than ever. Security and development, both covered in the Agency's mandate, were two sides of the same coin, namely, peace. The Agency's role in both areas was crucial and would be even more so in the future, particularly as concerned non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. A world free of nuclear weapons — a longstanding dream of humanity — was on the agenda, and it was to be hoped that the NPT Review Conference could be an important step forward in reinforcing and universalizing the non-proliferation regime. In view of the NPT's enhanced role, the best contribution which the General Conference could make now would be to conduct fruitful deliberations to achieve continuing progress on the Agency's "Atoms for Peace" mission within its existing mandate.
7. Equally, the Agency's role in development was of growing importance; the most recent global crises (food, fuel, finance) had made the international community's efforts to attain the United Nations Millennium Development Goals even more difficult. To make progress to that end in the near future, due attention must be given to reviewing the Agency's activities and providing sufficient support to enhancing them in the two areas related to development in its mandate: nuclear applications and nuclear power. Nuclear applications were extremely useful for improving food security and quality, health and the environment. Technical assistance to Member States wishing to develop nuclear power in a safe, secure and peaceful manner was a crucial contribution to alleviating the world energy crisis.
8. He therefore welcomed the Agency's decision to devote the 2009 Scientific Forum to energy for development and particularly commended the initiative of focusing on energy as the "missing

development goal". He had stressed the same point at the Vienna Energy Conference, organized jointly by UNIDO and the Austrian Government in June 2009. Indeed the combined effects of the food, fuel and finance crises compounded the risks of climate change which, if not properly addressed, would create ever greater obstacles to sustainable development, particularly in the poorest countries. Vienna, hosting several international agencies and organizations dealing with energy, such as the IAEA, UNIDO, OPEC and IIASA, was becoming an increasingly significant forum for coordinating efforts towards a new global energy agenda for the international community.

9. In addressing the General Conference in 2008, he had expressed the hope that the efforts of the Director General and many others towards convening a forum on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East could produce results by the end of 2009. Unfortunately that had not been the case, despite there being a consensus on the idea. Goodwill had not been enough to overcome the differences between the parties more directly involved on how to organize such a forum. He hoped that in the debate that followed on Middle East issues, notwithstanding differing views and positions, emphasis could be placed on points held in common. If that new, more constructive approach prevailed, it would at long last be possible to fulfil the hopes expressed at the 44th General Conference.

10. Over the past year, he had seen promising signs of re-engagement and a spirit of compromise, for instance in the lively and constructive debate on the future of the Agency or in connection with reaching a compromise on budget issues. He urged the General Conference to renew the spirit of Vienna, mindful of the political value of the technical debate in the Agency and the potential impact which fulfilment of the Agency's mandate could have on peace and development. With that reinvigorated spirit, he was convinced that the General Conference would achieve excellent results.

1. Election of officers and appointment of the General Committee

11. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT invited nominations for the office of President of the Conference.

12. Mr POTTS (Australia), speaking on behalf of the South East Asia and the Pacific Group, proposed Ms MacMillan (New Zealand).

13. Ms MacMillan (New Zealand) was elected President by acclamation.

14. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT congratulated Ms MacMillan on her election and wished her every success in her task.

Ms MacMillan (New Zealand) took the Chair.

15. The PRESIDENT, thanking the South East Asia and the Pacific Group for nominating her, and all Member States for electing her to that challenging position, said she counted on them all to approach their joint task constructively and in the spirit of Vienna.

16. The General Conference was a unique event on the Agency's annual calendar. It brought together all Member States to discuss every aspect of the Agency's work — safety and security, science and technology, and safeguards and verification. Although there was a healthy debate on the prioritization of the Agency's activities, Member States were unified in their commitment to its objectives, namely to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and

prosperity throughout the world and to ensure, so far as it was able, that assistance provided by it, or at its request, or under its supervision or control, was not used in such a way as to further any military purpose. That commitment needed to be kept in view during the forthcoming discussions both in plenary and in the Committee of the Whole. The resolutions on which attention would be focused were a way of ensuring the continuation of the important technical work of the Agency in all of its fields of activity and in all regions of the world.

17. The challenges facing the Agency were diverse: they were old and new, financial and technical, and increasingly complex. As recognised in the Agency's Statute and reflected in its ever-growing membership, nuclear technology offered tremendous benefits in the fields of human health, water quality, crop enhancement, pest control and energy for development. Developing and sharing those benefits would be critical for addressing poverty, hunger and disease for millions of people as the international community worked to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

18. While pursuing its important work in those areas, the Agency must also fulfil its obligations in addressing the complex and broad-ranging safety and security challenges posed by nuclear technology. Providing the Agency with the means to fulfil its safety, security and verification mandates was essential to ensure that the awesome power of atomic energy was used solely for peaceful purposes throughout the world.

19. Those issues were intimidating, but the Agency did not deal with them alone. Rather, it was a vital component of the nuclear non-proliferation architecture. After a lacklustre period, it appeared that the disarmament and non-proliferation landscape might be on the verge of positive change, with growing support for a world free from nuclear weapons and the recognition that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation were mutually reinforcing principles. The Agency could contribute to and benefit from that encouraging change, and she looked forward to sending a united and positive message from the 53rd session of the General Conference.

20. In addition, the General Conference would highlight the value of the Agency's work not only to policymakers but also to civil society, scientists and the business community. The Scientific Forum on energy for development and the many different side events that would take place during the week were a testament to the broad scope of the work of the Agency and its application in everyday life.

21. She acknowledged the service of Mr Mohammed ElBaradei in his 12-year stewardship of the Agency. Since he had taken on the role of Director General in 1997, the Agency had seen a number of challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Professional, impartial and passionate, he had worked consistently and pro-actively with Member States and his staff to meet those challenges and to ensure that the Agency was prepared for others that arose in the future. The Director General had sought to strengthen the three pillars underpinning the Agency's mission, a demanding task recognised by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.

22. The bar had been set high for Ambassador Yukiya Amano, the Director General-elect. Member States could all look forward to working with him and supporting him in that demanding role.

23. She pledged her full commitment to achieving the objectives of the 53rd General Conference and said she would spare no effort in encouraging dialogue among delegations and regional groups so that the spirit of Vienna might prevail.

24. She recalled that, pursuant to Rules 34 and 40 of the Rules of Procedure, the Conference had to elect 8 Vice-Presidents, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and 5 additional members of the General Committee — resulting in a General Committee of 15 members, with herself as its Chairperson. However, in the current year the General Committee would be composed of 16 members, consisting of 8 Vice-Presidents and 6 additional members, so that the area of South East Asia and the

Pacific, in addition to providing the President of the Conference, could also have a Vice-President. That would involve suspension of Rules 34 and 40 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, as had been done in comparable situations in the past.

25. It was so agreed.

26. She proposed that the delegates of Finland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, Peru, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Sudan and the United States of America be elected as Vice-Presidents; that Mr Smith (United Kingdom) be elected as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and that the delegates of Belarus, Canada, Cuba, Italy, Lebanon and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya be elected as additional members of the General Committee.

27. The President's proposals were accepted.

28. The PRESIDENT further proposed that the General Conference deal with items 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 — in that order — pending receipt of the General Committee's recommendation on the provisional agenda.

29. The President's proposal was accepted.

2. Applications for membership of the Agency (GC(53)/21 and 22)

30. The PRESIDENT drew attention to documents GC(53)/21 and GC(53)/22 containing applications for membership made by the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Rwanda, respectively. Both applications had been endorsed by the Board of Governors, which had also submitted two draft resolutions for adoption by the General Conference.

31. She took it that the Conference wished to adopt the two draft resolutions.

32. It was so decided.

33. Mr SITTHIPHONG (Thailand) congratulated Cambodia on behalf of the ASEAN delegations to the General Conference and welcomed its membership of the Agency.

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

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

"I am pleased to send my greetings to the fifty-third session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"I wish to take this opportunity to thank Dr Mohamed ElBaradei for his many years of outstanding service to humanity and to international peace and security. I also extend my full support to the new Director General, Ambassador Yukiya Amano, as he prepares to confront the many challenges ahead.

