

General Conference

GC(55)/OR.4

Issued: January 2012

General Distribution

Original: English

Fifty-fifth regular session

Plenary

Record of the Fourth Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Tuesday, 20 September 2011, at 3.10 p.m.

President: Ms LAOSE (Nigeria)

Later: Ms DENGO BENAVIDES (Costa Rica)

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Abbreviations used in this record:

ABACC	Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ARCAL	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
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
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
G8	Group of Eight
G20	Group of Twenty
HEU	high-enriched uranium
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
LDC	least developed country
LEU	low-enriched uranium
MESA	Middle East and South Asia
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NEA	Nuclear Energy Agency (of OECD)
New START	New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSART	Operational Safety Review Team
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PET	positron emission tomography
Quadripartite Agreement	Agreement between the Republic of Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards
R&D	research and development
RBMK	high-power channel-type reactor (Soviet Union)
SIT	sterile insect technique
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WANO	World Association of Nuclear Operators

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2010 (continued) (GC(55)/2)

1. Mr DZHAKSALIYEV (Kazakhstan) said that his country spared no effort to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. It had been 20 years since the closure of the Semipalatinsk test site, and the United Nations had declared 29 August — the anniversary of the closure — the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

2. As a party to the NPT, Kazakhstan was playing an active role in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It had declared its readiness to host the Agency LEU bank, in support of the Agency's initiative on assurance of supply of nuclear fuel. The Agency had sent a technical mission to Kazakhstan to examine the proposed sites for the LEU bank.

3. The establishment of international mechanisms for assurance of supply would not infringe upon the right of Member States to develop their own nuclear fuel cycle capacities. Any such mechanism should not be politicized or discriminatory in nature but should be accessible to all States that were in compliance with their safeguards agreements. Any transfer of nuclear material should take place in accordance with non-political criteria in an objective and consistent manner.

4. His country called on all States to work towards the universalization of safeguards agreements and the additional protocol, and it called on those countries that had not yet concluded safeguards agreements and additional protocols to do so without delay.

5. Kazakhstan had played a major role in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and it trusted that that example could be of use to other regions of the world. It supported the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and welcomed the Director General's initiative to convene a forum on the issue in November. His country would be pleased to share its experience in that field and continued to strive for a peaceful and secure world.

6. His country had ratified the CTBT and it called upon those States that had not yet done so to do likewise without delay, since the Treaty's entry into force was essential for the effective functioning of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

7. Kazakhstan was implementing the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and encouraged those countries that had not yet done so to accede to that Convention.

8. The 2010 Nuclear Security Summit, in which his country had participated, had reconfirmed the desire of the majority of States to strengthen global nuclear security. The principles set out in the Summit communiqué were supported by the majority of the Member States of the Agency, and Kazakhstan itself was making every effort to implement the Summit's work plan.

9. The transfer of spent fuel from the BN-350 reactor to a long-term storage facility had been completed. With the support of the United States Department of Energy, a project was being implemented to convert the WWR-K research reactor at the Institute of Nuclear Physics to LEU fuel. Technology for the production of radioisotopes using LEU was also being developed.

10. His country was implementing fully the provisions of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and was taking steps to improve further its system for preventing illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive material. As a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and

the Zangger Committee, Kazakhstan made every effort to maintain tight control over nuclear exports, including facilities and equipment that could be used for uranium enrichment and spent fuel reprocessing.

11. Kazakhstan appreciated the Agency's work to strengthen the nuclear safety regime, since any large-scale nuclear accident could have serious transboundary consequences. His country had participated in the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in the wake of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident and it supported the Agency's efforts to develop a stricter approach to ensuring safety in nuclear power. It welcomed the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety.

12. As the Agency was the leading global forum in the field of scientific and technical cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, it was important that States support its activities for transferring and developing technologies and knowledge related to peaceful nuclear applications, including nuclear power and the nuclear fuel cycle. The Agency's efforts relating to human resources development in the field of nuclear science and technology were particularly important to Kazakhstan.

13. He drew attention to his country's work in collaboration with the Agency in the field of nuclear medicine, and in assessing contamination at part of the Semipalatinsk test site with a view to its economic use.

14. Kazakhstan intended to develop further its technical cooperation with the Agency. It paid its contributions to the Agency's budget regularly and its voluntary contributions to the TCF, and it intended to meet its financial obligations in the future in full and without conditions.

15. His country was a leading producer of uranium ore, had the capacity to produce nuclear fuel and intended to expand its involvement in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy within the framework of the NPT. The Kazatomprom company was establishing a vertically integrated company with a full nuclear fuel cycle. The company was being integrated with a Russian isotope separation enterprise, and it was planned that joint conversion and fuel fabrication operations would be undertaken.

16. In conclusion, his country remained fully committed to the Agency's efforts to expand the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the good of humankind, strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and increase levels of nuclear safety worldwide.

17. Ms ŽIAKOVÁ (Slovakia), recalling the tragic earthquake and tsunami that had occurred in March 2011 in Japan and had led to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, expressed her country's deep-felt sympathy and support for the people of Japan and paid tribute to the workers at Fukushima and to the Japanese authorities for their courage in handling the crisis.

18. Despite that tragic event, nuclear energy continued to play an important role in meeting the world's energy needs. In Slovakia, over 50 % of electricity was produced by nuclear power plants. Safety was a top priority. All Slovak nuclear installations complied fully with international standards and were subject to regular safety assessments.

19. Her country welcomed the convening of the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June 2011 following the Fukushima accident, the subsequent adoption of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, the announcement by Government of Japan of its intention to organize an international conference on nuclear safety in 2012 in cooperation with the Agency, and the decision to hold an extraordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety in 2012 to review measures to strengthen the provisions and implementation of the Convention.

20. At the fifth review meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety in April 2011, Slovakia had given an overview of its progress since the preceding meeting, including measures taken to implement its national action plan. The so-called 'stress tests' agreed upon in the

European Union had been performed successfully in Slovakia and some specific measures had been adopted following them. They had confirmed the high safety standards of Slovak nuclear power plants. The measures to be implemented would improve plant safety further. In May 2011, the Slovak Government had decided to prepare and implement a national emergency exercise simulating an accident at a nuclear power plant in Slovakia.

21. The role of international safety review missions should be strengthened. Slovakia had hosted several such missions in the past and would be hosting an IRRS mission in 2012.

22. While nuclear safety was a national responsibility, the existing framework of international legal instruments in that area provided an adequate basis for preserving and enhancing nuclear safety at both national and international level. Slovakia encouraged countries developing nuclear power programmes to accede to all relevant international instruments, in particular the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

23. In the nuclear security field, she commended the Agency for its activities aimed at preventing and combating nuclear terrorism. The recent NPT Review Conference and Nuclear Security Summit had emphasized the key role of the Agency in helping Member States, at their request, to enhance nuclear security. The responsibility for nuclear security too rested with individual States and all States had the responsibility to establish appropriate systems and take the necessary measures to prevent, detect and respond to malicious acts involving nuclear material.

24. Her country welcomed the Director's General decision to host a forum in which States from the Middle East and other interested parties could learn from the experience of nuclear-weapon-free zones established in other regions. The forum could make an important contribution to the planned 2012 conference on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

25. While Slovakia was grateful to the Director General for his efforts to cope with existing challenges to the non-proliferation regime, it noted with concern that the Agency's most recent verification reports confirmed that those challenges continued to grow.

26. Her country deeply regretted the fact that, owing to insufficient cooperation by Iran, the Agency had been unable to provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared material and activities in that country and thus conclude that all its nuclear material was in peaceful activities. Iran should respond to outstanding concerns and fulfil its obligations under relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

27. Slovakia was also gravely concerned at the lack of any progress on the Syria file. The conclusion in the Director's General report to the Board in June (GOV/2011/30) that the destroyed building at the Dair Alzour site had very likely been a nuclear reactor and should have been declared by Syria pursuant to its safeguards agreement lent a strong sense of urgency to the overall situation. Syria must remedy the situation and cooperate with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues.

28. The DPRK's nuclear and missile programmes also remained a matter of grave concern. Recent information about the construction of a new uranium enrichment facility and a light water reactor in the DPRK seriously aggravated the situation. The DPRK must comply with its international obligations and abandon its nuclear programme.

29. Agency safeguards were a key element of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and were central to implementation of the NPT. Her country continued to view a comprehensive safeguards agreement plus an additional protocol as the current Agency verification standard. It actively supported the

safeguards system by cooperating with Member State safeguards support programmes, and by supporting the safeguards resolutions adopted by the General Conference.

30. Technical cooperation with the Agency remained an important part of Slovakia's international cooperation activities. It had been cooperating with the Agency within the framework of national, regional and interregional technical cooperation projects. In the 2012–2013 cycle, national projects would focus on nuclear regulation, decommissioning, human health, and nuclear science applications.

31. The Europe region played a double role in Agency technical cooperation activities: some countries provided know-how and financial support, and others were beneficiaries, participating in regional and national projects, attending meetings and training events, and receiving expert missions. The Europe region had adopted a strategy for the technical cooperation programme in the region in February 2010. The planning and design of regional projects had been conducted in a commendably transparent and open manner, which contributed to the high quality of projects.

32. The Agency should step up efforts to develop appropriate partnerships with other United Nations organizations and international organizations in order to improve the coherence and efficiency of its technical cooperation programme. Intensified cooperation with other organisations could help increase the socio-economic impact of technical cooperation initiatives, enhance synergies with other programmes and avoid duplication. As in previous years, Slovakia was ready to contribute to those efforts by providing experts and training facilities, and it would continue to pursue a general policy of accepting fellows and scientific visitors sponsored by the Agency.

33. Mr SCOTTI (Italy), offering his country's condolences to the people and Government of Japan, said that the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant had highlighted the need for further enhancement of international cooperation on nuclear safety. Safety standards had to be improved and effectively implemented at national and international level, which called for a tougher international nuclear safety regime and an even stronger role for the Agency. Italy therefore looked forward to the adoption during the General Conference of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety developed pursuant to the declaration adopted at the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June 2011. Member States should promptly carry out assessments of the capacity of their nuclear power plants to resist extreme natural hazards and submit the results to the Agency's peer review services. Such 'stress tests' had already begun in the European Union and Italy was firmly committed to their success and fully supported their implementation through the active participation of its national nuclear safety authority.

34. Achieving a high level of safety and security of radioactive sources also remained an important goal, to ensure adequate protection of the population and the environment from any loss of control of radioactive sources during their use. His country fully endorsed the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources which supplemented the Agency's Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, and it encouraged Member States to implement both.

35. Reducing the risk of access to and malicious use of nuclear material by non-State actors had become a common goal of the international community. Italy was fully committed to the success of the process started at the Washington Nuclear Security Summit and it strongly supported an enhanced role for the Agency and its nuclear security programme. It was particularly interested in strengthening national capacities through advanced training and the development of a nuclear security culture. In view of the positive evaluation of its first course, Italy intended to develop further the International School on Nuclear Security organized in Trieste in cooperation with the Agency and the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics.

36. Reinforcing the international safeguards regime remained one of Member States' shared goals and his country strongly supported the Agency's role in verifying, in accordance with comprehensive

safeguards agreements, that States were complying fully with their non-proliferation obligations. It supported the universal adoption of the additional protocol and urged all those countries which had not done so to conclude an additional protocol to their safeguard agreements.

37. While acknowledging the right to the peaceful use of the nuclear energy granted by the NPT, Italy continued to be concerned at the developments in some countries.

38. The Director General's latest report on Iran to the Board of Governors (GOV/2011/54) confirmed that that country was neither complying with United Nations Security Council resolutions nor providing the necessary cooperation to the Agency. Iran must engage in negotiations in good faith in order to establish international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

39. Mindful of the adoption in June of a resolution by the Board of Governors finding the Syrian Arab Republic in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations (GOV/2011/41), Italy called on Syria to engage constructively and without further delay with the Agency and to cooperate fully with the organization's inspectors on all outstanding issues.

40. The nuclear programme of the DPRK continued to be a source of great concern. The recent contacts in Bali between the delegations of the DPRK and the Republic of Korea were encouraging, however, and his country hoped that the six-party talks would resume as soon as possible.

41. Italy strongly believed that the goals set at the 2010 NPT Review Conference were achievable and it continued to support the international community's efforts to convene in 2012 an international conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East. It commended the Director General on his support for that process and looked forward to taking part in the related Agency forum planned for the autumn in Vienna.

42. The peaceful uses of nuclear energy continued to be one of the Agency's main goals and his country supported its activities related to the development of nuclear applications in the areas of human health, food and agriculture, water resources and environmental protection, which helped to address global challenges and promote achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In that connection, Italy was greatly interested in the discussions expected to take place during the Scientific Forum on the theme of water and water resources development. It encouraged the Secretariat and Member States to make the best use of the resources allocated to the IAEA Environment Laboratories in Monaco.

43. Despite the current international financial situation, he confirmed his country's support for the TCF and the activities promoted by the Agency under it. In view of the importance of promoting higher standards of nuclear safety worldwide, his country hoped that a larger part of the TCF would be devoted to activities in that area. Both donor and recipient countries, and the Secretariat needed to work harder to ensure that technical cooperation funds were spent as efficiently, effectively and transparently as possible.

44. Italy continued to support training activities, in particular those aimed at developing a stronger nuclear culture. In that connection, he drew attention to the activities promoted by the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, which was funded to a large extent by the Italian Government.

45. Welcoming the agreement on the budget for 2012–2013, he pointed out that, to fulfil its important mandate successfully, the Agency needed stable and adequate funding. At the same time, the current financial and economic difficulties required strict budgetary discipline throughout the

United Nations system. Italy therefore called on the Director General and his staff to improve the Agency's efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

46. Based on the results of a public consultation in June 2011, Italy had decided to discontinue its existing nuclear programme and all activities related to the development of new nuclear plants for power generation. Its commitment to promoting and upholding nuclear safety, security and safeguards, and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, remained firm and it would continue to support Agency activities in those areas. Its concern for the responsible use of nuclear energy, in full compliance with the Agency's international regime, required it to maintain its full commitment in the international arena. At national level, it would continue to allocate enough resources to maintain adequate competencies and to manage the heritage of its past nuclear programme. It was committed to ensuring the highest level of safety in decommissioning and waste management activities, and the highest standards of security when dealing with nuclear and radiological material.

47. Bilateral cooperation on nuclear issues, in particular with neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean and the western Balkans, would continue. During the General Conference, the Albanian National Nuclear Agency and the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development would be signing a cooperation agreement under which Italy would provide technical assistance with the updating of Albanian legislation with a view to the setting up of a nuclear energy programme.

48. Mr VAICIUNAS (Lithuania) said that the events at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant had demonstrated the transboundary implications of nuclear accidents and the need for the international community to take action and be prepared for future threats and challenges, however hypothetical. Nuclear safety had therefore become a top priority for the European Union and the world. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in June 2011 had been a welcome and timely initiative. The Agency played a vital role in enhancing nuclear safety and security and its efforts must be strengthened and supported by all Member States.

49. The IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety constituted an initial step towards strengthening nuclear safety worldwide, but its real value depended on the common political will to implement it.

50. As the Director General had stated in his report on the Ministerial Conference (GC(55)/INF/10), safety in the operation of a nuclear power plant was an element of foremost importance for the protection of people, society and the environment in all States, including those considering embarking on a nuclear power programme as well as those considering extending an existing programme. Member States should consider conducting periodic and comprehensive safety reviews of both existing and projected plants, giving prior consent to the Agency to perform systematic, regular peer reviews of regulatory effectiveness, operational safety, design review, site evaluation and emergency preparedness, along with follow-up reviews. Transparency, public information, obligatory implementation of Agency safety standards, adherence to safety conventions, and regular requests for specialized Agency missions for the whole nuclear fuel cycle, including site safety, should become an integral part of any nuclear power programme.

51. Given that nuclear accidents did not respect national borders, States should develop their nuclear energy projects with due consideration for the safety not only of their own population but also of other potentially affected countries, by holding consultations and settling transnational disputes constructively, ensuring full transparency of projects, and information sharing. It was particularly important to pay attention to the safety of new nuclear power plants. In that regard, Lithuania and other States in the region were concerned over nuclear power plant projects in the Russian Federation

and Belarus which lacked transparency and thus failed to comply with international practice and the current focus on improving nuclear safety and security.

52. Decommissioning activities continued at the Ignalina nuclear power plant, including monitoring of the safety of the units following shutdown, unloading of fuel from the second reactor, dismantling and decontamination of process equipment, completion of the construction of a buffer storage facility for very low-level radioactive waste, design of a near-surface repository for low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste, and construction of a new dry spent fuel storage facility and of a solid waste management and storage facility. Lithuania was also participating in the initiative to establish a European Repository Development Organization to develop a concept for multinational geological disposal of spent fuel. The decommissioning of the Ignalina plant represented an exceptional financial burden for Lithuania and adequate financial assistance was needed from the European Union to ensure safety. His country was doing pioneering work on the management of radioactive graphite from the RBMK reactors and would be happy to share its accumulated knowledge and experience with other countries. It was expected that all the facilities and infrastructure to support decommissioning would be in place by 2016 and that the whole decommissioning process would be finished by 2029.

53. In response to the Fukushima accident, and in view of the spent nuclear fuel located at the Ignalina site, Lithuania was participating in the European Union safety review based on comprehensive and transparent risk assessment. Stress tests had been performed at the Ignalina plant and the final report on the results would be provided to the national nuclear regulator soon. His country called on all countries outside the European Union to conduct similar stress tests at existing or planned nuclear facilities. Taking into account the recommendations of WANO, a detailed inspection of emergency preparedness had been conducted at Ignalina. As a result, a new version of the emergency preparedness plan had been produced that included additional corrective measures to meet new challenges.

54. The events at Fukushima had not dissuaded his country from pursuing the new Visaginas nuclear power plant project with its regional partners Estonia, Latvia and Poland. Some key milestones had been achieved in 2011 in that regard. Following intensive negotiations with nuclear infrastructure developers, Hitachi had been selected as the strategic investor. The signing of a concession agreement and other project-related agreements was envisaged by the end of the year. Comprehensive efforts had been made by his Government to reform nuclear and radiation safety regulatory infrastructure and create a more efficient, transparent and streamlined process for construction of the plant. A new law on nuclear safety had been adopted and numerous related existing laws and other legal acts had been amended. The regulatory environment now conformed to Agency recommendations and international best practice. All preparatory work for the nuclear power plant project, including an environmental impact assessment, a transport study, a detailed plan of the construction sites and assessments of two potential sites, had been completed. He thanked the Agency for organizing an expert mission to evaluate the site assessments. Both sites had proved suitable.

55. Coherent multinational efforts were needed to promote and strengthen the effectiveness of the Agency's safeguards system. An additional protocol and a comprehensive safeguards agreement constituted the current verification standard, which needed to be further strengthened, universalized and applied as a condition for the supply of nuclear material and technology worldwide. Lithuania encouraged all States with operational nuclear power plants, or plans to construct such facilities, to bring into force a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol as soon as possible.

56. Lithuania paid close attention to physical protection both during decommissioning and at new facilities under construction. National experts shared their experience by participating in Agency workshops and technical meetings. They were also involved in the preparation of the

recommendations on the physical protection of nuclear facilities and nuclear and other radioactive material, and the guidelines for implementation of those recommendations.

57. His country assigned priority to continued participation in the Agency's technical cooperation programme and its involvement would, in future, focus on strengthening nuclear regulatory capabilities, nuclear knowledge management, improvement of radioactive waste management, reduction of public, occupational and medical exposure, and improving preparedness for radiological and nuclear accidents.

58. Nuclear energy could be climate-friendly and safe if used responsibly in compliance with the highest international safety and security standards. The Agency's role in ensuring nuclear safety worldwide should be strengthened and the use of its services made more obligatory in nature. All States should take concrete actions to improve the global nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation regimes and ensure they were universally applied.

59. Mr CHOREV (Israel) said that, following the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, the safety of nuclear power and the future of the nuclear industry had become pressing issues in many countries. Public anxiety over the accident had forced governments to confirm their long-term commitment to improving nuclear safety. Nuclear accidents respected no borders and the wider implications of the Fukushima crisis had led the Director General to convene a high-level conference in June with a view to learning lessons from the accident and raising awareness of the need for high standards of nuclear safety. His country commended the Director General on his initiative and efforts and supported the endorsement of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety by the General Conference. Among other things, the action plan emphasized the need for all countries to ensure that their regulatory authorities were effective and fully independent, and to strengthen the global emergency preparedness and response system.

60. Israel's two nuclear centres operated in accordance with high safety standards compatible with those of the Agency, and under the supervision of the country's independent nuclear licensing and safety office. At the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June, Israel had stressed the merit of a regional emergency preparedness and response system, proposing a joint study in the Middle East of the lessons learned from Fukushima, and the promotion of regional cooperation. His country looked forward to a constructive dialogue with neighbouring countries on nuclear safety and security.

61. At national level, his country had long since put in place all the necessary emergency response procedures. Although it considered the probability of leakage or emission of radioactivity from its nuclear research centres to be very low, it had a contingency plan for such emergencies. It also conducted periodic national preparedness exercises, the most recent having been carried out successfully that very month.

62. Profound changes had taken place in many States in the Middle East and the positive implications of the democratization process in the region might help to build trust and confidence. Israel's approach and policy in the field of regional security and arms control had always been responsible and prudent and was rooted in the belief that the security concerns of all should be realistically addressed within the regional context. The prerequisites for turning the Middle East into a mutually verifiable zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems were a comprehensive and lasting regional peace together with full compliance by all States in the region with their arms control and non-proliferation obligations. International experience had shown that the initiative to establish such a zone could only emanate from within a region through direct negotiations. The Middle East was no exception. No majority vote in international forums could replace region-wide consent and cooperation.

63. Guided by its conviction, his country had participated in a European Union seminar to promote confidence building in support of a process aimed at establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East held in Brussels in July 2011. It had also cooperated with the Director General's initiative to convene a forum to learn from the experience of other regions in that regard, in spite of the current disturbing events in the Middle East and Israel's reservations over the resolution adopted by the General Conference in 2010 on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East (GC(54)/RES/13). Israel's approach to the planned forum and related events could not be separated from the evolving circumstances in the region and the attitude manifested towards his country in international forums, including the General Conference. Israel therefore hoped that the Arab States would display a similar positive attitude and use the opportunity to foster sincere dialogue among States in the region. In that respect, the continued denial of Israel's membership in the MESA group by the Arab States was counterproductive, negating any dialogue or political accommodation.

64. Unlike the Fukushima nuclear accident, which had been nature-induced, the negative developments in the nuclear domain in the Middle East region were entirely man-made. They were reflected in the Director General's reports on Iran and Syria, and in the resolutions of the Board of Governors and United Nations Security Council. It was hardly surprising that regimes that brutally oppressed their own citizens and did not hesitate before bloodshed should have no qualms about non-compliance with their legally binding obligations under international law. Al Qaddafi's Libya, for example, had signed the Pelindaba Treaty in 1996 but had continued its clandestine nuclear programme until mid-2003. Regrettably, the lesson had not yet been learned and the international community had failed to convey a decisive message to such rulers who saw non-compliance as low-risk. The international community should prove them wrong and punish violators.

65. In its May 2011 report on Syria (GOV/2011/30), a nominal party to the NPT, the Agency had assessed that it was very likely that the building destroyed at the Dair Alzour site had been a nuclear reactor which should have been declared. Yet Syria continued to deny the Agency access to any of its nuclear activities and sites.

66. The Iranian regime persisted in refusing to comply with its international obligations. The Agency had stated in its September 2011 report on that country (GOV/2011/54) that it was increasingly concerned about the possible existence in Iran of past or current undisclosed nuclear-related activities involving military-related organizations, including activities related to the development of a nuclear payload for a missile, about which it continued to receive new information. It had added that the information available to it in connection with those issues was extensive and comprehensive. Israel had no doubt that Iran was pursuing nuclear weapons behind the facade of its NPT membership. Not only was that country continuing its enrichment-related activities in defiance of Security Council resolutions, it was also engaging in activities directly related to the design and testing of nuclear weapons. In the absence of an effective response by the international community, Iran might become the first country to acquire nuclear weapons while a member of the NPT. Carefully worded diplomatic phrases only obscured ominous realities and obstructed an effective concerted response.

67. The 2010 Nuclear Security Summit hosted by the United States had recognized the close association between the threat of nuclear proliferation and that of nuclear terrorism sponsored and supported by rogue States. With the collapse of Al Qaddafi's regime in Libya, and in the face of the volatile situation in Syria, the international community should direct its efforts towards urgent counter-proliferation issues in both those countries.

68. The 2010 General Conference had rejected an Arab-sponsored resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities, sending a clear message to the sponsors that it wished to address constructive issues

drawn from the Agency's mission statement. Nevertheless, in June 2011 the Arab States had requested inclusion of the same ill-motivated item in the agenda of the General Conference and had recently been mobilizing support in the world's capitals. If the Arab States were truly committed to building trust and confidence among regional parties, they would not repeatedly impose an anti-Israeli agenda item on the General Conference with the aim of diverting attention from their own domestic problems and from serial non-compliance by some of them with the NPT and their safeguards agreements. Short-term tactics by the Arab States at the 2011 General Conference would not advance genuine regional arms control measures. If the Arab States were sincere, they would find in Israel a true partner for a positive transformation of the General Conference, but differing viewpoints among regional parties could not be resolved by imposing a majority vote in that forum. The Arab States should abandon their annual political ritual.

69. In an era of critical challenges, Israel looked forward to helping the Agency fulfil its mandate relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and nuclear safety and security, while confronting the major threats posed to global and regional peace and security by a few rogue States that were grossly violating international norms and obligations, challenging the world order and brutally oppressing their citizens.

70. 2011 had so far been a difficult year for many Member States and their people, who had faced natural disasters, negative economic developments and swift and unexpected political changes. The international community and its institutions were also affected. It was therefore incumbent upon all Member States to support the Agency in fulfilling its mission and to reject efforts by a few to hijack it for a narrow political agenda driven by extraneous considerations.

71. Mr PARVEZ (Pakistan) said that, having been established at about the same time more than five decades ago, the Agency and the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission could be said to be growing together. Cooperation between the two organizations that had been mutually beneficial. Today, the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission was actively engaged in the application of nuclear technology for the socio-economic development of the country in such areas as cancer diagnosis and treatment, agriculture, food preservation, water management and industry. The most important task, however, was harnessing nuclear energy for the generation of electricity.

72. His country currently faced a severe electricity shortage which was seriously hampering its economic growth. Its accessible conventional energy resources were acutely limited and its people, whose lives had been affected by frequent and long power outages, looked to the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission to provide relief by building more nuclear power plants and operating the country's plants successfully and safely.

73. Pakistan's association with nuclear power dated back to a time when nuclear energy had just started to be introduced as a viable energy source. Its first commercial nuclear power plant had come on line in 1972, was located in Karachi and was still licensed to operate following refurbishments and safety retrofits. In addition, Pakistan now had two 325 MW(e) units at its second nuclear power plant at the Chashma site, which had been operating safely, and another two units at the same site were under construction and due to be commissioned by 2016. All its plants had been built with the assistance of China, with an increasing degree of localization under a long-term agreement between the two countries. That bilateral cooperation, under Agency safeguards, was a practical manifestation of the peaceful application of nuclear energy for the common good.

74. His country needed international assistance in building and safely operating more nuclear power plants to meet its energy needs. The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission had already been tasked with installing 8800 MW(e) of nuclear power by the year 2030. The restrictions and embargoes that had historically impeded the growth of nuclear power in Pakistan had long lost any justification they

might have had. His country called for equitable and non-discriminatory policies in the area of nuclear power generation and other peaceful applications of nuclear energy. All of its civil nuclear power plants had always been under Agency safeguards, and that would continue to be the country's practice in the future.

75. The Fukushima accident, which the Japanese people had faced so bravely, had brought the nuclear community closer together. Pakistan supported the Agency's leading role in global efforts to analyse and institutionalize the lessons learned from the accident. It acknowledged the Agency's timely efforts in that regard, including the holding of the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety. While Fukushima pointed to the need to be more vigilant and safety-conscious, it must not obstruct the future of the nuclear industry and his country was pleased to note that most Member States with a nuclear power programme had indicated their commitment to continue with it, albeit more cautiously; and several Member States wishing to embark on a new nuclear power programme continued to maintain their interest, but with greater emphasis on developing the necessary know-how and regulatory infrastructure.

76. Pakistan had kept abreast of the various studies on the lessons learned from Fukushima and had been actively engaged in thoroughly revisiting, in that new perspective, the safety and emergency preparedness of its own nuclear power plants, fully recognizing that that had to be a continuing process with no room for complacency. Its longstanding focus on developing a strong safety and regulatory infrastructure had been strengthened by the establishment in 2001 of an independent regulatory and licensing body, the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, which had grown rapidly in the preceding decade to establish itself as a strong and credible oversight body with close links with the Agency.

77. His country attached great importance to nuclear security as a national responsibility. It was party to several international regimes related to nuclear safety and security and participated in related Agency activities and programmes, including the Nuclear Security Plan. The Agency had the mandate, the technical expertise and the broad membership to lead the policy, implementation and assistance aspects of the nuclear security agenda. It played an important role in assisting Member States, upon request, in strengthening their national nuclear security infrastructure, including in the areas of awareness, education and training. Pakistan shared the views expressed in the Agency's Nuclear Security Report 2011 (GC(55)/21) concerning duplication and overlap between Agency activities and other nuclear security-related initiatives. The Agency must retain the central role in elaborating guidelines and guidance documents. Competing or parallel efforts and activities might ultimately prove counterproductive.

78. The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission was currently operating 14 nuclear medicine and oncology hospitals across the country, and another four were under construction. That was still not enough to meet the needs of his country's population and his Government planned to continue to expand capabilities in the public sector. Pakistan produced most of the radiopharmaceuticals it required and it had recently installed a facility for the production of molybdenum-99 and was now in a position to export it. Its agricultural and biotechnology centres were making a valuable contribution to the country's agriculture and livestock sectors.

79. The Commission had developed a sound infrastructure for addressing problems related to water resources management using isotopic techniques. Pakistan was taking part in the Agency's programme of intercalibration of standards and was providing expert and analytical services in that field to Agency Member States in the region. It had a network of educational and training institutes that encompassed all major facets of nuclear science and technology. Besides meeting the needs of Pakistan's own programmes, those institutes were ready to welcome persons from other Member States.

80. His country appreciated the assistance the Agency had provided in terms of expert services, equipment and human resources development in helping Pakistan to establish and improve all those facilities. That was an area where the Agency was duty-bound to foster growth in other countries as well and, with its experience, his country could also make a contribution.

81. The Agency had an important role to play in assisting Member States in their national efforts to promote nuclear security. The Agency's responsibilities in the safeguards and verification field were equally important. However, in the post-Fukushima nuclear world, greater emphasis must also be placed on nuclear safety. The Agency should help ensure a free flow of safety-related technological information and equipment between Member States as an intrinsic part of its focus on nuclear safety. At the same time, more resources should be devoted to safety assurance. Striking the right balance between its different activities would be a challenge for the organization, but that challenge could be met by rationalizing priorities.

82. It was his country's firm belief that the Agency would continue to maintain its vital role in areas relating to safety, security and safeguards, and in providing assistance to Member States on an equitable and non-discriminatory basis in line with its mission statement, which explicitly protected the right of every State to the development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology, including for the generation of electricity.

83. Pakistan had had very productive technical cooperation with the Agency for more than half a century. It had greatly benefited from that cooperation and, for its part, had made a modest contribution towards the Agency's activities by sharing its experience and providing expert services in the areas of energy planning, water management, nuclear site studies and the development of regulatory infrastructure. With its sizeable nuclear power programme, well trained pool of experts and decades of experience in the fields of power generation, health, agriculture and industrial applications, it hoped to be able to contribute even more effectively in the future.

84. Mr LE Dinh Tien (Vietnam) said that his country highly appreciated the Agency's remarkable achievements over the preceding year in the performance of its mandate, in particular the initiative to organize the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety to identify lessons learned from the Fukushima accident and propose measures for establishing a realistic and enhanced post-Fukushima nuclear safety framework. In that connection, he emphasized the need to implement the joint statement from the Conference, and the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety to be adopted at the General Conference.

85. His country was maintaining its policy of developing nuclear power to meet national energy demand. The construction of two nuclear power plants was planned to start in 2014–2015, with the first unit due to be commissioned by 2020. As the nuclear power programme was implemented, nuclear power's share of total national electricity production would increase from 1.5% in 2020 to 6.2% and 7.8% in 2025 and 2030 respectively.

86. Nuclear safety should remain the responsibility of States, with the Agency playing a leading role in shaping a safer nuclear future throughout the world. Vietnam was developing and using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in a responsible manner, ensuring the highest level of nuclear safety as its top priority. His Government was focusing on investment in developing and improving nuclear infrastructures, including the legal and regulatory system, strengthening the capacity of the nuclear regulatory body, developing technical support organizations and enhancing international cooperation on nuclear safety.

87. Vietnam attached great importance to effective and efficient cooperation with the Agency in all areas related to nuclear energy. In February 2011, it had concluded its CPF for the period 2011–2015 under which the Agency would continue to assist the country in seven priority areas through national, regional and interregional projects. In particular, in collaboration with relevant Vietnamese agencies,

an integrated master plan was to be elaborated for building national infrastructure for nuclear power. Cooperation with the Agency had been productive in the area of human resources, improvement of national infrastructure for nuclear power, and increased use of radiation applications in many socio-economic spheres. Vietnam highly appreciated the Agency's role in assisting Member States in the field of nuclear power as well as in non-power applications such as cancer prevention, food, agriculture and water resources management.

88. His country had responsibly fulfilled its obligations and commitments to the Agency while supporting and participating in international initiatives and efforts related to the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy and non-proliferation. It supported and participated in the activities of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and had worked on the preparations for the second Nuclear Security Summit to be held in the Republic of Korea in 2012. It was considering acceding to the CPPNM and the amendment thereto. It was cooperating with the Agency, the United States of America and the Russian Federation to implement the full core conversion of the Dalat nuclear research reactor from HEU to LEU fuel, and with the Agency, the European Union and other countries on a number of projects related to nuclear safety and security.

89. In conclusion, he commended all the staff of the Agency for their dedicated and effective work and reaffirmed Vietnam's full support for the activities of the organization.

90. Mr BAYER (Turkey) said that electricity demand in his country had increased particularly rapidly in the preceding two decades and the country lacked sufficient indigenous energy resources. Ensuring secure, sustainable and competitive energy supplies was central to its energy policy. Its long-term plans required diversification of its energy sources. Currently, the country was over 50% dependent on imported fossil fuels. According to projections, it would require an additional 100 000 MW(e) installed capacity by 2030. Consequently, nuclear power had become one of the most feasible options. Thus, Turkey had concluded an agreement with the Russian Federation for the construction of four WWER-1200 units at the already licensed Akkuyu nuclear site by 2020. In addition, it was planning to construct a nuclear power plant with a total capacity of 5000 MW(e) at the Sinop nuclear site and was therefore expected to have an installed nuclear capacity of at least 10 000 MW(e) within the coming 10-15 years.

91. His country supported the Agency's efforts to promote and maintain high levels of nuclear safety worldwide and it encouraged the Secretariat to continue to strengthen its efforts related to nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety, particularly in areas that were vital for Member States. The Fukushima accident had drawn the world's attention once again to the significance of nuclear safety. The lessons learned from Fukushima must be applied to prevent the recurrence of such an incident. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in June 2011 had made an important contribution to the Agency's efforts to foster a global nuclear safety regime, and the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety should help promote higher nuclear safety standards worldwide. He encouraged the Agency to continue its efforts to provide guidance, support and assistance to Member States in establishing and maintaining adequate safety regulations and infrastructure, with due regard for the needs of Member States considering introducing nuclear power.

92. The safety of old nuclear power plants in particular needed to be thoroughly reviewed. The Metsamor nuclear power plant located in an earthquake zone in Armenia lacked protective structures, which remained a concern for Turkey and other countries in the region. All necessary measures must be taken to eliminate the risks associated with that plant. Turkey also attached importance to the European Union stress test programme for nuclear power plants in which it had volunteered to participate.

93. Promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was one of the main missions of the Agency and one of the fundamental objectives of the NPT. The organization's activities in that area contributed both to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and to the maintenance of international peace and security, for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and non-proliferation were complementary. Agency assistance to developing countries in the area of nuclear applications both made a direct contribution to human well-being and helped build broad support for the Agency and its energy, safety, security, and verification functions. For Member States with no nuclear power reactors, i.e. the majority, technical cooperation in applications of nuclear techniques in agriculture, human health, industry, environment, hydrology, or biological and physical research was a prime benefit of membership in the Agency.

94. Turkey had always strongly supported the Agency's promotional activities and its technical cooperation programme, the funding of which it considered to be the shared responsibility of all Member States. The Agency should also continue to be provided with adequate resources through the Regular Budget to enable it to conduct its statutory functions properly and effectively. Turkey would thus continue to support all reasonable, balanced and affordable budget increases.

95. The NPT, based on the three mutually reinforcing pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, constituted a unique and irreplaceable framework for maintaining and strengthening international peace, security and stability. Universalization of the Treaty, strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system, including universalization of the additional protocol, reinforcement of export controls and the early entry into force of the CTBT were important for the sustainability of the NPT. Other priorities were the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and reduction of nuclear weapon stockpiles, particularly in the face of the terrorist threat.

96. Universalization of the additional protocol would strengthen the non-proliferation regime, enhance security throughout the world and, most importantly, significantly increase confidence, allowing international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to reach its full potential.

97. Turkey was concerned that a considerable number of States still had no additional protocol and that 15 States had still not brought into force a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency pursuant to their NPT obligations. It called upon those States to sign, ratify and implement comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols without delay.

98. The NPT did not assign responsibilities only to non-nuclear-weapon States; it also placed important obligations (e.g. under Article VI) on nuclear-weapon States. Without a genuine commitment to the elimination of nuclear arsenals the objectives of the NPT must fail to be fulfilled and determined efforts were required on the part of the nuclear-weapon States. In that connection, his country welcomed the recent entry into force of the New START and looked forward to rapid progress in implementing it, and to continued negotiations on further reductions in nuclear arsenals, including non-strategic nuclear weapons. Also, in his country's view, the Agency should be given a mandate for the verification of disarmament activities. Furthermore, the existence of non-NPT States with nuclear weapons programmes was dangerously undermining the global safeguards system and the NPT and Turkey called on those States to sign the NPT and eliminate totally their nuclear capabilities and programmes as soon as possible.

99. Turkey supported the establishment of zones free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction wherever feasible, and in particular the establishment of an effectively verifiable zone free of such weapons and their means of delivery in the Middle East. It encouraged all efforts aimed at developing a common regional understanding to that end, with the participation of all parties concerned. It strongly believed that all countries in the region should become party to all international arrangements for the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular the

NPT. Possession of weapons of mass destruction did not provide additional security, but rather further increased instability. Moreover, Israel's non-accession to the NPT and its widely acknowledged possession of weapons of mass destruction undermined international efforts to foster a regional environment conducive to the achievement of lasting peace and security. His country therefore welcomed the adoption of the decision in the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference to convene a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It also welcomed the convening of the related Agency forum in November, which should pave the way for the planned conference.

100. All States that complied with their NPT obligations had the undisputed right to benefit from nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under Article IV of the Treaty. At the same time, all necessary steps needed to be taken to ensure that there was no increased risk of proliferation associated with the expansion of nuclear energy. The Agency's international safeguards system was an essential part of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and Turkey attached great importance to its effectiveness and appreciated the meticulous manner in which the Secretariat approached verification activities under its mandate.

101. The recent meetings between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Agency had provided both sides with the opportunity to discuss directly issues related to the implementation of Iran's safeguards agreement. Turkey encouraged further dialogue and cooperation between Iran and the Agency to help clarify the outstanding issues with a view to reaching a common understanding and building confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of that country's nuclear activities. His country remained fully committed to a diplomatic solution to that problem. Only through a gradual process, including exploratory talks on a set of parallel actions aimed at overcoming the current impasse, could a mutually satisfactory settlement be achieved. As always, Turkey stood ready to contribute to all constructive efforts that would ease the way for dialogue and cooperation.

102. On the issue of the implementation of Syria's safeguards agreement, Turkey trusted that continued engagement by and with Syria would help the Agency clarify ambiguities and eventually close that file.

103. His country reiterated its grave concern at the decision by the Government of the DPRK to cease all cooperation with the Agency in April 2009, and at other actions of the DPRK, in particular the testing of two nuclear explosive devices, the resumption of operations at the reprocessing facility in Yongbyon, and the recently discovered uranium enrichment activities. Those acts posed a severe threat to international peace and security and undermined the stability of the Korean Peninsula and the region. Turkey therefore called on the DPRK to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete and irreversible manner under Agency verification, to act strictly in accordance with its international obligations and to return immediately to the six-party talks.

104. Finally, Turkey fully supported the activities organized by the Agency both during and after the General Conference related to water management and the utilization of nuclear science and techniques to enhance water resources.

105. Ms MYKOLAICHUK (Ukraine) said that 26 April 2011 had been the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident, which had dispelled any illusions about peaceful nuclear energy being completely safe. A quarter of a century later it was obvious that a responsible and holistic approach to the peaceful use of the atom was the prerequisite for a safer world in the future. Her country's strategy in addressing the after-effects of the accident had focused on fostering the region's long-term development and providing people with the support they needed to lead safe and healthy lives. For the anniversary, Ukraine had hosted two international events: a summit on safe and innovative use of nuclear energy and a scientific conference on nuclear safety for the future. All participants in the

summit had acknowledged the need to ensure adequate safety levels at every stage of nuclear energy production. She thanked the Agency and its Director General for participating in both events, and for the untiring support Ukraine had received in its efforts to mitigate the consequences of the accident.

106. The Chernobyl accident had triggered not only the revision of international nuclear safety standards but also the creation of numerous international instruments to ensure both the highest levels of nuclear, waste and radiation safety worldwide and the establishment of an adequate emergency preparedness and response system. In 2011 those instruments had been put to test in the response to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident. Given its unique capabilities and expertise, the Agency had a leading role to play in any nuclear-related accident or emergency and its on-site involvement was vital in addressing situations like that at Fukushima.

107. Based on the lessons learned to date from that accident, Ukraine had conducted targeted safety assessments at all its nuclear power units in operation, it had reinforced the independence of its national nuclear regulatory authority and, as a top priority, had launched a comprehensive review of its national nuclear regulatory framework. Her country had also participated in the European Union stress tests and the related peer review process.

108. While it welcomed the outcome of the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in Vienna in June 2011, Ukraine had expected the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety to be more ambitious in terms of peer review missions and transparency; however, it recognized that the plan represented a common denominator of States' positions. Of particular practical value were the important steps envisaged in the plan that might strengthen peer review services and mechanisms in the future.

109. Although the responsibility for nuclear safety lay with each Member State, the Agency's Safety Fundamentals and Safety Requirements should constitute a minimum obligatory basis for States with active civil nuclear programmes and operating nuclear power plants and research reactors. The existing international treaty framework relating to response to nuclear accidents clearly needed improving and the various proposals made by States to improve the Convention on Nuclear Safety and other relevant instruments deserved further consideration.

110. The events in Japan had raised widespread concern about the safety of nuclear power plants worldwide and had led to a discussion of the viability of nuclear power. There were clearly many lessons still to be learned from the Fukushima accident and her country therefore welcomed the plan of the Government of Japan to hold in 2012, in cooperation with the IAEA, an international conference on nuclear safety.

111. Ukraine fully supported the Agency's activities aimed at improving nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety worldwide. Each country had the right to decide on its own energy strategy and energy mix. The Agency had a key role to play in helping countries ensure that nuclear power was used under the most stringent legal, operational, safety, security and non-proliferation conditions. International cooperation was crucial to promoting the global nuclear safety regime. Her country was strongly committed to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management; being party to those instruments was in the best interest of any country that had, or planned to have its own nuclear power programme. She called on all Member States, especially any State planning to introduce nuclear technologies for the first time, to adhere to those conventions without delay.

112. She also called on Member States to use the Agency's safety review services, which were an indispensable instrument for comprehensively and comparably evaluating facilities and activities. Her country had benefited, in particular, from IRRS, design safety, waste safety and OSART missions at all its nuclear power plants over the preceding three years. She encouraged countries with both mature and emerging nuclear power programmes to follow Ukraine's example. Moreover, her country had

taken a close interest in the ongoing discussions on the feasibility of developing appropriate links between the IAEA's Safety Standards Series and Nuclear Security Series, as both areas were closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

113. Turning to nuclear security, she commended the Agency on its activities aimed at helping States prevent and combat nuclear terrorism, emphasizing the important role of the Agency in fostering international cooperation in nuclear security, establishing a comprehensive set of guidelines, and assisting Member States, on their request, to enhance nuclear security. The responsibility for nuclear security lay with each individual State, but all States were responsible for establishing appropriate systems and taking the necessary measures to prevent, detect and respond to malicious acts involving nuclear material.

114. In 2010, Ukraine had announced its decision to get rid of all HEU stocks by the next Nuclear Security Summit, its partners providing the necessary technical and financial assistance to support that effort. The preparations for transporting the last designated HEU stocks from Ukrainian research reactors had already begun. Ukraine's voluntary step sent a clear message that Ukraine took non-proliferation seriously.

115. Her country noted with concern that, six years after the amendment to the CPPNM had been adopted by consensus, only 49 of the 145 parties to the Convention had adhered to it. Adherence to the international legal instruments related to nuclear security was increasing, but at a slow pace. Ukraine called on all States that had not yet done so to adhere to the CPPNM amendment as soon as possible, and to act in accordance with the object and purpose of the amendment pending its entry into force.

116. With regard to nuclear security competence development, she announced the graduation of another 14 nuclear security engineers from the Sevastopol National University of Nuclear Energy and Industry, commending the Agency for its invaluable support for the development of training and education facilities for nuclear security at the University, the Agency's earliest partner in nuclear security education. She confirmed her country's readiness to contribute to the Agency's nuclear security education programmes.

117. Her country also appreciated the considerable activities of the Agency related to strengthening of nuclear security measures at major public events, in particular the support that was being provided to Poland and Ukraine in preparation for the 2012 European football championship.

118. Ukraine supported the Agency's role in verifying States' compliance with their safeguards obligations under the NPT. The Agency's safeguards system was a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and a comprehensive safeguards agreement together with an additional protocol constituted the current highest verification standard. Universal adherence to both instruments would strengthen the non-proliferation regime and contribute to global security. The 'safeguards by design' concept was an important step for addressing future verification challenges and Ukraine welcomed the move towards integrated safeguards and, in particular, the emphasis on an information-driven safeguards system, in the interests of strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system.

119. Her country had had a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol in force since January 2006. The Safeguards Implementation Report for 2010 had acknowledged its efforts regarding safeguards implementation and that year, for the first time, the broad safeguards conclusions had been drawn with respect to its compliance with its obligations. Ukraine appreciated the efforts of the Agency's inspectors involved in safeguards activities in the country, in particular with respect to the resolution of problems and complications related to the Chernobyl site. At the latest meeting of the Ukraine-IAEA high-level safeguards implementation review group in Kiev, discussions had begun on the introduction of a State-level integrated safeguards approach for Ukraine and her country would

continue to work with the Agency to establish the necessary conditions for the application of integrated safeguards.

120. Over the preceding year, the Agency had continued to make a significant contribution to global development objectives in accordance with its Statute. The 2011 Scientific Forum on water scarcity was another major step towards establishing a clear vision of how radiation technologies could serve human health goals without posing unnecessary risks. She commended the Agency and the Director General for their tireless efforts in those spheres and called upon the Agency to increase further the contribution of nuclear technology to health and economic development, and to promote dissemination of knowledge on peaceful applications of nuclear technologies among States.

121. Ukraine was convinced of the benefits of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. The LEU reserve established in the Russian Federation for the Agency had successfully begun to function. Her country participated in the work of the International Uranium Enrichment Centre in Angarsk, the first such joint enterprise, which could serve as an example for future activities in the field. The practical aspects of the functioning of the LEU bank now needed to be worked out.

122. Ukraine had always been committed to effective multilateral action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. At the 2010 NPT Review Conference, agreement had been secured on further steps to implement the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East, including the convening of a conference in 2012. It was important for the General Conference to build on the results of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and avoid anything that might undermine the success achieved.

123. Ms RADENKOVIĆ (Serbia) expressed her country's sympathy and support for the people of Japan following the earthquake and tsunami in March 2011. Serbia understood the concerns and anxiety of the international community regarding the safety aspects of the use of nuclear power and the need to improve nuclear safety standards. The Agency had played a leading role in drafting the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety and in acting upon lessons learned after the accident in Japan with the aim of strengthening nuclear safety, emergency preparedness, radiation protection of people and the environment, and the relevant international legal frameworks. Strengthening the global nuclear safety regime and promoting international cooperation and expertise were essential to support the safe and secure use of nuclear technologies.

124. Strongly committed as it was to integrating itself into the European Union, her country was making great efforts to meet all its obligations under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, with particular emphasis on nuclear safety and safeguards.

125. Serbia had made considerable efforts to develop a legislative and regulatory framework, with a view to achieving full compatibility with Agency and European Commission recommendations and standards in the field of nuclear safety and security. Its independent regulatory body, the Serbian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Agency, had become operational at the end of 2010. In addition to developing and introducing a new set of national regulations, efforts had been made to strengthen the international legal framework, primarily by incorporating provisions of enacted conventions into national legislation and complying with provisions of instruments to which Serbia was not yet a party.

126. Her country remained firmly committed to the peaceful application of nuclear energy. A strengthened safeguards system and the application of the additional protocol would help the NPT regime to overcome the challenges it currently faced.

127. The establishment of a regulatory body in Serbia would expedite ratification of the additional protocol and accession to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of

Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, which should further strengthen national safety mechanisms and instruments.

128. With assistance from the Agency and a number of international partners and governments, her country had successfully completed the repatriation of its spent nuclear fuel to the Russian Federation in December 2010. She thanked all stakeholders for their contributions.

129. Serbia fully supported efforts to combat nuclear terrorism. With a view to preventing misuse of nuclear and other radioactive material, and related knowledge and technologies, her country was improving physical protection of nuclear and radioactive material and its capabilities to combat illicit trafficking. Efforts were also being made to strengthen the national emergency preparedness and response system, in cooperation with relevant national and international organizations and regulatory authorities.

130. Her country's efforts in the area of capacity building and infrastructure development in the field of radiation protection and nuclear safety were recognized by the Agency and supported through several national and international projects.

131. Finally, she noted that Serbia would continue to meet its financial and other obligations vis-à-vis the Agency.

132. Mr KRALEV (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that the role of the Agency was of crucial importance in a world in which the threat of nuclear terrorism was a reality. His country was aware that the primary responsibility for nuclear security lay with Member States and had therefore acceded to the instruments aimed at strengthening non-proliferation, nuclear verification and export control, submitting the relevant reports in compliance with its obligations.

133. In view of his country's ambition to join the European Union it had, over the preceding decade, developed and implemented a wide range of measures to strengthen its nuclear regulatory framework and infrastructure. Effective instruments had been put in place to protect its border against illicit trafficking in radioactive and nuclear material. It would continue to build capacity with a view to achieving further improvements in the physical protection of nuclear applications, border control management and its regulatory infrastructure.

134. With assistance from the Agency, its independent Radiation Safety Directorate had made further progress in building national capacities for effective radiation protection and nuclear safety. A significant number of young experts had been trained, and national legislation in the area of nuclear safety and radiation protection had been further harmonized with European Union legislation. A national plan establishing an emergency preparedness and response system to deal with a radiological emergency had also been adopted and implemented.

135. Expressing appreciation for the Agency's technical cooperation programme, he said that the envisioned CPF for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia would be implemented via national and regional projects addressing the country's priority development needs. The projects selected for the 2012–2013 cycle were in full compliance with the new CPF for 2011–2015 that would be signed in October and they focused on building capacities in human health, food safety and cultural heritage protection. He thanked the Department of Technical Cooperation for its assistance in that regard.

136. The application of nuclear technologies in the field of medicine was extremely important for improving health services. Despite difficult economic conditions, his Government was committed to proceeding with the ongoing project on the establishment of a PET centre. Further support from the Agency would be required for the successful implementation of that project.

137. Demand in the European region for Agency activities in the area of agriculture and food safety was growing. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had been among the first countries in the region to initiate and implement projects on crop breeding and good agricultural practices, including quality and food safety, in accordance with its national agricultural and rural development strategy.

138. Thanks to successful cooperation with the Agency, some institutions in his country had become centres of excellence and training centres used by the Agency. His country was pleased to accept experts from the region in training programmes at its institutions.

139. Despite its limited economic resources, his Government had always met its financial obligations to the Agency's Regular Budget. It also provided significant extrabudgetary contributions for the TCF to facilitate implementation of the technical cooperation programme.

140. Mr LABBÉ VILLA (Chile) underlined the importance of the Agency's role in the field of technical cooperation, nuclear verification and non-proliferation.

141. Promoting and facilitating research, development and the practical application of atomic energy was one of the Agency's central functions, carried out through the Department of Technical Cooperation and specific projects implemented with Member States. The Agency needed resources to carry out those statutory functions and Chile was pleased to note the improved rate of attainment over the preceding year.

142. His country also supported the Peaceful Uses Initiative, which aimed to reinforce the Agency's work in such areas as human health, food security, nuclear energy infrastructure and water resources management.

143. In Chile, technical cooperation with the Agency during the 2009–2011 cycle had focused on upgrading the radioisotope production laboratory, studying the nuclear energy option, contributing to public health monitoring through the development and application of new methodologies for determining arsenic and lead, and evaluating water sources in arid areas. The current programme included projects on the use of nuclear techniques in mining and health, in line with Ministry of Health programmes and policies.

144. Chile appreciated the Agency's support in the area of nuclear security. Through regional projects, the Agency was working to strengthen the capacities of Member States in the areas of prevention and detection of, and response to incidents involving nuclear and other radioactive material. Human resources training was of fundamental importance in that regard. During a visit to Chile by the Director General from 30 June to 2 July 2011, technical cooperation issues had been discussed as well as the Agency's support for national nuclear security programmes. The Director General had also attended an international workshop on nuclear security culture organized by the Chilean Nuclear Energy Commission.

145. With regard to the international legal framework, the slow progress as regards adherence to international nuclear security instruments was regrettable. While 145 States were party to the CPPNM, it was a matter of concern that the number of States that had ratified the 2005 amendment to that Convention was far below the two thirds required for its entry into force. Chile appealed to Latin American countries in particular to adhere to the amendment.

146. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in June 2011 had marked the launch of a process whose next stage had been the approval of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety by the Board of Governors. As the outcome of a process in which views had diverged, the plan could not please everyone and Chile would have preferred it to be more ambitious, harnessing the momentum provided by the Conference. Nevertheless, his country fully supported the implementation of the plan and would contribute as far as it was able. It was vital to demonstrate that the Agency truly had the

will to strengthen nuclear safety activities, and it was incumbent on Member States to bring the plan to life.

147. The Fukushima accident had shown that more needed to be done to ensure that international emergency preparedness and response mechanisms were rapid and effective. The international framework was not everything: Agency support for national mechanisms and capacities was of particular value. Chile also welcomed the efforts to explore mechanisms for strengthening implementation of the relevant international agreements.

148. There was a need to improve the transparency and effectiveness of communication with the public and civil society in the event of nuclear emergencies, as public confidence could only be regained and maintained through the provision of objective, reliable, comprehensible and timely information.

149. Chile supported general and complete disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It was party to all relevant international instruments, which it wished to see universally applied. It had ratified the CTBT, the entry into force of which was of vital importance, and it urged all States that had not yet ratified that Treaty — particularly Annex 2 countries — to do so.

150. As a member of the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, his country supported the establishment of such zones in other parts of the world, notably the Middle East. Consequently it welcomed the convening of a forum in November 2011 on that issue, which should contribute to the success of the conference on that subject planned in 2012.

151. Article III of the NPT entrusted the Agency with a vital verification role. The additional protocol allowed the Agency to provide assurances regarding the non-existence of undeclared nuclear activities in a country. Though it was a voluntary instrument, its provisions helped strengthen the non-proliferation regime and universal adherence to it would allow for substantial improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's safeguards system. In that connection, Chile welcomed the Director General's announcement that 110 States had now concluded additional protocols. The Safeguards Implementation Report painted an encouraging picture of how States were meeting their commitments, but some areas of concern remained.

152. Though his country took note of the recent dialogue, the lack of progress in efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula was regrettable. Chile deplored the fact that the DPRK was not granting the Agency access to its nuclear facilities, thereby preventing the Director General from reporting adequately on that country's activities. It hoped that the DPRK would return to the negotiating table and rejoin the NPT. It would once again be sponsoring the draft resolution on that issue submitted to the General Conference.

153. His country had also consistently supported the Agency's verification work in the Islamic Republic of Iran and it acknowledged that country's collaboration in safeguards matters. Nevertheless, there was still a lack of confidence that there was no military dimension to Iran's nuclear programme, and Iran should cooperate fully with the Agency to dispel the international community's doubts. Iran must meet its international obligations if it wished to take its place in the community of nations.

154. All organizations, including the Agency, needed to have sufficient flexibility and resources to meet new challenges. The Agency was contributing to achieving the Millennium Development Goals through its work in the areas of health, agriculture and energy, and to peace and non-proliferation through its verification activities. It was in the interests of all countries for the Agency to be strong, with the human and other resources it needed to carry out its mandate. Chile would continue to support the Agency's work in all areas.

155. Mr BUCHEERI (Bahrain) expressed deep regret at the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan caused by the earthquake and tsunami. That event had demonstrated the need to boost the Agency's regulatory role, especially in the area of nuclear safeguards and in promoting the nuclear safety regime.

156. Since joining the Agency in 2009, the Kingdom of Bahrain had taken steps to build its national capacity to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in order to promote sustainable socio-economic development. His country was also committed to complying fully with its international obligations vis-à-vis the Agency, and to the goals of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament which would guarantee a safe environment for future generations free from the threat of nuclear weapons and radiation leaks.

157. Bahrain had developed its relationship with the Agency, acceding to three multilateral treaties in a single year. It had acceded to the CPPNM on 10 May 2010, to the Convention on Nuclear Safety on 11 November 2010 and to the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident on 5 May 2011. Last but not least, it had signed an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement with the Agency.

158. His country commended the Agency's role in assisting Member States to obtain access to nuclear energy, and in restricting the use of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes. Nuclear technology was a vital asset in certain medical, industrial and scientific fields and his country was studying the possibility of exploiting its potential as a clean and easy-to-use option in a variety of sectors. It looked forward to increased cooperation with the Agency under the technical cooperation programme with a view to acquiring the requisite expertise, as well as appropriate nuclear technology, to be used in implementing its future development plans and programmes.

159. Bahrain participated in the joint programme of the Gulf Cooperation Council to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The member States of the Council attached importance to diversification of sources of energy and hoped to use nuclear energy as an alternative to oil and gas in areas such as electricity generation and seawater desalination in order to reduce the harmful impact of the latter on the environment.

160. His country had consistently emphasized in regional and international forums the importance of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the need to establish a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. States must take resolute action to ensure the success of the conference to be held in 2012 on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the region. In that connection, it was essential to urge some States in the region that had not yet done so to accede to the NPT and to cooperate more closely with the Agency, placing their nuclear reactors and installations under Agency safeguards to ensure that they were used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

161. Israel's insistence on preserving its nuclear capabilities was a source of concern to all States in the Middle East and a prime cause of instability, since it posed both a military and an environmental threat and encouraged an arms race in the region. Israel's accession to the NPT and the placement of its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards was recognized as a vital and strategic necessity by all States in the region, the Agency and the rest of the world. It was also a prerequisite for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and hence for regional and international peace and security.

162. Bahrain continued to hope for full and transparent cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Agency in accordance with relevant international resolutions.

163. As a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and NAM, Bahrain was deeply committed to the objective of achieving peace and stability in the region

through its support for the efforts of the Agency. It called on all regional and international parties to comply with their obligations under the United Nations Charter, and with the resolutions of the Agency and the United Nations Security Council.

164. Weapons of mass destruction were the greatest threat facing the modern world. The Kingdom of Bahrain urged all countries to join forces in halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It also advocated close international cooperation under the auspices of the Agency in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and emphasized the importance of the Agency's role in implementing the safeguards regime and guaranteeing nuclear safety.

Ms Dengo Benavides (Costa Rica) took the Chair.

165. Mr SYCHOV (Belarus) offered his country's condolences and support to the people of Japan people in connection with the national disaster which had claimed thousands of lives and caused a major accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant. Twenty-five years after the Chernobyl accident, the international community was once again confronted with the devastating consequences of an accident at a nuclear power plant. The events at Fukushima prompted an analysis of the possibility of safe use of peaceful nuclear energy and an assessment of the relative advantages and risks of nuclear power. The Republic of Belarus, like many other countries exercising their inalienable right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, was convinced that the sad experience of nuclear accidents should not become a reason to say no to the development of nuclear power. The advantages of nuclear power as an economical and environmentally attractive way of meeting the growing demand for electricity, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and contributing to energy security were obvious.

166. Though nuclear safety was primarily the responsibility of individual States, the problem the world was currently facing required effective international cooperation, in which the Agency should play a central coordinating role since it had the necessary competence, expertise and authority. His country supported the efforts of the Director General and the Secretariat to mobilize and coordinate efforts to strengthen the international nuclear safety regime. It appreciated the Agency's response to the Fukushima accident, the convening of the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety and the declaration it had adopted, and the development of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety which would provide important guidance for joint efforts at national level.

167. Belarus noted the importance of universalizing and further improving international legal instruments in the nuclear field, especially the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident. It supported the Russian Federation's proposal for amendments to those instruments to reflect lessons learned from the Fukushima accident. