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President: Ms RASI (Finland)
Later: Mr ENKHSAIKHAN JARGALSAIKHAN (Mongolia)

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[1] The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(53)/INF/7/Rev.1.

Abbreviations used in this record:

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
ARASIA	Cooperative Agreement for Arab States in Asia for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
Bangkok Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone
CANDU	Canada deuterium-uranium [reactor]
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Early Notification Convention	Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
INES	International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
IRS	Incident Reporting System
LEU	low-enriched uranium
NDT	non-destructive testing
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/NEA	Nuclear Energy Agency of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

PET	positron emission tomography
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SESAME	Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East
SIT	sterile insect technique
SQP	small quantities protocol
START	Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

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

1. Mr SMITH (United Kingdom) said that the 2009 General Conference was meeting at a time when the nuclear question was central to the great and interconnected challenges of global society: global security, getting the global economy back on track, climate change and energy needs, global poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Guided by that conviction, in its *Road to 2010* policy document published in July, the United Kingdom had set out a vision of how it thought the international community could best address those nuclear-related issues in the coming years and how best to focus international efforts.

2. The Agency was at the forefront of international efforts to deliver a safe, secure and proliferation–free nuclear future. It was essential for it to maintain and strengthen its work in that regard. The United Kingdom therefore welcomed the lively and constructive discussions that had taken place during 2009 within the framework of the informal and open-ended process on the future of the Agency and the role it should play in 2020 and beyond.

3. Nuclear power was a proven technology which generated low-carbon electricity. It was affordable, dependable, safe and capable of increasing diversity of energy supply. It was an essential part of any global solution to the challenges of climate change and energy security. His country did not seek to persuade other countries to develop nuclear power — that was a decision for independent sovereign Governments. However, it noted the recent upward revision by the Agency of its nuclear power projections, and it proceeded from the firm assumption that the coming years would see a significant increase in the use of nuclear energy. It was determined to engage in that new phase of nuclear energy in a way which maximized the opportunities and minimized the risks.

4. One of the areas in which the United Kingdom sought to make a contribution was on the question of assurances of fuel supply. The nuclear fuel assurance proposal it had presented the preceding week to the Board of Governors was part of that effort. It facilitated access to nuclear energy, sparing countries the huge cost and technological challenge involved in establishing their own nuclear fuel cycle, while addressing existing concerns over security of supply of nuclear fuel services. As the Director General had said in his introductory statement to the Board of Governors in the preceding week, the United Kingdom proposal was fully consistent with the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy enshrined in Article IV of the NPT. His country remained open to and would welcome further comments and advice from Member States on its proposal as it continued to shape the concept into an effective mechanism ready for implementation.

5. As more States were now considering a nuclear power programme or seeking to expand an existing one, his country was convinced that the time was right to ensure that multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle were developed jointly by supplier and customer States, to provide attractive and robust options that would contribute to meeting increased nuclear fuel supply requirements in the long term.

6. A number of other proposals were also on the table, which the United Kingdom welcomed, because customer States should be able to choose from the widest possible range of non-discriminatory options to ensure the closest fit to their individual needs.

7. The Agency had a key role to play in that regard as an objective guide, standard setter and monitor. In that connection, he welcomed the launch of the Agency's INIR service.

8. In 2008, he had reported to the General Conference on the publication by his Government of a White Paper on nuclear energy. That paper had confirmed that the United Kingdom saw nuclear power as an essential part of its energy mix for a more secure and prosperous low-carbon Britain. With the objective of enabling companies to begin operation of new nuclear power stations between 2017 and 2020, the United Kingdom had taken active steps over the preceding year to establish and consolidate the right policy framework and create the right conditions in the country for investment in new nuclear power stations.

9. With regard to the question of regulation, his Government was currently conducting a public consultation on a proposal to restructure the organizational framework of its national nuclear regulation. The idea was to create a new sector-specific independent regulator with its own predominantly non-executive governing board that had clear lines of accountability to central government. It would have responsibility for safety, security, safeguards and transport functions and would enjoy enhanced autonomy. That would build on existing regulatory strengths to create a modern organization that was empowered to meet the challenges of the changing nuclear environment.

10. In light of the potential nuclear renaissance worldwide, the United Kingdom was seeking to minimize the proliferation risks that could arise from an expansion of nuclear power. In that connection, enhancing the Agency's safeguards capabilities was of the utmost priority. His country urged non-nuclear weapons States that had not yet done so to conclude and bring into force a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol and, whenever relevant, to amend their SQP. It endorsed the opinion expressed by the Director General at the June meetings of the Board that, without the additional protocol, the Agency could not do its work in a credible way. It did not underestimate the technical challenges that the implementation of safeguards might entail for some countries and it remained ready, with the Agency and other Member States, to share with requesting countries best practice and expertise on safeguards implementation.

11. During the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Agency had repeatedly called on Member States and NPT State Parties to respond to the need for improvement of its technical capabilities. The United Kingdom had been assisting Agency safeguards since 1981 through its national safeguards support programme. It was keen to update and improve the programme and encouraged the Agency to make greater use of the support it provided and of its facilities and expertise, including with respect to increased training of existing and new safeguards inspectors.

12. In addition, the safeguards regime should be continuously reviewed to ensure that it remained fit for its purpose. Continued concerns regarding non-compliant and non-cooperative States indicated that it might be time to initiate an international discussion on what additional powers of inspection the Agency should be given in the future.

13. The Director General's recent report on Iran made it clear once again that Iran was continuing its enrichment-related activities in defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions. Iran had belatedly agreed to allow Agency access to the heavy-water research reactor at Arak and to improve monitoring at Natanz. Those small and belated steps only highlighted the many areas in which Iran was not fulfilling its responsibilities. The Director General had noted that Iran had not cooperated with the Agency on outstanding issues with a possible military dimension for over a year.

14. Implementation by Iran of the additional protocol, and the fulfilment of its commitments under the provisions of the modified Code 3.1 of its Subsidiary Arrangements, were essential steps if confidence was to be established in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. The United

Kingdom called again on Iran to comply without qualification with its safeguards obligations and to submit outstanding design information as requested by the Agency, including in relation to the nuclear power plant to be built at Darkhovin.

15. His country urged the DPRK to fulfil its NPT obligations, resume cooperation with the Agency, refrain from further provocative actions and re-engage in dialogue with the international community. Actions that breached Security Council resolutions and NPT obligations undermined regional security and further isolated the DPRK.

16. It was of the utmost importance for the international community to ensure that terrorist groups did not acquire and use nuclear devices. The threat was real, which was why the international community should recognize nuclear security as a fourth pillar of the global nuclear non-proliferation framework. The Agency had a key role to play in that area as well.

17. By helping Member States to improve regulatory infrastructures and border monitoring, enhancing national capabilities and reducing the risk by securing radioactive sources, the nuclear security programme had already achieved considerable success. However, assessment and evaluation missions had identified the need for further improvements by many Member States.

18. The Agency had a vital role to play in matching Member States' nuclear security requirements with the capacity and expertise of other Member States, facilitating a multilateral assistance relationship between them.

19. Building on its existing good work, the Agency was also in a unique position to ensure that all Member States with fissile material fulfilled their responsibility to ensure that it was fully secure. As was underlined in its *Road to 2010* paper, the United Kingdom was eager to see a strengthening in the longer term of the Agency's role in securing adherence to Agency security guidelines beyond the current voluntary arrangements.

20. His country welcomed the agreement reached on the extension of the nuclear security programme through the Nuclear Security Plan 2010–2013, which provided a sound basis for enhanced cooperation with other countries on those issues. To underscore its support for the programme, it had contributed a further £4 million to the Nuclear Security Fund in 2009.

21. Mr ERTAY (Turkey) said that the General Conference had adopted a substantial agenda, reflecting the growing relevance of the Agency in the complex global security environment. Since its foundation, the Agency had made great strides in international nuclear cooperation and had greatly contributed to the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Now, when the international community was facing diverse challenges with respect to the future of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the role of the Agency in maximizing the contribution of nuclear technology to human well-being, while minimizing the risks of proliferation, was more significant than ever.

22. Turkey was fully committed to the NPT and its three pillars of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, each of which was of equal importance. It advocated global disarmament and supported international arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. It was party to all international non-proliferation instruments and export control regimes and fully supported their implementation.

23. The Agency's safeguards system formed an essential part of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The universal adoption and implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols was a prerequisite for an effective and credible safeguards system. Turkey therefore supported the universalization of the additional protocol as the current verification standard.

It attached great importance to the effectiveness of the Agency's safeguards system and appreciated the meticulous manner in which the Secretariat pursued verification activities under its mandate.

24. His country noted with satisfaction that the Agency continued to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran. However, it also noted that the Agency was still unable to provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in that country.

25. It was important that the outstanding issues relating to Iran's nuclear programme be addressed in a constructive and transparent manner and brought to a positive conclusion without further delay. As a neighbour of Iran, Turkey was prepared to contribute to the resolution of the ongoing crisis of confidence between Iran and the international community through peaceful and diplomatic means.

26. With regard to the implementation of NPT safeguards in Syria, his country considered it essential that all parties display full transparency with a view to assisting the Agency to conclude its verification activities without further complications. Turkey trusted that continued engagement of and with Syria would help the Agency eliminate ambiguities and resolve the issue.

27. Turkey found regrettable the actions that had been taken by the DPRK during 2009, which had been in clear violation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. The missile launches and nuclear weapon test that country had carried out undermined mutual trust, security and stability in the region and beyond. His country was particularly concerned by the DPRK's decision to cease all cooperation with the Agency, to the detriment of the application of safeguards in the country. It continued to support the six-party talks aimed at the complete, irreversible and verifiable disablement and dismantlement of the DPRK's nuclear weapons programme and related installations in the DPRK, and it encouraged the DPRK to return immediately to the negotiations.

28. His country highly valued the establishment, wherever feasible, of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones free of weapons of mass destruction. It particularly supported the establishment of an effectively verifiable zone free of such weapons, and their means of delivery, in the Middle East, and it encouraged all efforts aimed at developing a common regional understanding to that end, with the participation of all parties concerned.

29. Nuclear terrorism had recently emerged as a new challenge to be taken into account in non-proliferation efforts. Turkey strongly supported all appropriate measures aimed at preventing terrorists from gaining access to nuclear material and other components of nuclear weapons. It was committed to international efforts to combat terrorism in all its forms, including malicious acts involving nuclear and radioactive material. It therefore supported cooperation between the Agency and the Security Council pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the Agency's engagement with Member States to address the issue of illicit nuclear trafficking. It encouraged other Member States to join the Agency's illicit trafficking database.

30. Turkey remained resolutely committed to ensuring the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. It supported the Agency's efforts to promote and maintain a high level nuclear safety worldwide and encouraged the Secretariat to continue to strengthen its efforts in relation to nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety in regions where the need for improvement was greatest. It welcomed the revised IAEA Safety Standards Series as the main reference for Member States in drafting or reviewing their national nuclear safety regulations. Its support for the work of the four safety committees would continue, through sharing of expertise and best practice.

31. The Director General had informed the Board of Governors that the Agency's projections for nuclear power generating capacity in the medium term had been revised upwards. Turkey was aware that the number of Member States considering or already launching new nuclear power programmes was growing, with a corresponding rise in demand for Agency assistance. He expressed his country's

appreciation to the Agency for its important role in providing guidance to Member States on launching a nuclear power programme for the first time, and for its readiness to support infrastructure development for nuclear power.

32. With its rapidly expanding economy, Turkey's heavy dependence on fossil fuel resources from external suppliers posed a great challenge to its energy security. According to recent estimates, its growing energy demand would require an additional 100 000 MW(e) of installed electricity generating capacity by 2030. Turkey was looking into possible ways of diversifying its energy resources, in terms of both type and origin, in order to meet that demand.

33. Currently, there were no nuclear power plants in operation, under construction or decommissioned in Turkey, but the country considered the integration of nuclear energy into its supply package as a viable option to meet its energy requirements in the medium to long term. Preparations were about to be finalized for the construction of a nuclear power plant with a capacity of 5000 MW(e) by 2020. In addition, detailed site investigations were under way for a second site for a plant with a capacity of 10 000 MW(e).

34. Turkey was following closely the ongoing debate on multilateral approaches to assurances of nuclear fuel supply. The proposed arrangements raised several issues with regard to their technical, political, legal and economic implications that needed to be discussed extensively. His country was prepared to consider non-discriminatory approaches that would ensure uninterrupted supply in a manner that did not impair the current fuel market, based on objective criteria and without prejudice to the legitimate rights of States to develop their own peaceful nuclear capabilities under the NPT. From Turkey's perspective, such mechanisms should fully convince States that they would be able to obtain nuclear fuel in a predictable, stable and cost-effective manner over a long period without undue interference.

35. For the majority of Member States without nuclear power reactors, technical cooperation in the application of nuclear techniques in agriculture, human health, industry, environment, hydrology, or biological and physical research was a prime benefit of Agency membership. The Agency's work in helping developing countries with nuclear applications was important not only with respect to the direct contribution it made to human well-being; it also helped build broad support for the Agency and its larger responsibilities in relation to nuclear power, safety, security and non-proliferation.

36. He reiterated his country's strong support for the Agency's technical cooperation programme, as demonstrated by its consistent payment of its contributions to the TCF on time and in full. In addition to its regular payments to the TCF, Turkey would also be bearing the full costs of implementing its national projects during the current technical cooperation cycle.

37. Mr PARVEZ (Pakistan) said that the Agency's unique role as the world's focal point for promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy was assuming greater significance in view of the increasing global energy demand, the scarcity of fossil fuel reserves, and environmental concerns. There had been a resurgence of interest in nuclear power following more than twenty years of good and safe performance of nuclear power plants. The Agency had a guiding role to play in promoting equitable access to nuclear technology, material and equipment.

38. To ensure that every State could realize its right to the peaceful applications of nuclear technology, particularly nuclear power generation, there was a need to develop universal and non-discriminatory criteria for international cooperation. In that process, principles should be placed above perceptions. The Agency's Statute was based on the concept that the application of safeguards and safety measures was an associated function in promoting and transferring nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. A balance therefore should be maintained between the Agency's promotional activities and its work on verification and nuclear security. In recent times, verification and nuclear

security had taken up much of the attention of the Agency and its policy-making organs. Efforts should be made to ensure that such a trend did not hamper the Agency's core statutory function of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, particularly at a time when many developing countries were interested in developing nuclear power programmes and were looking to the Agency in that connection.

39. The technical cooperation programme was the primary vehicle through which the Agency fulfilled its promotional role and had brought tangible benefits to developing Member States. Pakistan, for its part, had benefited greatly from Agency technical cooperation, not only in the area of nuclear power, but also in such fields as agriculture, hydrology, medicine and industry. It highly appreciated the Agency's efforts to improve the quality of technical cooperation activities, making them compatible with the changing needs and requirements of Member States, despite resource constraints. Technical cooperation activities should be further strengthened by the provision of sufficient resources. Pakistan would continue to contribute to the programme by sharing its experience, offering training placements, and providing the services of experts.

40. His country had long been a strong advocate of using nuclear technology for progress and prosperity. It had been one of the first developing countries to consider using nuclear energy and its first nuclear power plant, which had been connected to the grid in 1972, was still operating, and all the front-end requirements of the fuel cycle were taken care of within the country. He thanked the Agency for its support in assessing the design and operational safety of his country's second nuclear power plant which had been commissioned in 2000 with Chinese assistance. Pakistan's third plant was nearing completion and the country looked to the Agency and the developed world for assistance as it developed its nuclear power programme, so that that clean source of electricity could be exploited in his energy-starved country.

41. His country had also developed programmes on the application of ionizing radiation and radioisotopes in the areas of agriculture and medicine. There were now 13 nuclear medicine centres across the country providing diagnostic and therapeutic services to some half a million people each year. A further five centres were under construction.

42. Since the inception of its atomic energy development programme, Pakistan had recognized the importance of ensuring safety and security. His country had always striven to follow existing international standards and practices and had based its national regulations on the Agency's safety standards. Agency guidance documents on the physical protection of facilities and material, and on the safety and security of radioactive sources, were used as a basis for inspection and enforcement.

43. Pakistan had been fulfilling its obligations under the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the CPPNM, and the Early Notification and Assistance Conventions. It also participated actively in the Agency's nuclear safety and security programmes and contributed to the Agency's illicit trafficking database, INES and the IRS.

44. His country was committed to nuclear non-proliferation and had maintained a good track record with regard to safeguards. It was continuously improving controls over the export of goods, technologies and facilities and believed that the global non-proliferation regime had to be strengthened on the basis of moral, political and international commitments.

45. In conclusion, his country expressed appreciation for the valuable assistance provided by the Agency in the areas of nuclear technology, safety and security. It urged the Agency to facilitate the construction of nuclear power plants in Member States on a non-discriminatory basis with a view to promoting economic growth for all.

46. Mr OTHMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) thanked the Member States that had expressed support and understanding for Syria's position. However, the comments of some States regarding the Israeli attack on Syria's territorial sovereignty in September 2007 and the destruction of a military installation that was under construction and that had no connection with nuclear activities were regrettable. Israel's conduct had flouted international law. In spite of Syria's indignation at the international community's failure to take any serious practical steps to question Israel and to take legal action against it pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions, it had met all the Agency's demands, allowing a team to visit the site of the destroyed building, to move around freely and to take environmental samples from the site and the surrounding area. Syria had also provided the Agency with information and replies to all its questions. It would continue to cooperate with it on all matters pertaining to its obligations under the Statute and its safeguards agreement. However, the fact that Syria was still being asked for information and documentation, while its attacker was never questioned, encouraged the latter to mount further attacks.

47. Syria deplored the manner in which the agenda item on application of Agency safeguards in the Middle East had been dealt with at the preceding session of the General Conference. The adoption of amendments proposed by the delegation of Israel, the only State in the region that had not acceded to the NPT, and the rejection of amendments proposed by the Arab States, undermined the spirit of consensus and sent a negative message to the peoples of the Middle East regarding the continuing application of double standards within the United Nations.

48. Israel had recently waged a savage war against the defenceless women and children of Gaza, using internationally prohibited weapons and had paid no heed to international appeals to halt the hostilities. Its war has caused panic, permanent disabilities, severe mental trauma, destruction and displacement, and it had flouted all international treaties concerning military acts against civilians. Such conduct underscored the urgent need to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons. He reminded the international community of the resolutions calling for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and of Syria's serious attempt to achieve that aim when, as a member of the United Nations Security Council in 2003, it had submitted a draft resolution on behalf of the Arab States concerning the establishment of such a zone. However, it had failed to secure the approval of the States that supported Israel.

49. Israel's obstruction of attempts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East were based on the argument that peace should first be achieved. That approach simply demonstrated that Israel lacked the political will to make peace and was determined to maintain its military hegemony in the region. A succession of Israeli governments had failed to take any positive steps in response to international peace initiatives. Instead they pressed ahead with their aggressive policy of occupation of Arab lands, settlement-building and the Judaization of Jerusalem.

50. The Pelindaba Treaty and the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia had both entered into force in 2009. Thus, the Southern Hemisphere was now a nuclear-weapon-free zone, thereby strengthening the NPT regime. The major powers bore a special responsibility to redouble their efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, otherwise the efforts made in Africa would lack credibility.

51. The group of Arab States had proposed an agenda item on Israeli nuclear capabilities at every session of the General Conference for a number of years and was seeking to draw attention at all major international events to the danger to regional and international peace, security and stability posed by Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. The unwillingness of some Member States to discuss the matter encouraged Israel to continue to develop its nuclear arsenal without any form of international oversight. His country called on the international community to give the agenda item the attention it deserved, and to bring pressure to bear on Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear

installations under Agency safeguards as a first step towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

52. The Agency had faced major difficulties in adopting its programme and budget for the year ahead owing to the Secretariat's proposal for a substantial increase. The agreement of the policy-making organs to a departure from zero real growth in the Regular Budget, to meet the costs of Major Programme 3 in particular, called for a process of reflection on priorities and on the extent to which they corresponded to the three pillars of the Agency's Statute. He urged the Secretariat to pursue a policy of rationalization when dealing with matters that did not form part of the Agency's core mandate and to give the requisite attention to matters that were directly related to the technical cooperation programme.

53. The process of preparing a strategy document containing a vision for the Agency's future had proved difficult for a number of reasons, chief among them the divergence of opinion regarding the Agency's priorities, the tremendous pressure on the Agency to finance programmes that were not directly related to its mandate, the limited resources available under the Regular Budget and the challenges posed by the current global economic crisis. Member States bore a responsibility to future generations to guarantee a bright future for the Agency, based on the three pillars of its Statute. One of their foremost responsibilities was the development of appropriate financing arrangements that would enable to Agency to fulfil its mandate in a balanced manner.

54. The developing countries faced many obstacles when it came to implementing their national technical cooperation programmes. It was essential to ensure the successful implementation of the Agency's technical cooperation programme, and that countries possessing the requisite technology provided the organization with the facilities it needed. A political prohibition on the export of scientific equipment for strictly humanitarian purposes prevented peoples from exercising their right under the Charter of the United Nations to benefit from scientific and technological development.

55. Syria continued to support the technical cooperation programme at regional and national level. In early 2009, it had hosted the regional meeting of the ARASIA Board of Representatives. That meeting had issued recommendations aimed at implementing regional projects under Agency oversight. He thanked the Secretariat staff who had helped to ensure their successful implementation.

56. Syria commended the Agency on its organization of seminars, workshops and technical meetings in 2008, the circulation of questionnaires, and the publications issued in the Nuclear Energy Series which offered helpful guidance to countries that were considering the nuclear energy option. The projects under the technical cooperation programme in that area afforded further evidence of the need for giving the same attention to that programme as to the rest of the Agency's programmes.

57. After a careful study of energy demand and availability, the Atomic Energy Commission of Syria and the Ministry for Electricity had launched a project in cooperation with the Agency on nuclear electricity generation. During the 2008–2009 biennium, Syria had opened a nuclear engineering branch at Damascus University. For the preceding ten years, the Agency had supported the advanced studies programme on radiation protection and the safety of radioactive sources run jointly by the Agency, the Atomic Energy Commission and Damascus University. Over that period, more than 200 students from a number of Arab countries had graduated. He warmly thanked the Agency's Secretariat and encouraged the Arab States to send their students to attend the course. In early 2010, a 33-week regional course in Arabic would begin in Damascus.

58. Mr TOUKAN (Jordan) said that, in view of Jordan's limited energy sources, nuclear energy was now perceived as the best available option to meet the country's future demand for electricity. Jordan currently relied on oil derivatives and the sharp increase in import costs had led to a trade deficit. As nuclear power was a stable source of energy and environmentally friendly, especially from the point of

view of climate change, it had become Jordan's strategic energy option for the future. It was also the most effective means of achieving the goal of building a strong economy based on a stable supply of energy and water.

59. Jordan's natural sources of uranium were a key component of the country's nuclear programme, enabling it become self-reliant in the area of power generation. There were also plans to build nuclear reactors to meet the country's demand for electricity and for low-cost energy for seawater desalination. The Jordan Atomic Energy Commission was drawing up plans for the exploitation of the country's uranium and had signed agreements with three international prospecting companies. It had also begun to build partnerships with international companies with a view to conducting geological, physical and chemical studies. Other studies focused on the building of nuclear reactors that complied with international nuclear safety and security standards, and a preparatory programme for the training of Jordanian human resources in nuclear science and technology had been launched. The Jordan University of Science and Technology now offered a nuclear engineering course, and preparations had begun for the building of a nuclear research and training reactor at the university.

60. Jordan had signed nuclear cooperation agreements with a number of countries with advanced nuclear energy programmes, such as France, Canada, China, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom, with a view to benefiting from their expertise. It would sign additional agreements before the end of 2009 with Argentina and Spain, and negotiations were under way with other countries, including Japan and the United States.

61. Jordan had benefited from a number of national, regional and interregional projects under the Agency's technical cooperation programme, in particular a project on uranium extraction under which the Agency had provided a facility for recovering yellowcake from phosphoric acid. Steps had been taken to implement two further projects, one on uranium extraction and the other on uranium exploration. Other important activities related to a technical and economic feasibility study for a nuclear power and water desalination plant, and the synchrotron project (SESAME).

62. Jordan greatly appreciated the Agency's technical support, in particular the recent INIR mission to the country. It had also recently completed its CPF.

63. He urged the Agency to give special attention to the needs of countries that were contemplating the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and were seeking to boost regional cooperation in order to take advantage of opportunities for investment in infrastructure pertaining to nuclear energy projects, nuclear safety and security requirements, and human resources development.

64. Jordan welcomed the proposals by Member States and the Director General concerning assurances of nuclear fuel supply. It drew attention to the need for an in-depth study of the legal aspects and implications of the proposals, and their political and technical dimensions. Nuclear fuel assurances should form part of an integrated programme to assist developing countries in building a sustainable civilian nuclear programme. Jordan was determined to broaden its range of options to include the purchase of nuclear fuel services in international markets, without undermining its right to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under Article IV of the NPT. It urged all parties to that Treaty to facilitate exchange of materials, equipment and scientific and technological information relating to peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

65. His country attached great importance to the safeguards regime, which played a major role in promoting nuclear disarmament and guaranteeing non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Thus it had signed a safeguards agreement and an additional protocol. It was very much aware of the danger posed by weapons of mass destruction to international peace and security and, in particular, to stability in the Middle East, which was still suffering from the consequences of the failure to implement resolutions concerning nuclear disarmament. Jordan emphasized the need for Israel to accede to the NPT and to

place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, which would bring about universal adherence to the NPT in the region and lay the basis for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Such action would encourage the countries of the region to focus on economic and social development instead of engaging in an arms race. In that context, he welcomed the substantive discussions under way concerning proposals to turn the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

66. Mr JAFFEER (Sri Lanka) said that his country attached great importance to the mandate and functions of the Agency relating to the peaceful use and application of nuclear energy and technology for economic and social development, and it continued to meet fully its obligations and responsibilities vis-à-vis the organization.

67. Throughout the fifty years the Agency had existed, the demand of countries seeking the benefits of the peaceful use and application of nuclear energy had increased, making the organization's role ever more essential. The Agency must remain balanced, impartial and non-political to address those demands, thus ensuring global peace, security and sustainable development. The Agency's success in that regard had been recognized and his country hoped that the prevailing atmosphere would continue to help it carry out its work and mandate effectively.

68. In recent years, the Agency had been facing new challenges. The depletion of non-renewable energy sources, escalating fossil fuel prices, and the growing challenges of climate change had renewed countries' interest in nuclear energy as a way of meeting the demands of national development and power generation. Hence, the Agency's role had become essential to ensure nuclear safety, security and verification.

69. Sri Lanka was evaluating the possibility of including nuclear power in its energy mix. It had included a special section on nuclear energy in its CPF for 2009–2013, which was currently being drafted and would be ready for signature in 2009.

70. Terrorism remained a great threat to humanity and one that his country had faced for nearly three decades. However, it had been able to overcome that menace and now looked to the future with renewed hope and enthusiasm. It had accelerated rehabilitation and development work in the affected areas and had initiated a political process to address issues via democratic means.

71. Sri Lanka fully supported global measures to combat terrorism and had been at the forefront of multilateral efforts as Chair of the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on the elimination of terrorism. It had helped negotiate several texts, resulting in the adoption of three treaties: the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

72. The world faced the grave threat of nuclear weapons and radioactive material falling into the hands of terrorists. It was therefore vital that countries remain vigilant and ensure that nuclear material and sources were kept safe, secure and accounted for.

73. Recent concerns had compelled Sri Lanka to address issues related to nuclear security. In collaboration with the United States-initiated Megaports Initiative, it had been able to improve the safety and security of radioactive sources and monitor international movement of nuclear material through ports in Sri Lanka.

74. General and complete disarmament had been a declared objective of the United Nations and the international community for many decades but had remained elusive. As one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement and an original signatory of the NPT, Sri Lanka had always held that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation were interlinked and could not be pursued independently and in isolation. However, obligations and commitments undertaken by countries

should not jeopardize their sovereign and inalienable right to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as enshrined in the relevant provisions of the NPT.

75. His country welcomed the recent renewed calls by leaders to address the obligations of the nuclear-weapon States to pursue disarmament as well as non-proliferation. It hoped that that conducive atmosphere would bring renewed vigour and dedication to the issue.

76. Over the preceding five decades, the use of nuclear applications to address challenges that developing nations faced, such as disease, hunger and shortage of drinking water, had increased. Sri Lanka attached high priority to the development of nuclear technology and its potential to contribute to socio-economic improvement in developing countries.

77. The Agency had played an indispensable role in the field of nuclear applications. Sri Lanka strongly endorsed the views of the Group of 77 and China on further strengthening of the technical cooperation activities of the Agency. Those vital aspects of the Agency's mandate should not be overlooked or weakened.

78. Agency technical cooperation had enabled Sri Lanka to build capacity in areas such as industry, agriculture, human health, nutrition and radiation protection. Over the preceding few years, the country had obtained technical assistance for such important activities as the use of radioisotope-based molecular techniques for the diagnosis and monitoring of major infectious diseases, including drug-resistant malaria and tuberculosis. Those projects had achieved positive results and had been beneficial for the country's development. There was a demand for support in the area of radiation therapy, diagnosis, medical physics and nutrition, and the necessary funding should be assured to facilitate technical cooperation activities in those areas.

79. The Agency also provided assistance in the field of agriculture, such as with the development of high-yield varieties of legumes and seeds, and drought-tolerant and high-yield varieties of spices, and in the use of radioisotope techniques in animal husbandry.

80. Ensuring food and nutrition security had emerged as one of Sri Lanka's priority requirements in improving the living standards of its people. Agency assistance in that sector closely complemented government initiatives and, under the Government's new food initiative, Sri Lanka had even been able to withstand the severe impact of the recent food crisis.

81. Sri Lanka had been an active member of the RCA since 1976. Under the RCA programme, it had recognized the importance of non-destructive testing techniques for enhancing safety and productivity in industry. The Department of National Planning of Sri Lanka had recommended the establishment of a national centre for non-destructive testing. The country had developed NDT inspection and training capability with the support of the Agency and the proposed centre would perform such work on an enhanced scale. Sri Lanka intended to seek Agency support in that regard in the form of training, equipment and expert services.

82. His country was concerned at the findings of the WHO regarding the increasing incidence of cancer in developing countries and the threat that it posed to their socio-economic development. In that connection, it commended the Agency's PACT programme, which was a clear demonstration of the peaceful use of the atom. Sri Lanka was privileged to host one of the six PACT Model Demonstration Sites. The PACT programme complemented Sri Lanka's health policies on the prevention, control and management of malignant diseases.

83. Sri Lanka had taken part in the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century organized by the Agency in China in April 2009. He thanked the Government of the People's Republic of China for hosting the conference, which had addressed several issues related to

fuel prices, concerns about harmful emissions, climate challenges, energy demand and nuclear energy for power generation.

84. Finally, his country had cooperated with the Agency on a project on human resources development for nuclear technology support which had promoted national development in the field of nuclear technology and had provided assistance in developing human resources in national institutions. It looked forward to continued cooperation with the Agency in similar projects.

85. Mr COGAN (Ireland) expressed appreciation for the vital role the Agency played in promoting safe, secure and peaceful nuclear technology. For some years his country had been a member of the drafting group which worked on resolutions related to transport of nuclear material and the security and safety of nuclear power.

86. The Agency's mission was as important today as when it was established. His country welcomed the ongoing debate on the future of the Agency which had begun with the publication of the report of the Commission of Eminent Persons on the role of the Agency up to 2020 and beyond.

87. His country believed that safety standards and practices were best supported by international peer review and the sharing of knowledge, and that the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime provided the best guarantee of international peace and security. It was committed to maintaining the integrity and inviolability of the relevant treaties and agreements.

88. The threat posed by nuclear weapons had changed considerably since the adoption of the NPT. Ireland, with the New Agenda Coalition and other partners, had consistently called for prioritization of nuclear disarmament and saw the 13 practical steps agreed upon by the 2000 NPT Review Conference as the benchmark for progress.

89. He welcomed the commitment by the President of the United States to work for a nuclear-weapon-free world and a stronger NPT, and to work towards ratification of the CTBT by the United States. He likewise welcomed the commitment by the United States and the Russian Federation to negotiate an instrument to replace the START treaties. The nuclear-weapon States should ensure increased transparency in their nuclear activities. Maintaining their current levels of weapons, or developing new ones on the pretext of increasing their national security, set a bad example for other countries.

90. The NPT provided an essential basis of mutual confidence for the international development of exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear energy and he called upon all those who had not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so. The NPT incorporated key rights and obligations which must be recognized by all State Parties. His country looked forward to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which it hoped would result in a new package of agreements, supported by specific and ambitious benchmarks of progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

91. Ireland believed that a comprehensive safeguards agreement together with an additional protocol was the only acceptable verification standard and was essential to ensure full confidence in the peaceful purpose of a country's nuclear programme. Anything less than the agreed Agency standards fell short and was unacceptable.

92. The nuclear test carried out by the DPRK in May 2009 showed that country's blatant disregard for the safety of its own citizens and of neighbouring countries. He called upon the DPRK to return to the six-party talks immediately and without preconditions, and to abandon and dismantle any nuclear-weapons-related programme completely, transparently and irreversibly. The DPRK must comply unconditionally and without delay with all its international obligations, as set out in the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and in the country's comprehensive safeguards agreement.

93. As the Director General had recently reported to the Board of Governors, Iran had cooperated with the Agency in some areas, but it had not suspended enrichment-related activities or its work on heavy-water projects, nor had it implemented the additional protocol. It must cooperate with the Agency in order to allow the latter to exclude any possibility of there being a military dimension to the country's nuclear programme, and it should implement the additional protocol without delay.

94. His own country had a policy of not using nuclear energy for electricity generation and remained unconvinced of the case for nuclear power put forward by its advocates. It believed that the risks to human health and the environment from the use of nuclear energy outweighed the potential benefits, but it did not seek to prevent others from harnessing that energy source. Many problems had not yet been resolved, such as the safety and security of nuclear installations, transport of nuclear material, interim and long-term waste management, unnecessary reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, contamination of the marine and terrestrial environment and the risk of accidents and proliferation. Thus, his country did not see the creation of a new generation of nuclear installations as a solution to the problem of climate change; instead, more international resources should be devoted to the development of renewable energy sources.

95. Despite its views on nuclear power, Ireland greatly valued its membership of the Agency, and the latter's work in the areas of safety and security, and safeguards and verification. His country believed in a multilateral approach to safety and security and it was glad to be able to contribute to the culture of learning and continuous improvement fostered by organizations like the Agency.

96. Because of the transboundary nature of the risks from a nuclear accident or transport of radioactive material, safety was a matter of concern for nuclear and non-nuclear States alike. Ireland was situated in close proximity to nuclear facilities in neighbouring States over which it had no control. Thus, it was pleased to be part of the global dialogue on nuclear issues, and it placed great emphasis on safety standards, environmental protection, multilateral cooperation and transparency. It welcomed the ongoing debate on nuclear safety and security and was reassured by the level of commitment to those issues displayed by nuclear energy-producing countries.

97. His country respected and valued the work of the Agency in providing the vital framework for cooperative efforts to build and strengthen the international nuclear safety and security regimes. That framework included advisory standards, codes, guides and binding international conventions, peer reviews and an international emergency preparedness and response system.

98. His country appreciated the Agency's research in the reprocessing field. Reprocessing gave rise to substantial safety and environmental concerns. Ireland was particularly concerned over the radioactive discharges into the marine environment from a reprocessing plant in a nearby State. It looked forward to working with the Agency to ensure that such activities were undertaken cleanly and without risk.

99. Ireland had welcomed the adoption in June 2009 of a European Union nuclear safety directive aimed at ensuring the highest standards of safety in the operation of European nuclear facilities. It supported a strong regime for regular, independent safety assessments at nuclear installations and would continue to work for stricter regulation and standards in Europe and throughout the world.

100. Turning to the transport of nuclear material, he said that Ireland believed that coastal States should be fully informed when shipments passed near their coasts, so that they could carry out a risk assessment and prepare appropriate emergency response measures. His country used the forum provided by the Agency to promote discussion of that issue and engage in meetings between shipping and coastal States.

101. As nuclear technology continued to spread beyond its traditional use in energy generation, the roles of the Agency, and the complexity of the challenges facing it, would continue to increase. Ireland valued and supported the Agency's pioneering work and its high-quality research in such areas as agriculture, food, human health and other nuclear applications. The TCF was particularly important for upgrading safety standards in beneficiary States.

102. His country welcomed the progress made under the Nuclear Security Plan 2006–2009, and the approval by the Board of Governors of the next plan covering the period 2010–2013. It welcomed especially the attention the Agency would be giving to providing assistance to States planning to include nuclear power in their energy mix for the first time. In his country's view, that activity reflected the Agency's greatest strength: sharing of knowledge and experience and nurturing of a culture of constant improvement through peer review.

103. The world had changed considerably since the Agency's founding and new challenges, such as advances in technology in energy production and elsewhere, and the wider application of nuclear technology in the industrial, health-care and agricultural sectors, made a review of its roles and objectives both timely and necessary. The review should be used to strengthen and amend existing structures in order to achieve more effective and efficient operation. He thanked Ambassador Kauppi of Finland and her successor, Ambassador Vallim Guerreiro of Brazil, for chairing that process.

104. Mr CURIA (Argentina) said that, over the preceding year, his country had continued to reactivate its nuclear activities, re-establishing a nuclear programme based around large-scale nuclear power generation, with a heavy emphasis on developing autonomous capacity in the supply of nuclear products and services, and around nuclear technology applications in public health and industry.

105. Work to complete the Atucha II nuclear power plant was ongoing and the plant was expected to be connected to the national grid in mid-2011. The preliminary studies and activities relating to the life extension of the Embalse nuclear power plant and the assessments relating to the construction of new nuclear power plants in the coming decade were also ongoing, and activities relating to the construction of the prototype innovative CAREM reactor had been stepped up and it was expected that project would be complete within five years.

106. Argentina continued to participate actively in international efforts to develop next-generation reactors and fuel cycles that offered a higher level of operational safety, substantially reduced radioactive waste generation and eliminated proliferation risks. In particular, it supported INPRO through the provision of experts and extrabudgetary funding.

107. Measures had been taken to strengthen nuclear fuel cycle activities and efforts were continuing with a view to resuming uranium enrichment activities at the Pilcaniyeu Technological Complex. The aim was to meet future demand for LEU for fuel elements for heavy-water moderated natural uranium power reactors, and to meet the demand for low-enriched fuel for national research and production reactors and, possibly, experimental reactors exported to third countries, and, in the medium term, for the CAREM reactor.

108. Uranium mining and prospecting activities were being intensified, as was environmental rehabilitation of deposits previously used for such mining. The Arroyito plant continued to produce heavy water with a view to completing the initial inventory for the Atucha II plant and supplying plants in operation.

109. Turning to nuclear technology applications, particularly in the area of human health, he noted that the operation of the nuclear medicine centres linked to the National Atomic Energy Commission had been strengthened, including through the upgrading of equipment and the continuation of research on boron neutron capture therapy. Recalling the acute shortage of radioisotopes for medical use, he

said that, with its normal production level, Argentina was not only meeting national demand for such radioisotopes but had also provided some to other countries in the region, including molybdenum-99.

110. The National Atomic Energy Commission had intensified its activities on nuclear power and research reactors, the fuel cycle, spent fuel and radioactive waste management, and nuclear applications, as well as basic scientific research. Efforts were also being made to strengthen the training of highly specialized human resources through the three university-level institutes specializing in nuclear and related disciplines, and associated nuclear medicine centres.

111. Argentina remained open to cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy at multilateral level through active participation in the Agency's technical cooperation programme and ARCAL, and at bilateral level through specific cooperation agreements with more than 30 countries. ARCAL was celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary. The Agreement constituted an important vehicle for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

112. His country attached particular importance to the Agency's nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety activities and international cooperation in that field. The existence of solid, effective and sustainable infrastructures was crucial for the expansion of nuclear energy, and its safe and efficient use. Training in those areas was also important. His country had always been active in that area and had signed a long-term agreement with the Agency to become a regional training centre. It welcomed the efforts of the Agency to conclude similar agreements with other countries.

113. Argentina appreciated the activities of the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies and stressed that technical projects undertaken by the Forum should be coordinated closely with Agency programmes. The 12th International Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association had been held in Buenos Aires in October 2008 and had led to the establishment of standards for protection against the harmful effects of radiation exposure with a view to strengthening radiation protection across the five continents. He thanked the Secretariat for its support which had ensured broad participation by developing countries.

114. Nuclear security and nuclear safety were issues that must be tackled together not separately, and careful consideration should be given to how the Secretariat dealt with the synergy between safety and security and with the risks of potential acts of nuclear terrorism.

115. International safeguards, together with nuclear and radiation safety, were especially important for facilitating nuclear expansion. The Agency implemented an effective verification system to assure the international community of the peaceful nature of nuclear programmes. Safeguards had to be implemented in a spirit of cooperation and dialogue between the Agency and Member States, guided by the principles of non-discrimination, quality, technical excellence and objectivity. He highlighted the valuable contribution ABACC had made to non-proliferation efforts for over 18 years. His country valued highly the cooperation between the Agency and ABACC, which should be extended and intensified.

116. Turning to nuclear accounting and control in Argentina, he noted that the Nuclear Regulatory Authority was continuing its work. The existence of such an independent body demonstrated his Government's conviction that appropriate accounting was essential for safe and efficient implementation of nuclear activities and public acceptance. The Nuclear Regulatory Authority continued to give priority to tasks related to the licensing of Atucha II and the CAREM reactor, and the life extension of the Embalse and Atucha I plants.

117. Mr EL-KHOURY (Lebanon) said that the Agency faced complex challenges in a world that was evolving at great speed. Scientific and technological advances, which should be associated with

equality of opportunity, transparency and morality, also involved political, economic and environmental risks, of which poor and developing societies, who accounted for the majority of the world's inhabitants, were generally the main victims. His country therefore supported the idea of involving all Member States in a dialogue with each other and with the Secretariat with a view to enhancing the Agency's performance. The main challenge would consist in translating the outcome of that dialogue into practical proposals on which all could agree, since views still differed sharply on such basic issues as safeguards, technical cooperation and nuclear security.

118. Lebanon attached special importance to the use of nuclear energy in such fields as agriculture, medicine and the environment in support of sustainable development. It reaffirmed States' inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, which should not be inhibited for political motives, or rendered ineffectual by an imbalance within the Agency between the various components of the organization's mandate. Lebanon was therefore paying close attention to the fuel assurance initiatives that were currently being discussed, and to the Director General's efforts in that connection. It would support any arrangement that secured a consensus, unless it placed an additional financial burden on the Agency or was used by a few advanced countries to monopolize expertise regarding the nuclear fuel cycle and to prevent transfer of fuel cycle expertise to developing countries. The Director General's initiative and the other proposals laid the basis for an eventual meeting of minds on effective guarantees that would allay the doubts and fears of some developing countries.

119. Lebanon was committed to full compliance with the Agency's nuclear safety guidelines and was taking steps to ratify the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Technical cooperation between the Agency and Lebanon on nuclear security was proceeding satisfactorily and was highly appreciated.

120. His country, like many others, was keen to explore the possibility of using nuclear energy for electricity generation. It urgently needed to address mounting problems and increased demand by developing appropriate infrastructure and legislation that was in line with the standards applied by the Agency. It would shortly be in a position to submit proposals to the Agency and friendly States requesting technical, scientific and material support.

121. Lebanon, which attached great importance to its partnership with the Agency and hoped to make full use of its programmes and expertise, had paid all its financial contributions and arrears.

122. He commended the Agency's activities in the area of safeguards and welcomed the use of extrabudgetary funds to modernize the Agency's laboratories. When undertaking verification work, the Secretariat should remain within the bounds of the Statute, maintaining a careful balance between the obligations imposed by comprehensive safeguards agreements and the standards of transparency, objectivity and impartiality observed by the parties thereto.

123. The significant increase in the Agency's latest budget proposal had impeded its smooth adoption. Any growth in the Agency's work should be natural and indispensable, and aim at meeting fresh demands for its expertise and services. It should not place an excessive burden on developing countries or adversely affect the technical cooperation programme. That would not be a difficult result to achieve if Member States put their minds to it and were determined to succeed.

124. The issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities was raised at every session of the General Conference. In reality, it was an easy problem to solve if States adopted an unbiased and strictly technical approach. All that the Arab States were demanding was that Israel accede to the NPT and place its nuclear installations under comprehensive Agency safeguards. Such action was a prerequisite for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, a region that continued to suffer from the consequences of Israeli aggression. The world had not forgotten the destructive war waged against Lebanon in the summer of 2006, and that waged against Gaza in early 2009. Israel had left millions of

cluster bombs on Lebanese soil which continued to claim victims among workers, children and members of the international units that had volunteered to clear them away.

125. However, one should not lose hope. The international community remained determined to achieve a just and comprehensive peace throughout the world, and particularly in the Middle East, so that all peoples could enjoy prosperity and well-being. The Agency had an essential role to play in that regard.

126. Mr FERUTĂ (Romania) said that his country's policy in promoting both power and non-power nuclear applications, and its national objectives within the framework of the technical cooperation programme, were in line with the European Union's objectives in the energy field. Development in the nuclear field continued to be essential to Romania, which considered investments in secure and sustainable nuclear power capabilities to be a viable option. The contribution of nuclear power to the country's national energy mix was continuously increasing.

127. The Cernavoda nuclear power plant, which currently provided around 18% of Romania's electricity, was to be extended with the completion of two new CANDU-6 units by the end of 2016, which were expected to supply 35% of electricity needs, thus reducing dependence on fossil fuels. In November 2008, the State-owned company Nuclearelectrica SA and a group of six important international investors had agreed to set up a project company devoted to the completion, commissioning and operation of those two new units. Romania had decided to extend its national nuclear programme still further and a site selection study for a new nuclear power plant, expected to become operational by 2020, was already under way.

128. Despite the world's economic and financial crisis, issues related to human health, water resources and the environment continued to be important and his country appreciated the Agency's efforts to apply nuclear science and technology in support of sustainable development in Member States.

129. Romania had been consistently promoting nuclear applications and techniques in medicine, and centres for early diagnosis and treatment of cancer based on PET were soon to be extended to all regions of the country.

130. Romania's main objectives in the area of non-power nuclear applications were: implementation of new image analysis and processing systems for medicine and industry; diversification of nuclear research and development in the field of radioisotopes, irradiation techniques and advanced materials technologies for use in a wide range of fields; and integration of its nuclear research infrastructure into the European Research Area Network.

131. Since the preceding General Conference, Romania had established a centre for the coordination and supervision of response to nuclear emergencies.

132. His country had been a party to the NPT since 1970 and was fully committed to its three pillars. The additional protocol to its safeguards agreement had been in force since 2000.

133. Romania had been an active promoter of the Agency's nuclear safety and security activities and saw international cooperation and adherence to the relevant conventions as crucial to promoting the global nuclear safety network.

134. His country had demonstrated its commitment to combating nuclear threats through its efforts to repatriate all high-enriched spent fuel stored in Romania to the Russian Federation, an activity that had been completed in June 2009 with the support of the Global Threat Reduction Initiative. The cooperation between his country, the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the Agency had made that operation a success. Romania had thus become the 14th country from which

high-enriched spent nuclear fuel had been totally removed. The operation had involved the first authorized commercial air shipment of spent nuclear fuel, demonstrating that air shipment was a viable option for spent fuel repatriation.

135. In the interests of preventing nuclear terrorism, Romania had decided to increase its involvement in the working groups organized under the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership. In September 2008, it had signed an agreement with the United States of America to coordinate efforts to prevent nuclear smuggling by installing modern radiation detection equipment at multiple points of entry. The ability to detect illicit shipments of nuclear and other radioactive material and rapidly share information on such events would be a key component in the global efforts to combat nuclear terrorism.

136. Romania continued to be committed to developing peaceful nuclear technologies through international technical cooperation coordinated by the Agency, and it was also ready to share its own expertise and experience with partners. The medium-term projects under its current CPF focused on nuclear and radiation safety, radioactive waste and spent fuel management, sustainability, human resources and human health.

137. His country had jointly organized with the Agency several international events related to its CPF priorities, which had provided opportunities for experts to exchange knowledge concerning reactor safety, safety assessment, decommissioning of nuclear facilities, human resources planning and management of the lifetime of nuclear power plants.

138. Plans for the next technical cooperation cycle should take into account the projected development of nuclear power over the coming years. Romania would continue to place emphasis on regional knowledge-sharing activities.

139. Romania continued to pay its full financial contribution to the Agency's technical cooperation activities and had already pledged its national voluntary contribution to support the Agency's technical cooperation projects.

140. His country believed strongly that the Agency had to have the resources it needed to operate independently and implement all its functions and tasks. He had been privileged to work on building a consensus on the 2010–2011 Agency programme and budget and was convinced that it constituted a step forward in preparing the Agency for its future challenges. The Agency's tasks of facilitating international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and promoting nuclear safety, security and verification were more important than ever.

141. Mr RIJMENANS (Belgium) said his country remained convinced of the Agency's crucial role in enlarging the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity and in ensuring, in conformity with its Statute, that nuclear activities were not diverted for military purposes. The Agency played an essential role in encouraging and assisting States to put in place the most rigorous nuclear safety criteria and in preventing terrorism. His country maintained that the NPT was and must remain the hub of the non-proliferation regime. International peace and security were currently facing major challenges and an effective multilateral approach was needed to respond to those challenges.

142. His country called once again on Iran to cooperate fully and transparently with the Agency and to respond as a matter of urgency to the outstanding issues regarding its nuclear programme in order to provide assurances of its exclusively peaceful nature. Iran must meet all its international obligations. In particular, it should implement the additional protocol and suspend its enrichment activities in conformity with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the Board of Governors. Belgium supported the impartial and professional work of the Agency in dealing with that particularly difficult case. It urged Iran to respond positively to the offers of negotiation made by the 5 permanent

members of the Security Council plus Germany, with the support of the European Union High Representative.

143. The Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had firmly condemned the nuclear test announced by the DPRK in April. Such provocation did not inspire confidence in the re-establishment of security and stability in the region. His country called on the DPRK to return to the six-party talks, reassume its responsibilities under the NPT, implement the decisions of the Security Council, dismantle its nuclear installations in a verifiable and irreversible manner and abandon its weapons-grade nuclear material. The Agency should play its full role in the verification of the DPRK's nuclear file and it was essential that the inspectors return to the country.

144. Belgium also called on Syria to cooperate fully and transparently with the Agency so that the latter could conduct all the investigations necessary to resolve the questions concerning the presence of undeclared nuclear material in the country. Syria should also ratify the additional protocol to allow its file to be closed swiftly.

145. The aforementioned cases showed the importance of giving the Agency the instruments it needed to carry out its work. It was essential to reinforce the obligation of States to cooperate with respect to nuclear verification. His country supported universal application of comprehensive safeguards and the additional protocol. Ninety-one countries had an additional protocol in force. The combination of an additional protocol and a comprehensive safeguards agreement had thus become the current verification standard. Belgium also called upon States concerned to sign an SQP and the amendment thereto as soon as possible.

146. Convinced as it was of the essential role played by the Agency, Belgium made both in-kind and financial contributions to the organization, of both an obligatory and voluntary nature. Technical cooperation was one of the Agency's priorities and his country attached especial importance to it. In the current year, Belgium would be paying a substantial contribution to the TCF.

147. The discussions in the Board of Governors on multilateral assurances of nuclear fuel supply were important and he urged Member States to follow them. Belgium was considering what contribution it might make to elaborating such a mechanism.

148. His country shared the international concern over the problems with the supply of medical radioisotopes and it was playing an active part in addressing that issue. In the short term, it had increased the production capacity of the BR2 reactor, to the extent that technical and organizational limitations permitted, without affecting the safety of the reactor and subject to adequate funding. The Belgian Institute for Radioisotopes had received authorization from the authorities to increase weekly production within the limits set for annual production. With a view to a longer-term solution, Belgium was participating in international initiatives to find a structural solution to the radioisotope supply problem. It was member of the high-level working group of the OECD/NEA on security of supply, in which the Agency also played an important role. It was currently studying the possibility of making a financial contribution to that group and called on the international community to pursue its efforts to find a solution to that urgent problem as quickly as possible.

149. Nuclear power provided over half of Belgium's electricity and the country was pursuing its consideration of its future energy policy. The committee which had been established to do that was currently preparing its final report which would be submitted to the Council of Ministers that autumn.

150. In April 2008, after several years of preparation, the Belgian safety authority had been strengthened by establishing a subsidiary organization responsible for a number of tasks, inter alia inspections in plants and safety analyses, which had previously been performed by a private body. The

know-how of that body had been largely preserved as 90% of its staff had been integrated into the subsidiary organization.

151. Pursuant to Article 35 of the Euratom Treaty, an inspection had been performed by the European Commission in January 2009 to verify the proper functioning of radioactivity monitoring installations and analysis and interpretation methods, and it had been concluded that Belgium was fulfilling all its obligations in that regard.

152. In 2006, his country had decided to build a final disposal site for short-lived low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste in the Dessel region. The Belgian Agency for Radioactive Waste and Enriched Fissile Materials (ONDRAF), which was responsible for the management of such waste, intended to submit a licensing request to the safety authority by 2011. The Federal Agency for Nuclear Control (AFCN) was following closely the preparatory work of ONDRAF and establishing specific guidelines based on international best practice and Agency standards. It was also adjusting the existing regulatory framework to adapt the licensing process for that type of installation.

153. ONDRAF, the AFCN and most federations active in the scrap metal sector had signed a protocol on contaminated scrap metal and radioactive substances at the end of 2007 with the aim of managing and tracing radioactive material outside the nuclear sector. One of the expected benefits of the protocol — which incorporated a financial incentive for operators — was a reduction in the number of undeclared or lost orphan sources. That mechanism would be evaluated after 3 years.

154. With regard to nuclear security, on 17 July 2009 the Council of Ministers had approved the draft regulations on the physical protection of nuclear material. The regulatory texts were currently with the Council of State and would then be sent to parliament. The future regulations were based directly on INFCIRC/225 and took account of the amendment to the CPPNM. Monitoring of the reliability of persons with access to nuclear material and installations and related documents was given major attention, as well as a graduated approach and defence in depth at sites where nuclear material was located.

155. The law accepting the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism had been adopted by parliament on 25 June 2009 and was awaiting royal approval.

156. Regulatory work was continuing on the safety of radioactive sources, based on the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources. The main difficulties encountered related to the extreme diversity of users and their significant numbers. Implementation of those regulations would require a user outreach campaign. With regard to export and import of sources, Belgium was in favour of more structured system for control of exports allowing for refusal.

157. When elaborating new nuclear regulations, the Agency's recommendations provided very valuable assistance. Thus, Belgium played an active part in several groups responsible for elaborating various parts of the Nuclear Security Series. It welcomed the progress made, though the task was far from finished, and felt sure the process would be crowned with success. However, attention should be given to strict respect for the principle of a graduated approach in selecting the recommended measures, and due account should be taken of the specific characteristics of fissile material and other radioactive material.

158. The Belgian competent authority had approved the draft safeguards agreement for Belgium elaborated by the Agency in collaboration with the European Commission. His country hope that integrated safeguards could be applied in the near future throughout the European Union, allowing for a rationalization of inspection activities and consequent substantial savings, without undermining non-proliferation objectives.

159. Expressing appreciation for the professionalism of the Director General and the Secretariat, he urged all Member States to work together to achieve their common objectives at a time when the Agency was facing major challenges.

160. Mr SVEDAS (Lithuania) said that non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction would always be particularly important for international peace and security and his country called upon all States to adhere to and comply with the NPT. The Agency's safeguards system played a central role in curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and moving towards nuclear disarmament. Lithuania strongly supported efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of that system and called upon all countries to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols, as the global standard for verifying compliance with the NPT. Lithuania firmly abided by its nuclear non-proliferation commitments, as was confirmed by the Agency and the fact it was one of the 25 Member States where integrated safeguards were being implemented throughout 2008.

161. Energy issues were very high on his country's political agenda and attracted a lot of public attention. By the end of 2009, the Ignalina nuclear power plant would be shut down and the necessary measures would have to be taken to ensure the safe and smooth decommissioning and dismantling of both its units. A regional project was under way, with the participation of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland, to develop the Visaginas nuclear power plant. In addition, power connections were being built with Poland, Sweden and Finland with a view to integrating the Baltic States' energy market into that of the European Union.

162. As a country using nuclear energy, Lithuania paid due attention to nuclear safety and security and radioactive waste management. The responsibility for nuclear security rested entirely with the State and an effective national security system was vital in enhancing global efforts to combat nuclear terrorism and in facilitating the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Physical protection issues were properly addressed at the country's existing nuclear facilities, and in the preparatory activities for the construction of new ones.

163. In April 2009, a national seminar on physical protection issues during the preparatory stage and construction of new nuclear facilities had been held in Lithuania. The Agency had given valuable assistance in providing experts for the event. Cooperation with the Agency on nuclear security had contributed towards defining the design basis threat for the new nuclear power plant to be built in the country.

164. Lithuania had deposited with the Agency ratification documents for the amendment to the CPPNM in May 2009 and hoped that the amendment would enter into force without delay.

165. During 2008, more than 70 experts from Lithuania had participated in safety-related workshops, expert meetings, conferences and other events organized in cooperation with, or under the auspices of, the Agency. More than 20 national experts had contributed to the review of Agency safety standards and guides. Further steps were being taken to strengthen the regulatory regime and the national regulatory authority — the State Nuclear Power Safety Inspectorate (VATESI). A new nuclear safety law was in preparation with the aim of reinforcing and increasing the efficiency of the nuclear safety regulation and supervision system by clearly defining supervision and enforcement measures and enhancing the financing system of the regulatory institution. During preparations for the construction of the new nuclear power plant, all regulatory requirements had been assessed systematically against the Agency's safety standards. A plan for further improvements had been developed, for implementation by 2011.

166. The target date for the commissioning of the new Visaginas nuclear power plant was 2018. The environmental impact assessment had been completed in close coordination with Lithuanian society and neighbouring countries. The resulting report had been examined by an Agency international expert

review mission. In April 2009, the Ministry of the Environment had taken a positive decision on the feasibility of constructing the Visaginas plant on the site of the Ignalina nuclear power plant. A business model to integrate all partner countries and a strategic investor would be developed by the end of 2009.

167. The issue of radioactive waste management was becoming increasingly relevant. Existing nuclear installations and other facilities using radioactive material were ageing and their eventual decommissioning was approaching. The nuclear renaissance made it necessary to supply new and innovative possibilities for the management of radioactive waste, including spent fuel. Confidence in the safety of spent fuel and radioactive waste management was an important factor in the public acceptance of nuclear energy. In that regard, Lithuania recognized the importance of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, which provided an international peer review mechanism. In implementing its national radioactive waste management strategy, Lithuania had significantly improved its radioactive waste management infrastructure. The country was also exploring possible alternative solutions for spent fuel management. It was participating in the European Repository Development Organization initiative with the aim of developing a concept for multinational geological disposal of spent fuel.

168. His country strove to maintain the highest standards in monitoring activities involving the use of ionizing radiation. Many measures were in place to ensure that the impact of ionizing radiation was justified, optimized and limited to the lowest possible level.

169. The Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources were non-binding international instruments. However, serious account had been taken of both in managing high-activity sources in Lithuania and in striving to establish effective control of sources and minimize the associated risks.

170. With regard to radiation protection in medicine, new diagnostic reference levels had been developed and approved in cooperation with the Agency, and another project on patient protection in computed tomography, especially in paediatrics, had been launched. On account of the importance Lithuania attached to training in that regard, a modern training centre had been established for national and foreign specialists. Efforts were being made to assimilate best international practices and develop appropriate training standards.

171. The Agency's technical cooperation programme was one of the key mechanisms for achieving a tangible socio-economic impact not only in individual Member States but also in the region. His country attached great importance to support for and strengthening of technical cooperation activities, It participated in government cost-sharing and paid its contribution to the TCF in full and on time. The country's participation in technical cooperation activities was based on its CPF developed in 2001, while its regional cooperation activities were guided by the European regional profile. The technical cooperation strategy for Europe, which was under development, would help the Agency manage national, regional and interregional projects.

172. In view of recent developments in the nuclear field, Lithuania was concerned at the lack of availability of qualified personnel for the nuclear industry. It appreciated the Agency's continued support for strengthening of capabilities for managing, preserving and transferring nuclear knowledge, and developing new skills and competences in nuclear-related areas.

173. Ms PHETCHARATANA (Thailand) said that the growing interest in nuclear energy, to which the increasing number of new entrant countries and the expansion of existing nuclear power programmes attested, was both an opportunity and a challenge for the Agency. The Agency would need strong support from all Member States to address in an effective manner challenges associated with the risks of nuclear accidents and terrorism. Thailand, for its part, had undertaken a number of

measures to complement the Agency's work to promote nuclear safeguards and verification, safety and security, and cooperation in science and technology applications. It hoped to strengthen further its partnership with the Agency, notably in the promotion of energy for development.

174. The Agency was the sole international nuclear verification body and the world relied on its technical expertise and indispensable role in strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Thailand commended the Agency's tireless efforts in implementing effective nuclear verification in several proliferation cases.

175. Her country supported all efforts aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system. Comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols served as the international standard for nuclear verification, and Thailand was taking practical steps to ratify an additional protocol. Her country looked forward to closer cooperation between the Agency and Member States based on goodwill and mutual respect, and to the development of cooperation between Agency inspectors and local experts in Member States, in particular in developing countries, which could enhance the Agency's verification work. Cooperation between the Agency and regional nuclear-weapon-free zones might also be explored to complement the Agency's safeguards system at regional level, and Thailand looked forward to cooperation between the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the Agency in building up a regional safeguards system and fostering regional cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies.

176. Thailand appreciated the Agency's continued efforts to enhance the security of nuclear material and radioactive sources, in particular through the development of the Nuclear Security Plan 2010–2013. It welcomed the Agency's role in assisting Member States to establish and maintain effective nuclear security, including through capacity building, guidelines, human resources development, and the provision of assistance with the implementation of relevant international legal instruments.

177. Her country was committed to establishing a safety and security system for emergency response, which would help to strengthen the mechanisms for notification, licensing, border control, inspection and enforcement. It also recognized the productive role of the Asian Nuclear Safety Network in the sharing of technical knowledge and practical experience to improve further the safety of nuclear installations in the region.

178. During the 27th ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting held in Myanmar in July, ASEAN countries had agreed to develop further the ASEAN nuclear energy cooperation subsector network to serve as a regional nuclear safety network in response to the growing interest in nuclear energy in South East Asia.

179. Through the technical cooperation programme, her country cooperated closely with the Agency to promote peaceful uses of technology, which contributed to its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Many useful projects had been implemented with the assistance and cooperation of the Agency. In the field of health, Thailand aspired to become a centre of excellence in the region for PACT through the development of multidisciplinary cancer capacity-building projects to enhance sustainability in developing Member States. In agriculture, she welcomed the cooperation between Thailand and the Agency in improving the SIT as the major component of sustainable, environmentally friendly and cost-effective integrated pest control. Thailand was willing to offer its expertise as a centre for SIT technology transfer in South East Asia.

180. Like many other countries, Thailand was seeking to diversify its energy supply sources, including through the use of nuclear energy. It was exploring ways of forging regional nuclear cooperation on a voluntary and non-binding basis to study issues relating to the civilian use of nuclear energy, as well as safety, capacity building, education and training, information sharing and public information. As a party to the Bangkok Treaty, Thailand was obliged to conduct a nuclear safety

assessment prior to embarking on a peaceful nuclear energy programme. It was therefore seeking the Agency's technical support and guidance on a number of aspects which were essential to build a safe, reliable, efficient and widely accepted nuclear power programme.

181. Her country also looked forward to strengthened cooperation with the Agency to enhance further the development and security of nuclear energy in the region. Such cooperation might encompass strategies to encourage private sector participation and strengthen joint initiatives by the public and private sectors to develop and implement future programmes and activities.

182. Thailand supported the international efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Iranian and DPRK nuclear issues. While respecting the inalienable right of all parties to the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, Thailand urged Iran to cooperate fully with the Agency. It joined others in calling upon the DPRK to comply fully with its international obligations. The six-party talks remained the main mechanism for achieving peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, and she urged all parties to return to that process as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 6:20 p.m.