“The IAEA has a strong foundation upon which to build. It has expanded international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, while reducing the risks of nuclear proliferation and terrorism. It has cooperated closely with other international organizations and has a longstanding working relationship with the UN Secretariat.

“As you know, on 24 September, the Security Council will convene a high-level summit to address nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. This historic event will provide a timely opportunity to revitalize the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda and to reaffirm the contributions of the IAEA in the areas of verification, transparency and irreversibility.

“Concerns over the dangers of nuclear weapons proliferation have highlighted the importance of the Agency’s safeguards system and the need for universal adherence to the additional protocol. I hope that the non-nuclear-weapon States that are party to the NPT but which have not brought their comprehensive safeguards agreements into force will do so before the 2010 NPT Review Conference. I urge all parties to cooperate fully with the IAEA in resolving issues that might arise relating to safeguards agreements.

“This General Conference also provides a useful opportunity to reaffirm international support for resuming the six-party talks aimed at the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

“Nuclear safety and security are also essential for expanding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. New levels of cooperation will also be needed to address challenges such as spent fuel, waste management and transportation. Member States have also made constructive proposals, including to enhance the assurance of nuclear fuel supply.

“Great progress is possible in all these fields. Please accept my best wishes for a successful conference.”

4. Statement by the Director General

35. The DIRECTOR GENERAL expressed pride in the considerable progress the Agency had made in many areas, from improving access to energy, food and water for people in need, to helping to enhance the safety and security of nuclear materials and facilities, since his first statement to the General Conference as Director General in 1998. It was troubling, however, that so many of the issues he had raised back then still prevailed: nuclear verification in the DPRK, the lack of any significant progress in nuclear disarmament and the perennial problems of inadequate Agency funding and legal authority.

36. The world had changed dramatically after the atrocities of 11 September 2001. It had been necessary to respond to the uncovering of a sophisticated covert network dealing in sensitive nuclear technology, which had made it alarmingly easy to acquire nuclear weapons’ knowledge and technology. Nine States now possessed nuclear weapons and there was a growing number of nuclear weapons capable countries which, because of their mastery of uranium enrichment or plutonium reprocessing, could manufacture nuclear weapons within a few months if their security perceptions changed.

37. A major cause for regret had been the fact that, despite the Agency and the United Nations providing impartial and factual information that had pointed to the absence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, a war had been launched against that country, with tragic consequences.

38. Back in the 1990s, it had not been uncommon for world leaders to stumble over the name of the IAEA because of its unfamiliarity. Now, the Agency had become a household name. The ultimate recognition of its work, of course, had come with the award of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.

39. The Agency had a proud story to tell when it came to efficiency. The United Nations Secretary-General's High-level Panel had described the Agency in 2004 as an "extraordinary bargain." The staff of the Agency could take pride in their achievements.

40. Looking back at his statement to the General Conference in 1998 had helped him to take stock of what had been achieved in the past 12 years, to consider what lessons needed to be learned and to offer a perspective on the challenges that lay ahead.

41. Starting with nuclear power, he said that when he had addressed the 42nd General Conference nuclear power had stopped growing in Western Europe and North America. The outlook had been quite uncertain in other parts of the world. The Chernobyl accident had still been fresh in people's memories. Public opinion had associated nuclear power with the possibility of a major disaster and concerns about the disposal of radioactive waste. Today, by contrast, the world seemed set for a significant expansion in the use of nuclear power, with scores of countries having told the Agency that they were interested in introducing it. Not surprisingly, most of those were from the developing world, where annual electricity consumption per capita could be as low as 50 kW·h compared with an average of 8600 kW·h in OECD countries. For many countries, nuclear power, with its good performance and safety record, was a way to meet their surging demand for energy, reduce their vulnerability to fluctuations in the cost of fossil fuels and combat climate change.

42. The Agency was not a lobbyist for nuclear power. Its role was to provide objective, comparative information. If a country made the decision to add nuclear power to its energy mix, the Agency worked to ensure that it was done effectively, in the safest and most secure manner and exclusively for peaceful purposes. A considerable expansion in the number of nuclear power reactors throughout the world would create extra work for the Agency. The Agency had already adjusted its priorities to focus more on the nuclear power programmes of newcomers.

43. As regards other aspects of the development side of the Agency's mandate, namely making nuclear techniques available to developing countries to help them meet the basic needs of their peoples, he recalled that in 1998 the size of the Agency's technical cooperation programme had been modest, at around US \$80 million per year. Ten years later, in 2008, the programme had disbursed \$96 million. That was still disappointingly modest, especially considering the growth in Agency membership in that period from 127 countries to the present 150 and the increasing development needs of Member States. Demand for Agency help greatly exceeded its ability to provide it. The Agency could and should do much more, but that required a dramatic increase in funding which had not been made available. That was as regrettable as it was short-sighted. All Member States should concentrate on delivering assistance where they could, to help provide energy for development, feed the hungry and heal the sick. They should also recognize the link between the security which everyone sought and development.

44. Improving life for the two billion people — one third of humanity — who lived on less than \$2 per day was not just the right thing to do morally; it was also the smart thing to do. By helping to address the root causes of instability and insecurity, including poverty, poor governance and endemic conflicts, Member States made it less likely that countries would feel the temptation to seek weapons of mass destruction. It had been an uphill battle to get more developed Member States to recognize the importance of the Agency's development activities and accept the need to fund them adequately. That should not be perceived as an act of largesse, rather a commitment to development. In the meantime, the Agency was doing everything it could to make its assistance as effective as possible.

45. One project dear to his heart was the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT), an innovative effort to bring radiation medicine activities into comprehensive national and regional cancer control programmes. With the incidence of cancer increasing dramatically in developing countries, their needs were great. For example, 27 of the 53 countries in Africa had no operating radiotherapy services at all; no prevention, no screening, no early diagnosis and no palliative care programmes. He expressed the hope that PACT would attract more governmental and non-governmental donors to help save millions of lives.

46. The Agency's technical cooperation activities had made a significant difference. The use of nuclear techniques for induced mutations to improve such crops as rice, cotton and wheat had provided better nutrition and greater food security and improved economic prospects for farmers, while the use of isotope data was helping to ensure reliable supplies of groundwater.

47. The global non-proliferation landscape had changed radically in the past two decades and in response, Agency safeguards had undergone a metamorphosis. Implementation had moved beyond simple verification of declared nuclear material at declared facilities to assessing information on a State's entire nuclear programme and, most importantly, verifying the absence of undeclared activities.

48. The Agency's ability to detect possible clandestine nuclear material and activities depended on the extent to which it was given the necessary legal authority, technology and resources to do so. Regrettably, it faced continuing major shortcomings in all three areas, which, if not addressed, could put the entire non-proliferation regime at risk.

49. As far as the Agency's legal authority was concerned, he had expressed the hope to the 42nd General Conference that all States would have concluded safeguards agreements and an additional protocol by 2000. That now looked wildly optimistic. Today, there were still 25 NPT non-nuclear-weapon States without comprehensive safeguards agreements in force, which meant that the Agency could not draw any non-proliferation conclusions for those countries. There were 73 countries with comprehensive safeguards agreements, but no additional protocols in force. For those countries, the Agency's ability to detect possible undeclared activities was severely limited. He stressed that universal adherence by all non-nuclear-weapon States to comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols was a prerequisite for an effective verification and non-proliferation system.

50. The Agency's credibility depended on its independence. It was vital for it to have state-of-the-art technology so that, for example, it could independently validate environmental sampling analyses. Moreover, the burden on the safeguards staff was growing steadily, as the number of facilities they had to inspect increased. Continuing with budgets that fell far short of the Agency's essential needs in the coming years was not a viable option.

51. Back in 1998, there had been two main countries on the proliferation radar. In the case of Iraq, he recalled that he had reported to the Security Council two months before the Iraq war that the Agency "had found no evidence that Iraq has revived its nuclear weapons programme". He had asked for a few more months as a "valuable investment in peace" to let the Agency complete its verification work. Unfortunately, the Agency's assessment and that of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) had been ignored and a war had been waged which had cost the lives of possibly hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians. It gave him no consolation that the Agency's findings had been subsequently vindicated.

52. In the case of the DPRK, the Agency had sounded the alarm and reported the country to the Security Council for non-compliance with its non-proliferation obligations as far back as 1993. Sixteen years later, the DPRK had moved from the possession of undeclared plutonium to acquiring

nuclear weapons. The 'on-again, off-again nature' of the dialogue between the DPRK and the international community had stymied resolution of that issue. In his view, the DPRK was a glaring example of the fragility and shortcomings of the non-proliferation regime.

53. Important lessons needed to be learned from Iraq and the DPRK. The first was that diplomacy and thorough verification must be allowed to take their course, however lengthy and tiresome the process might be. It was important to keep channels of communication open with parties with whom there were issues that needed to be resolved, rather than to seek to isolate them. Action must be taken within the framework of international institutions, like the Agency and the Security Council, and those institutions must be empowered, rather than bypassed through unilateral action. Force should never be used unless every other option had been exhausted, and then only within the bounds of international law, as codified in the Charter of the United Nations. The Agency could not do its work in isolation. It depended on a supportive political process, with the Security Council at its core. The Council needed to develop a comprehensive compliance mechanism that did not rely only on sanctions, which too often hurt the vulnerable and the innocent. It must focus on conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacemaking and address the insecurities that lay behind many cases of proliferation, such as mistrust and conflict. As the world, hopefully, moved towards nuclear disarmament, the Agency's verification mandate should be expanded and strengthened.

54. Six years had passed since Iran had been reported to the Board of Governors for failing to declare material and activities to the Agency, in violation of its safeguards agreement. As a result of difficult and painstaking work over that period, the Agency had acquired a better understanding of Iran's civil nuclear programme. Nevertheless, a number of questions and allegations that cast doubt on the peaceful nature of that programme remained outstanding. If confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme was to be restored, Iran must engage substantively with the Agency to clarify those issues, especially the difficult and important questions regarding the authenticity of information relating to alleged weaponization studies. He called on those who had provided the information to enable the Agency to share with Iran as much information as possible in order to assist the Agency in moving forward with the verification process. It was also essential that Iran implement the additional protocol so that the Agency could verify the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran. Addressing the international community's concerns about Iran's future intentions was primarily a matter of confidence building, which could only be achieved through dialogue. He therefore welcomed the offer of the United States of America to initiate a dialogue with Iran, without preconditions and on the basis of mutual respect. It was his hope that such a dialogue would begin as soon as possible.

55. One of his preoccupations as he reflected on the future of Agency safeguards was that it was becoming increasingly difficult to call on non-nuclear-weapon States to renounce such weapons in perpetuity and accept new measures to strengthen non-proliferation if nuclear-weapon States continued to modernize, and almost glorify, their nuclear arsenals. As President Obama had pointed out in his recent landmark Prague speech, serious nuclear disarmament was essential if the nuclear-weapon States were to have the moral authority to deal with the challenges facing the non-proliferation regime.

56. There had been times in the past 12 years when he had felt like one of a few lonely voices calling for nuclear disarmament, not least when the non-proliferation regime had begun losing some of its legitimacy in the eyes of the public, notably in the Middle East. Fortunately, after two largely lost decades after the end of the cold war, the tide now seemed to be turning. That reflected above all a realization that, with the technology no longer securely locked up and an increasing risk of terrorism, the danger of nuclear weapons being used had increased considerably. The recent commitment by Presidents Medvedev and Obama to cut the nuclear arsenals of the Russian Federation and the United States, respectively, by as much as a third was very encouraging.

57. In 2003, he had expressed his belief that the fuel cycle could prove to be the Achilles heel of the non-proliferation regime and he had raised the idea of putting the fuel cycle under multinational control. He had recently placed proposals before the Board of Governors to establish an LEU bank and an LEU reserve in Russia, under Agency auspices. No country would have to give up any of its rights under the NPT, including the right to develop its own fuel cycle. The ultimate goal should continue to be the full multinationalization of the sensitive parts of the fuel cycle in order to guarantee supply of nuclear fuel and consolidate efforts to move to a world free from nuclear weapons.

58. Turning to nuclear safety, he said that in 2008 the Agency had been proud to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its safety standards programme. Nuclear safety had improved significantly since the shock of Chernobyl in 1986, but the risk of accidents could never be eliminated completely. The combination of old reactors and weak regulators in some countries was still troubling. It was in the interests of all to ensure that the highest safety standards were upheld everywhere.

59. The Agency's activities in nuclear security dated back to the 1970s, when it had begun a modest programme that had provided training courses on the physical protection of nuclear materials. After the attacks of 11 September 2001, however, it had become clear that more needed to be done urgently, and the Agency had initiated a comprehensive programme to combat the risk of nuclear terrorism. He was proud of the speed and efficiency with which the Agency had turned a small programme with a budget of \$250 000 a year, into a major asset for Member States, which had provided \$50 million in equipment, training and other assistance in the past three years. It was disconcerting, however, that nuclear security was still funded almost entirely from voluntary contributions, which came with many conditions attached and were both insufficient and unpredictable. The gravest threat faced by the world was of an extremist group getting hold of nuclear weapons or materials.

60. The Agency had a proud story to tell in terms of efficiency. Keeping the Secretariat lean had been a management priority throughout his tenure. Unfortunately, despite its proven record of effectiveness and efficiency, the Agency found itself fighting exactly the same battles for resources at the start of every budget cycle. He was baffled that some Member States believed they could continue, year after year, to enjoy the benefits of the Agency's programme without putting in many, if any, additional resources, and without loss of quality, especially against a background of zero growth budget policies for most of the past two decades. While no one could see exactly what lay ahead, it was clear that the Agency must be properly equipped to deal with not only the unexpected, but also what was foreseeable. The sums needed to put Agency funding on a secure footing for the coming decades were insignificant, especially compared to the magnitude and range of the challenges and risks it had to address.

61. Looking to the future, he said it was clear that tremendous challenges, but also tremendous opportunities, lay ahead for the Agency. Nuclear disarmament was finally back on the agenda. If, as he hoped, it proceeded successfully, a significant additional verification role would be created for the Agency as a natural extension of its work. Furthermore, in 50 years' time, there could be several dozen additional countries with nuclear power programmes, mostly in the developing world. Considering that most of the 30 countries which already had nuclear power would build additional plants, that meant more work for the Agency in helping with capacity building, quality assurance, verification, safety and security. Demand for nuclear techniques in medicine, agriculture and other areas would continue to grow and the Agency would remain the first port of call for developing countries.

62. The Agency's dual mandate of security and development was unique. It was part of a complex web of international security mechanisms that had to work in harmony if the people who had placed their trust in the Agency were to be served effectively. He did not share the prevailing cynicism about international organizations. Like all human endeavours, they had their weaknesses but they were capable of great things if properly resourced and empowered and competently led. The Agency was

one of the finest and most effective organizations in the world today, with staff of exceptionally high calibre. Its strength lay in its objectivity and its outstanding technical competence. He urged Member States to invest in it and to cherish it.

63. According to the Egyptian-born poet Constantine Cavafy: “When you set out on your journey... pray that the road is long, full of adventure, full of knowledge”. His own journey with the Agency had indeed been long and there had been many adventures. It had been an honour and a privilege for him to serve as Director General for 12 years. He was deeply grateful to all his colleagues, past and present, for their sterling professionalism, their loyalty and their dedication. Without them, the Agency would not be where it was today. He thanked Member States for honouring him with their confidence.

64. Having congratulated his successor, Director General-designate Amano, he wished him every success and offered him his full support. He trusted that he would lead the Agency with vision, impartiality and courage.

65. After a lifetime as a diplomat and international civil servant, he knew that diplomacy and negotiation could be tedious. The lessons of history had been, however, that force rarely solved problems so it was better to follow the path of diplomacy. For diplomacy to succeed, States must act as one family, with the conviction that all human beings had a right to live in dignity and peace, free from fear and free from want, under a global security system that did not rely on inhumane weapons and was rooted in fairness and equity.

66. He concluded by recalling the concept of Ubuntu, the essential spirit of the continent of Africa, from which he came and to which he owed a debt of gratitude. Ubuntu was the recognition of the inextricable bonds that linked all human beings, and that no one existed in isolation: “I am, because you are”.

6. Approval of the appointment of the Director General (GC(53)/6 and 11)

67. The PRESIDENT, referring to document GC(53)/6, declared that, pursuant to Article VII.A of the Statute, the Board had decided to appoint Mr Yukiya Amano to serve as Director General of the Agency for a term of four years from 1 December 2009 to 30 November 2013 and had requested the General Conference to approve that appointment by adopting the draft resolution contained in document GC(53)/6. She took it that the General Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(53)/6.

68. It was so decided and the Conference confirmed the appointment of Mr Amano to the post of Director General by acclamation.

At the invitation of the President, Mr Amano entered the meeting.

69. The PRESIDENT informed Mr Amano that the General Conference had approved his appointment to the post of Director General. She was pleased to be the first to congratulate him on behalf of the General Conference and to wish him a successful tenure. She invited him to take the oath of office.

70. Mr AMANO took the following oath:

"I solemnly swear to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to discharge these functions and to regulate my conduct with the interest of the Agency only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other authority external to the Agency."

71. Mr AMANO said that he was greatly honoured that the General Conference had approved his appointment as the next Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency. He humbly accepted that appointment and expressed his sincere gratitude to Member States for their support and trust.

72. He expressed his profound respect to Mr ElBaradei for his outstanding contribution to the Agency during his 12-year tenure. His tireless efforts and selfless dedication to world peace and prosperity would undoubtedly be remembered. He wished him good health and all the very best for the future.

73. His own appointment had occurred during a period of slow but continuous change for the Agency. Those changes included increasing risks of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism, the rise in demand for energy coupled with concerns about increased greenhouse gas emissions, food security, water availability, human health and the continuing difficulties of the global economy. All of those challenges were global issues, and the Agency had the ability and responsibility to address them using nuclear technologies.

74. Nuclear power generation could be an option for meeting increasing energy needs without significant amounts of greenhouse gas emissions. Developed and developing countries alike must be able to enjoy the advantages of nuclear power if they decided to introduce it. The application of radioisotopes could provide various benefits, including a boost in food production. Nuclear medicine was an effective tool to protect human health, especially in the fight against cancer. Natural resources such as water could be better managed through the use of nuclear technology. In those endeavours, the Agency's technical cooperation deserved particular attention, as it was indispensable in enabling people throughout the world to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

75. Other important issues were nuclear safety and security. Ensuring safety and security was critical in gaining the international community's wider support and better recognition of nuclear technology as safe and secure. The Agency should continue to play a vital role in those fields.

76. The spread of nuclear weapons and nuclear terrorism was an increasing threat for the international community. As science and technology continued to advance, as knowledge dissemination increased and as the movement of people and commodities became a more critical factor, the world faced increasing risks of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. It was unlikely that that trend would ever be reversed; rather, it would probably accelerate. Thus further efforts needed to be made to offset that trend by universalizing and further strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, especially the Agency's safeguards system. Safeguards agreements with States must be implemented fully, professionally and impartially with the full cooperation of all the States concerned. Those efforts, in their turn, would facilitate the increased use of nuclear energy.

77. Despite the aforementioned worrying aspects, there was a recent positive development, namely the emerging hope for progress in nuclear disarmament. If that hope was translated into a concrete result, the Agency might have a role to play in verification. While well placed to address the global issues he had just mentioned, the Agency's contribution could be maximized only when it pursued, in a balanced manner, its dual objective of ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including technical cooperation. Merely being a nuclear watchdog would not suffice and nor would promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy

alone. The Agency, in spite of its advantages, could not address those global issues on its own. Many other actors and stakeholders shared the same objectives at various levels. It was therefore necessary for the Agency to cooperate with Member States, international and regional organizations, international forums and civil societies. He intended to identify and build on the Agency's comparative advantages so as to achieve greater synergy in a wider context.

78. Constant efforts to enhance the quality of management were needed for the Agency to remain an effective and efficient organization. Priorities must be clearly defined so as to make maximum use of available resources, and any waste of resources must be eliminated. Communication between the Secretariat and Member States and between different parts of the Secretariat must continue to be improved in order to enhance efficiency and avoid duplication. Such efforts would be particularly called for if the General Conference approved an increase in the Agency's budget despite the difficult global economic situation. The Agency had an excellent and dedicated body of staff in which he had full confidence. Their expertise and professional skills were its greatest asset. It would be his responsibility to maintain the best possible working environment, and that was an area he aimed to build on further.

79. Having been entrusted with the responsibilities of chief administrative officer of the Agency, he pledged to manage the Agency in an impartial and reliable manner, under the authority and subject to the control of the Board of Governors, and for the benefit of all Member States.

80. As Japan's Ambassador in Vienna and Governor of the Agency until recently, he had been honoured to meet and form friendships with so many truly distinguished Governors and Ambassadors. He hoped to maintain those good contacts and to continue to build on that close cooperation in all areas.

81. In conclusion, he said that he was looking forward to working in close cooperation with the members of the Board so that the Agency could contribute to addressing global issues as a united and unified organization.

82. The PRESIDENT took it that the Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution in document GC(53)/11 conferring the title of Director General Emeritus on the outgoing Director General.

83. The draft resolution in document GC(53)/11 was adopted by acclamation.

84. The PRESIDENT paid tribute to Mr ElBaradei on behalf of the General Conference for his outstanding leadership of the Agency over the past 12 years. Expressing the hope that he would continue to make his experience available to the Agency and make the best possible use of the title of Director General Emeritus, she wished him happiness, good health and continued success in the years ahead.

85. Mr POTTS (Australia), speaking on behalf of the South East Asia and the Pacific Group, said he was delighted to see the appointment of an experienced diplomat from Japan, who knew the Asia and Pacific region well. The Group was encouraged by the broad and inclusive vision that he had articulated of an Agency that focused on non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, safeguards and verification, technical cooperation, and nuclear safety and security. Mr Amano had long been committed to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The Group had great confidence that he would be a highly effective leader of the Agency and assured him of its full support.

86. The Group also paid tribute to the outgoing Director General and expressed deep appreciation for his outstanding service to the Agency and the international community.

87. Mr DAVIES (United States of America), speaking on behalf of the North American Group, thanked the outgoing Director General for his tireless work over a dozen years to make the Agency a

valuable part of the global effort to ensure international peace, security and well-being. Under his leadership, the Agency had been universally recognized for its dual mission of enlarging the peaceful uses of nuclear energy while preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The decision to bestow on him and the Agency the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize was a testament both to his inspired work and to the Agency's vital role in addressing critical global challenges. His commitment to international peace and security and his leadership had earned great respect for the Agency and a safer world for all, in recognition of which the North American Group had been gratified to join in the consensus in bestowing on him the title of Director General Emeritus.

88. The Group warmly congratulated Mr Amano on his appointment as Director General. As a strong supporter of the Agency in all aspects of its mission, the Group stood ready to assist him in ensuring that the Agency was prepared to meet the growing challenges of the twenty-first century. Under the leadership of Mr ElBaradei and his predecessors, the Agency had emerged as a premier international institution. The Group was confident that Mr Amano, building on that strong foundation, would help Member States to shape the Agency of the future. The Group would continue to do its part to ensure that the Agency had the resources and authority to fulfil its mandate. He underlined its commitment to the Agency's success and confidence in its future leadership.

89. Mr CURIA (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed acknowledgement and gratitude to Mr ElBaradei for the devotion, dedication and stamina he had displayed over the years during which he had led the Agency and the results he had achieved. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize had been just recognition of both the Agency and its Director General, and awarding Mr ElBaradei the title of Director General Emeritus would encourage him further to pledge his knowledge, experience and dedication to the Agency. The Group congratulated the Director General designate, Mr Amano, on the confirmation of his appointment, and expressed the conviction that his leadership, experience and knowledge would consolidate the work of the Agency in continuing to find solutions to problems within its remit and in assuming its responsibilities, taking into account in particular the needs of the developing countries.

90. Mr SHIM Yoon-Joe (Republic of Korea), speaking on behalf of the Far East region, expressed appreciation for Mr ElBaradei's achievements as Director General, which had been fittingly acknowledged by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize. He also congratulated the Director General designate, Mr Amano, on the confirmation of his appointment by acclamation and pledged full cooperation with him in the development and enhancement of the Agency's work and activities.

7. Contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2010 (GC(53)/23)

91. The PRESIDENT said that on 16 June 2009 the Board of Governors had recommended a figure of \$85 million as the target for voluntary contributions to the TCF for 2010. She drew attention to the table in document GC(53)/23 showing the contributions each Member State would need to make in order to meet its share of that target.

92. The early pledging and payment of contributions to the TCF greatly helped the Secretariat in planning the Agency's technical cooperation programmes and all delegations that were in a position to do so were urged to notify the Secretariat during the current session of the contributions that their Governments would be making for 2010.

93. She would report at the end of the session, under a later agenda item, on the contributions which had been pledged up to that time. She hoped to be able to report favourably on the percentage of the 2010 target figure already pledged.

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2008 (GC(53)/7)

94. Ms NODA (Japan) said that the Agency played a key role not only in nuclear non-proliferation but also in promoting the peaceful uses of atomic energy in fields such as nuclear safety and security as well as technical cooperation, and thus it was one of the most important international organizations in the maintenance of peace and prosperity for humanity. Under the leadership of Director General ElBaradei, the Agency had gained an increased level of confidence and wider recognition by the international community. She expressed Japan's sincere appreciation to him for his many accomplishments over the years.

95. Japan had been making significant contributions both as a member of the Board of Governors since the Agency's foundation and as a model country in terms of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The knowledge and experience Japan had acquired in that field had been shared widely and constructively with many developing countries by means of technical cooperation. While adhering to its three non-nuclear principles of not possessing or producing nuclear weapons or permitting their introduction into Japan, her country had also been contributing to strengthening and developing the Agency's safeguards system by sharing its advanced safeguards technology.

96. Japan, in close cooperation with all Member States, was determined to continue making contributions to the Agency aimed at its further development and reinforcement. The nomination of Ambassador Amano as a candidate for the post of Director General had been evidence of that determination and Japan had been delighted that the appointment had been approved. She expressed Japan's gratitude for the valuable support extended to him by Member States. Japan, convinced that the Agency would continue to develop and be reinforced further under Mr Amano's leadership, asked all Member States to unify with a view to tackling the difficult issues the international community faced.

97. In recent years, in response to the growing demand for energy and to global warming, the international community had begun re-evaluating the role of nuclear energy. In view of the gathering momentum of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including nuclear power generation, it was necessary to give due consideration to safeguards, safety and security (the 3S's). An initiative had been launched at the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in 2008 to encourage countries considering the introduction of nuclear power generation to ensure the 3S's. As a follow-up activity to that initiative, Japan would, in cooperation with the Agency, continue to hold regional seminars on the subject and planned to host an international conference in 2010 on nuclear security for Asia particularly for countries introducing nuclear power programmes.

98. Cooperation was essential in the various stages of preparation necessary for the introduction of nuclear power, including the development of human resources and the establishment of legal and regulatory frameworks. For its part, Japan would extend various kinds of assistance, including the sharing of its experience and knowledge through multilateral and bilateral cooperation. It would continue to cooperate with the Agency in expanding assistance to those countries planning to introduce nuclear power generation, including through extrabudgetary contributions for the

development of national infrastructure for nuclear power plants, through the dispatching of experts, and by contributing actively to related international conferences.

99. With a view to strengthening efforts to combat global warming, it was necessary to mobilize all effective technologies, including those related to nuclear energy. Nuclear technology should not be excluded when considering the role of the clean development mechanism.

100. On the assurance of nuclear fuel supply, Japan had hosted the seminar on global nuclear fuel supply at Agency headquarters in January 2009, the purpose of which had been to allow for information sharing and fact finding on issues relating to the front end of the nuclear fuel cycle. Japan hoped that such initiatives would contribute to fostering an environment that would facilitate discussions at the Agency on the assurance of nuclear fuel supply. Japan would continue to participate proactively in such discussions.

101. Technical cooperation should continue to be one of the Agency's main pillars as it could effectively address the needs of many Member States. Japan, with its long history and numerous achievements in the field of radiation application, recognized the important role of nuclear science and technology in socio-economic development and would continue to make technical and personnel contributions relating to the utilization of isotopes in medical, industrial and other areas.

102. As a member, and currently chair, of the RCA, Japan had been contributing to joint research, development and training on nuclear science and technology for developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It had also been playing an important role in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in Asia through the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA).

103. Japan, as the only country to have suffered atomic bombings, had been at the forefront of international efforts aimed at the elimination of nuclear weapons and therefore welcomed the momentum that nuclear disarmament had gathered recently. The 2010 NPT Review Conference represented an extremely important milestone in that regard. To contribute to its success, Japan would be submitting a draft resolution on the elimination of nuclear weapons to the General Assembly in 2009, as had been the case for the past 15 years. Also, it would strengthen its efforts to promote the entry into force of the CTBT and strongly hoped that the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, which was a Japanese-Australian initiative, would propose concrete and practical recommendations to help strengthen the NPT regime.

104. The strengthening of Agency safeguards was especially vital for the enhancement of the non-proliferation regime. Japan had always ensured international confidence in its activities by maintaining a high level of transparency and had been shifting to integrated safeguards. It was currently engaged in consultations with the Agency towards the development of an integrated safeguards State level approach. Japan was determined to play a leading role globally in that regard. The most realistic and effective way to strengthen safeguards was through universalization of the additional protocol. Japan would continue actively to promote that universalization by hosting the Asian Senior-level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP) meetings and relevant Agency seminars. Japan attached great importance to ensuring and improving the Agency's independent analytical capabilities and with that in mind had made a contribution to help strengthen the functions of the Safeguards Analytical Laboratory.

105. The DPRK had launched a missile on 5 April 2009 and had conducted a nuclear test on 25 May 2009. In addition, it had launched a ballistic missile on 4 July 2009, in contravention of Security Council resolution 1874 (2009). The DPRK's nuclear and missile programmes, which posed a grave threat to the peace and security of north-east Asia and beyond, were totally unacceptable. The international community should work to implement Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009) and should demonstrate clearly that it would never tolerate the possession of nuclear

weapons by the DPRK. Japan was seeking to normalize its relationship with the DPRK through a comprehensive resolution of such outstanding matters as the abduction of Japanese nationals, nuclear and missile issues, and settlement of the unfortunate past. It continued to work actively towards a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issues.

106. Regrettably, the Islamic Republic of Iran had continued to expand its uranium enrichment related activities in defiance of calls by the international community. To remove the concerns of the international community and to gain its confidence, Iran must cooperate fully with the Agency and respond sincerely to the requirements set forth by the relevant Board and Security Council resolutions. Japan would continue to work towards a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the issue in concert with the international community.

107. Stressing the importance of nuclear safety, she pointed to Japan's specific knowledge and experience in ensuring the seismic safety of nuclear power plants. In order to share that know-how, it was planning to host an Agency international workshop in 2009 in the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa region, which had recently suffered an earthquake. Another contribution Japan intended to make to nuclear safety in Asia was by taking a lead in the fields of emergency preparedness and response, education and training, and radioactive waste management in the Asian Nuclear Safety Network. It would continue actively to support the Agency's efforts and activities geared towards ensuring nuclear safety, including seismic safety, and would continue to make extrabudgetary contributions to that end.

108. The safe transport of radioactive materials was another essential aspect of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Based on the right of freedom of navigation under international law, Japan would continue to conduct such transport, while employing the most stringent safety measures in accordance with international standards. It would also continue to engage in confidence-building dialogue with shipping and coastal States.

109. It was vital that the international community stand together and work against the threat posed by nuclear terrorism. The various activities conducted by the Agency through its Nuclear Security Fund, helped significantly to enhance nuclear security in individual countries. Japan would continue providing its assistance to help bolster nuclear security, mainly in Asia, with its contributions to the Nuclear Security Fund. In addition, Japan would cooperate with the countries concerned towards the success of the Global Summit on Nuclear Security proposed by President Obama for 2010.

110. The Agency's core missions, aimed at enhancing the well-being of the global population, would continue to grow. Nuclear science and technology were clearly essential for daily life. The Agency should continue to contribute to addressing urgent issues on the global agenda, such as energy security, climate change, water issues, poverty eradication and cancer therapy. To that end, Japan strongly believed that the climate of cooperation among Member States needed to be further cultivated. Japan, for its part, would continue to share its knowledge and experience with the Agency so as to make further contributions toward peace, health and prosperity. It would continue to play a leading role as a bridge in the international community, aiming to deepen the sense of cooperation among Member States and to imbue a new spirit of Vienna.

111. Ms AYITTEY (Ghana), having conveyed the best wishes of President Professor John Atta Mills for a successful General Conference, reaffirmed the continued importance and relevance of the Agency as the only global body committed to ensuring that nuclear technology and its applications were used for peaceful purposes for the benefit of mankind. Referring to the Annual Report for 2008, she said that the Agency had demonstrated inter alia a clear commitment to the promotion of international cooperation in its efforts to help maintain the level of global nuclear safety that was needed. Those activities had not been limited to the nuclear powers, but had — commendably — covered all Member States both individually and as members of the various regions of the world.

112. Ghana attached great importance to the Agency's technical cooperation programme and appreciated its role in partnering Member States from Africa in using nuclear science and technology to address their socio-economic needs in human health, nutrition, agriculture, energy, industry and the environment. Ghana applauded the collaboration between the Agency and AFRA in the development and implementation of regional projects. Ghana supported AFRA's efforts to maximize the use of the available infrastructure and expertise in Africa in the field of nuclear science and technology towards the achievement of regional self-sufficiency and the development of strategies for concrete problem solving and thematic planning. To strengthen those efforts, Ghana invited Member States with nuclear educational institutions to support the region's effort to establish an African Network for Education in Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA-NEST) to promote, manage and preserve nuclear knowledge for the sustainability of nuclear technology in Africa.

113. Research scientists from the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission and other national research institutions and universities were engaged in various activities using nuclear and biotechnological techniques which were well aligned to the Country Programme Framework. Ghana's nuclear capabilities were dedicated not only to research, education and training but also to the promotion of commercialization aimed at achieving sustainability in its research activities. Continued investment in research and development and the effective harnessing of technology in agriculture, health and infrastructural development were vital if the United Nations Millennium Development Goals were to be achieved. It was Ghana's main objective, therefore, to ensure that nuclear and related techniques continued to play a critical role in its crop improvement, pest management, food preservation, medical sterilization, radiotherapy, nuclear medicine and petrochemical and mining industries.

114. Ghana was pleased to note the Agency's considerable work in cancer treatment. Early detection, which was crucial for effective treatment, was almost impossible without the requisite equipment and trained personnel. Ghana had been a beneficiary of the Agency's efforts to address challenges in those areas, particularly through the mobilization of resources for the establishment of the infrastructure necessary for prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Indeed, with the support of the Agency, Ghana had been able to secure a loan of \$13.5 million from the OPEC Fund and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa for the upgrading and expansion of radiotherapy centres in Accra and Kumasi. There were plans to establish a third centre in Tamale to serve the northern part of Ghana and the neighbouring West African countries which did not have radiotherapy facilities. Ghana was profoundly grateful to the Director General and the staff of the PACT Office in that regard.

115. Since the availability of talented and qualified human resources would ultimately ensure sustainability and growth in the use of both non-power and power applications in Ghana and Africa as a whole, Ghana had sought to strengthen its relevant institutions. The Graduate School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences of the University of Ghana, established in cooperation with the Agency in 2006, had recently been audited and favourably recommended for approval and recognition as an AFRA regional designated centre for professional and higher education. Ghana remained grateful to the Agency for its assistance in the establishment of that institution, for providing funds for students to pursue PhD sandwich programmes, and for the supply of vital equipment for student laboratory exercises and research. By way of building on that assistance and to further strengthen institutional capacity, Ghana had also established a national accelerator facility to complement the use of its existing nuclear facilities. That and other developments in its nuclear industry would in the long term require increased levels of manpower capacity in its nuclear institutions.

116. To promote the number of women in the nuclear industry, Ghana was encouraging its female students to pursue scientific courses and careers. To complement Ghana's own efforts, she asked the Agency to consider offering scholarships to Ghanaian and other African students, especially girls, to pursue postgraduate studies in nuclear science and technology, and to help expand the resource pool of women in the nuclear field for national and continent-wide development.

117. Amid the challenges of climate change and energy insecurity, there was the need for urgent and decisive action to address the issues of food security, agricultural development and the lack of potable water, particularly in African Member States, which often suffered the adverse effects of erratic rainfall patterns resulting in long periods of drought and sometimes floods. In that regard, Ghana welcomed and supported the use of the isotope hydrology technique, initiated by the Agency. Ghana also expressed its appreciation to the Agency for the development and use of the sterile insect technique for the suppression and eradication of tsetse flies, and further development of the technique for the elimination of the anopheles mosquito that caused malaria.

118. Sustainable development was not attainable without reliable access to energy. The non-availability or inadequate supply of electricity in many African countries, including Ghana, had been a major factor in the continent's slow development. For that reason, Ghana and some other African countries were considering the introduction of nuclear electricity as part of their energy mix. It would facilitate access by rural and urban communities to uninterrupted electricity, bringing with it opportunities for communities to engage in more beneficial commercial enterprises to improve their standard of life and to improve industrialization in African countries. Ghana was grateful for the Agency's concerted efforts to assist Member States in developing the requisite infrastructure for nuclear power for electricity generation. However, further assistance by the Agency for the establishment of new nuclear infrastructure and the expansion of existing infrastructure would be needed, and Ghana looked forward to greater collaboration in that regard.

119. Ghana had initiated the process of establishing an independent regulatory body, to be named the Ghana Nuclear Regulatory Authority, which would be responsible for enhancing the legal, regulatory and radioactive waste management infrastructure to ensure an effective nuclear safety and security regime. Efforts were also being made to ensure early ratification of all international instruments, which would strengthen international confidence in Ghana's nuclear programme. Ghana appreciated the Agency's assistance and support in the establishment of its regulatory and legal framework.

120. Ghana reaffirmed its full support to the Agency in the performance of its statutory duties, and urged recommitment by Member States to its ideals and principles. In that context, Ghana looked forward to enhanced cooperation and partnership with the Agency and its Member States.

121. In conclusion, she commended Mr ElBaradei, whose tenure of office had had its challenges but whose successes had been great. Ghana saluted him for the able manner in which he had directed the affairs of the Agency in the most difficult of times and wished him well in retirement. Ghana looked forward to working with Mr Amano and stood ready to support him fully in his new task. With the support and cooperation of all Member States, the Agency would be further strengthened to carry out its mandate.

122. Mr CHU (United States of America) congratulated Mr Amano on his appointment and pledged his Government's full support; he also thanked Mr ElBaradei for his quarter-century of distinguished service to the Agency and 12 years as Director General. His leadership had earned him and the Agency a Nobel Peace Prize and the enduring gratitude of the international community.

123. He read out the following message from President Obama.

"The United States stands with the IAEA and its Member States in seeking to advance the non-proliferation, energy, and developmental goals embodied in this Agency. These goals advance the common interests of our nations, and the needs of our citizens. They also define the central challenge of the nuclear age — that of using nuclear energy in ways that prevent proliferation and pursuing the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.

“We know the road to elimination of nuclear weapons will be long and difficult, and can only be achieved if all nations live up to their responsibilities. But we must not defer tough problems to future generations — there are important steps that we must take to advance the common security of all people. The stakes involved are enormous. Now is the time to strengthen a durable, global regime that prevents the spread of nuclear weapons to additional States or terrorist groups; reduces the world’s nuclear weapons; and pursues a world in which nuclear power is used for peaceful purposes. It is for this reason that in Prague last April, I laid out a comprehensive agenda for nuclear arms control and non-proliferation, which you will hear more about later today.

“The IAEA is central to that agenda and to the establishment of new, durable frameworks for cooperation. To that end, we must ensure that the IAEA has the resources and authority it needs to verify that nuclear programmes are peaceful, to facilitate access to a clean source of energy, and to improve the lives of citizens the world over — all without incurring new nuclear dangers.

“Working together, with renewed commitment and the exercise of our shared obligations, we can succeed in making real, substantive progress towards a world that is safer, more secure, and more prosperous. I hope you will join me and my delegation in committing to this goal and to the IAEA and other institutions that support it.

“Please accept my thanks for your hard work on building a better, more secure future. I wish you all the best for a successful conference.”

124. As President Obama had noted, the United States viewed the Agency as essential to solving some of the world’s most pressing problems, and to seizing one of its greatest opportunities. By unleashing the energy that bound the nuclei of atoms, a source of energy had been created that could play an important role in helping the world decrease its carbon emissions. But the energy of nuclear reactions had also given the world weapons of enormous destructive capability, so vigilance had to be exercised in guarding against the threats of proliferation. The Agency had been given the daunting task of helping guide the world along that difficult path, of making nuclear power plentiful while ensuring its use was peaceful. The NPT was the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, and President Obama had called on all nations to strengthen it.

125. The Agency would continue to play a vital role in the safe and responsible expansion of nuclear power to combat climate change and promote economic prosperity. President Obama had called for a new framework for civil nuclear cooperation so that all countries could access peaceful nuclear power without increasing the risks of proliferation. That framework could build on commercial models that already existed to provide the necessary tools and reassurance to the market. Binding and enforceable contracts could be extended to those that desired enhanced energy security. Confidence would come in the form of dependable fuel services that addressed the needs associated with all aspects of the commercial fuel cycle.

126. Around the world, used fuel management remained an important source of uncertainty for nuclear investment. The United States believed that the new civil nuclear framework should seek international cooperation to relieve nuclear fuel consumers of that uncertainty. It was time for governments to work together to take responsibility for managing the back end of the fuel cycle.

127. For its part, the United States had chosen to step back from an early decision about the final disposition of such material in a geological repository, but was confident that it could safely store it in dry-cask storage for a sufficient period of time while better alternatives were developed. The United States Government would appoint a high-level commission to examine its nuclear waste strategy in light of technical developments and knowledge gained over the past 25 years. It would also continue

to support mechanisms to reinforce the supply of nuclear fuel, including such measures as the fuel bank proposals put forward by the Russian Federation and the Agency.

128. The United States had long supported efforts, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to help nations build the necessary infrastructure for safe, secure and responsible use of nuclear energy. It applauded the Agency's efforts in that area and would continue to be a strong supporter through funding and technical expertise. The Department of Energy was also supporting vigorous nuclear power research, including: Generation IV reactors that could burn down long-lived actinides to reduce the amount and lifetime of nuclear waste; modular reactors that could be built and shipped as a single unit and did not need refuelling for an extended period of time; and new fuel processing methods to reduce proliferation risks.

129. International nuclear cooperation depended on a robust nuclear liability regime. To strengthen that regime, his country encouraged all nations to ratify and bring into force the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. The United States of America was proud to support the work the Agency did to leverage nuclear science for purposes other than energy, for example by pioneering the use of nuclear technology for food, medicine and safe drinking water in order to improve human welfare around the world.

130. The Agency's continued leadership was needed in strengthening international safeguards. All Member States should grant the Agency the authority to carry out its safeguards mission effectively. That meant bringing into force comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols to make them the accepted verification standard for the world. Earlier in 2009 the United States had brought into force its own additional protocol and it encouraged others to do the same. As information would be the life blood of a strengthened safeguards system, the Agency needed Member States' support in developing an information-driven approach that went hand-in-hand with inspection access rights to help uncover clandestine activities. In that regard, resources for the Agency's safeguards activities must keep pace with demand.

131. Under its next generation safeguards initiative the United States was addressing international safeguards needs over the next 25 years and beyond. It was developing new techniques for characterizing nuclear materials, new approaches for monitoring nuclear facilities and new tools for integrated information analysis. It was recruiting and training a new generation of safeguards experts and expanding its efforts to help other countries pursue nuclear power safely and securely. It welcomed Japan's decision to host the second international conference on Next Generation Safeguards in October 2009. As decades of experience had shown, countries with peaceful activities and ambitions had nothing to fear from safeguards. However, countries that violated their international obligations must face serious consequences both in the Agency and in the Security Council. Failure to impose meaningful consequences jeopardized everything that had been achieved. That could not be allowed to happen.

132. The Agency should continue to take the lead in achieving President Obama's vision, set forth in Prague in April 2009, of a world without nuclear weapons. The United States had already begun taking concrete steps. It had dramatically reduced the number of nuclear weapons in its stockpile and had permanently removed more than 430 tons of fissile material from weapons use. It had blended down 113 tons of its HEU into reactor fuel, enough for about 2700 nuclear warheads. It was also building a new MOX fuel fabrication plant that would permanently and transparently eliminate at least 34 metric tons of surplus weapons plutonium while producing enough fuel to power one million homes for 50 years. Once the MOX fuel had been irradiated in nuclear reactors, the plutonium was no longer readily weapons usable.

133. Furthermore, the United States had made progress in negotiating a new strategic arms reduction treaty with the Russian Federation, was actively pursuing its own ratification of the CTBT, and had finally reached agreement at the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty. It was time to make the concrete gains of recent years irreversible by making them part of a global, durable and verifiable ban on the production of fissile material for weapons.

134. The Agency had a critical role to play in keeping nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists. It was known that terrorists would not hesitate to use a nuclear weapon, so the essential strategy had to be to prevent them from acquiring or producing one. As long as there was unsecured nuclear material around the world, all nations were at risk. In that regard, President Obama had set an ambitious but achievable goal of securing all vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years. The United States was accelerating its efforts, but could not achieve that goal on its own. It was working with the Russian Federation and other countries to ensure that all fissile material, whether from civil or military programmes, was accounted for and secured against diversion or terrorist threats. One component of that effort was the conversion of civilian research reactors away from HEU. Over the past 12 months, the United States had worked with the Agency and its Member States to convert 7 reactors to use LEU fuel. Since 1996, it had have removed enough HEU fuel for nearly 100 nuclear weapons.

135. It was necessary to work together to disrupt black market networks and stop transfers of dangerous materials, including radiological sources that could be used to make dirty bombs. The United States had worked with the Agency, the European Union and other partners to deploy more than 1000 radiation detection systems at seaports, airports, border crossings and other international transit points. The Agency was promoting best practices for nuclear security and providing transparency and accountability to the world community. The work of the new World Institute for Nuclear Security, which had the support of the Department of Energy, would complement the Agency's efforts. To address those issues in a global forum, President Obama would be hosting an international nuclear security summit in Washington in April 2010, which would be an opportunity to reinforce commitments and advance national and international actions to secure nuclear materials and prevent nuclear terrorism.

136. It was an important moment for the Agency and the world. The transition to a new Director General provided an opportunity to review the Agency's priorities and needs. The United States was committed to working with the Agency and its Member States to place the Agency on a firm foundation for the future. It would help to provide the resources the Agency needed to remain a strong and effective partner in the common efforts. It wanted to help to bring Agency members together, to overcome lingering differences and achieve lasting progress towards the use of atoms for peace alone.

137. Mr WANG Yiren (China) paid tribute to the outgoing Director General, Mr ElBaradei, and the contributions made by the Agency to the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear non-proliferation under his leadership. He also congratulated the incoming Director General, Mr Amano, on his nomination.

138. At the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century held in April 2009 in Beijing, ministers and high-ranking officials from all countries had gathered to share experiences and views and explore future strategies and ideas concerning the sustainable development of nuclear energy. There had been broad consensus that nuclear energy was a technically proven, clean, safe and economically competitive source of energy. Thus, the Conference had made a positive contribution to promoting the global renaissance and expansion of nuclear energy.

139. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy in China were expanding rapidly. The existing 11 operational nuclear power units with an installed capacity of 9100 MW(e) would be complemented

by a further 24 units approved for construction with a total capacity of 25.4 GW(e). In the framework of the medium- and long-term nuclear development plan (2005-2020), another 40 GW(e) of capacity would be installed, with a further 18 GW(e) under construction. China was also engaged in analysis and deliberations with a view to possibly expanding that medium- and long-term nuclear power target.

140. After more than half a century, China had mastered the key technologies in uranium prospecting, mining, purification, conversion, enrichment and fuel element fabrication and had established a complete nuclear industrial system. It had the capacity to assure the requisite fuel supply for its nuclear energy development. Priority was being given to R&D of next generation technologies, including the China experimental fast reactor and the high-temperature gas-cooled reactor demonstration project. China was also actively participating in the GIF (Generation IV International Forum) and ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) programmes.

141. Nuclear safety was a precondition for the sustainable development of nuclear energy. China had acceded to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. It had put in place a comprehensive legal and regulatory system for nuclear safety, established the National Nuclear Emergency Response Coordination Committee, and formulated national nuclear emergency plans. In addition, it had intensified research into critical technologies for radioactive waste management, including decommissioning of nuclear facilities, spent fuel reprocessing, treatment and disposal of radioactive waste, partitioning and transmutation. The strategy of regional near-surface disposal of low and intermediate level radioactive waste and deep geological disposal of high level and transuranium radioactive waste had been developed with a view to reducing the volume of radioactive waste and ensuring environmental safety.

142. China, a long-standing opponent of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism, had developed a complete nuclear material management and export control system. The country had participated in the amendment of the CPPNM and was about to deposit with the Agency its instrument of ratification of that amendment.

143. Economic development, climate change and energy security were global issues that required international joint efforts. Despite the impact of the global financial crisis, global nuclear energy had grown steadily and there was a growing interest in nuclear power among developing Member States. The Iranian and North Korean nuclear issues remained pending, international calls for strengthening non-proliferation were increasing and new proposals were emerging for multilateral nuclear fuel cycle mechanisms. In response to the new situation, the Agency would have a more prominent role to play in a number of areas.

144. Firstly, in the context of the global nuclear renaissance, many developing Member States looked to the Agency for support in promoting nuclear power and nuclear technology applications. In so doing, the Agency should ensure balance in its activities and ensure increased support for technical cooperation with adequate and assured funding.

145. Secondly, the Agency should also focus on nuclear infrastructure development, which was of critical importance to new entrants to nuclear power. His delegation welcomed the increase in the number of technical cooperation projects in that field and the provision of Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review (INIR) services for newcomers. China's technical cooperation project with the Agency on enhancing the capabilities of national institutions supporting nuclear power development was proceeding smoothly. Its successful implementation would boost domestic infrastructure development and human resource development, contribute to the sound expansion of China's nuclear energy industry, set a model for other developing countries in the region and beyond, and facilitate training and assistance to other countries.

146. Thirdly, the Agency should strengthen nuclear safety and security and prevent nuclear terrorism. It should continue its efforts to establish a global nuclear safety and security legal framework and international standards, increase exchanges of nuclear knowledge, experience and lessons learnt and disseminate a culture of nuclear safety with a view to increasing public confidence in nuclear energy development. China hoped to continue cooperation with the Agency to ensure nuclear security at the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai.

147. Fourthly, the Agency should facilitate discussions on approaches to assured supply of nuclear fuel. Nuclear fuel supply was essential for nuclear energy development and a number of proposals on the development of multilateral nuclear fuel cycle mechanisms had been put forward in recent years. The establishment of such mechanisms carried certain benefits for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the effective prevention of nuclear proliferation. Relevant issues should be addressed in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner. All parties concerned should continue discussing the political, legal and technical issues involved and seek a solution acceptable to all.

148. Fifthly, the Agency should enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of safeguards. Its responsibilities relating to verification, efficient safeguards and ensuring the peaceful use of nuclear energy were an increasing challenge and progress was needed towards the universal application of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols. The Agency should improve its own technical capability and at the same time should strengthen cooperation with Member States by making full use of their resources in order to achieve safeguards objectives. China stood ready to support the Agency's efforts to that end.

149. Sixthly, the Agency's efforts to resolve complex nuclear issues had been the focus of international attention. China had been consistently advocating peaceful solutions to the North Korean and Iranian nuclear issues through dialogue and negotiations and had made unremitting efforts in that regard. China would continue cooperating with all parties concerned to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to find an appropriate solution to the Iranian nuclear issue with a view to safeguarding the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and maintaining regional peace and stability. The Agency should maintain its objectivity and impartiality and continue to play a constructive role.

150. The rapid expansion of nuclear energy worldwide represented both a challenge and an opportunity for the Agency. The close cooperation and concerted efforts of Member States and the Secretariat would help the Agency fulfil its mission.

151. Mr SALEHI (Islamic Republic of Iran) expressed the hope that the General Conference would address a number of issues, including the inalienable right of States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, the enhancement of international peace and security through the eradication of weapons of mass destruction, the universal application of the comprehensive safeguards regime without prejudice or discrimination, the need to maintain a balance between the Agency's promotional responsibilities and its verification activities, and the need for an internationally negotiated, legally binding instrument on assurances of nuclear fuel supply. Furthermore, it was important to recognize the threat posed to the Agency's independence by the political pressure exerted on the Secretariat.

152. Since the end of the second world war and the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear energy and associated technologies had stood at a crossroads between the development of nuclear technology, on the one hand, and global and regional wrangling, on the other. Nuclear competition aimed at unilateral domination had resulted only in an ominous cold war, and although all traces of that time appeared to have disappeared, its defining authoritarianism and arrogance continued to hold sway. Iran's courageous and almost single-handed attempts to challenge such arrogance had met only with affirmations by a number of States that they were defending their national interests. Under that

pretext, those States had amassed a terrifying arsenal in the Persian Gulf tens of thousands of miles away from home. Meanwhile, Iran's attempts to exercise its sovereign right were shamelessly denied. The continued threat of attack on Iran's nuclear facilities had only strengthened its resolve. It had overcome an imposed war and unjust sanctions and emerged as one of the most advanced countries in the region. Iran had successfully launched a satellite, and had played a pioneering role in the cloning of sheep, cows and goats. It had one of the highest numbers of students per capita and had published more books than any other Muslim country. Iran took seriously the threats made against it and had every confidence in its capacity to defend itself.

153. Iran was a peace-loving nation and viewed dialogue and unconditional negotiations as the key to conflict resolution. Iran had always rejected weapons of mass destruction and the non-peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and insisted on the integrity of the NPT and on global nuclear disarmament. The international community had witnessed Iran's appeal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Unfortunately, Israel had failed to cooperate in that regard. It had not acceded to the NPT and it possessed a nuclear weapons programme. It constantly turned a deaf ear to international appeals for peace and security and refused the Agency access to its nuclear installations. Such arrogance would surely lead to unexpected consequences within the region. Iran, by contrast, had maintained strong and active ties with the Agency since its inception, and had even gone beyond the call of duty by implementing the additional protocol for over two and a half years in order to demonstrate transparency and a spirit of cooperation. Subsequently, Iran and the Agency had agreed on a work plan to establish a timescale for ending the Agency's investigations of Iran's nuclear activities, with a view to making safeguards implementation a routine process in Iran. He hoped that the Agency would keep its word and deliver on its commitments in accordance with the final paragraph of the work plan contained in document INFCIRC/711. Iran would not accept discriminatory treatment.

154. With respect to Iran's nuclear programme, he said his country now had considerable radioisotope production capacity. That capacity was expected to increase further once the heavy water reactor at Arak came into operation. Thereafter, Iran intended to meet the humanitarian needs of neighbouring countries by providing them with pharmaceutical radioisotopes. Also, Iran was prepared to share its experience of nuclear technology by hosting, in collaboration with the Agency, various regional and international workshops and training courses on nuclear applications in medicine, agriculture and industry. The production capacity at the uranium conversion facility in Isfahan could be made available to other countries on request, under the full supervision of the Agency. Iran was embarking on a long-term plan to construct nuclear power plants with a total capacity of 5000 MW(e) within the next decade. Such an ambitious project required comprehensive planning in various fields of nuclear technology, such as the fuel cycle, safety and waste management techniques.

155. In the course of its peaceful nuclear activities, Iran remained committed to cooperating closely with the Agency in accordance with its safeguards agreement.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.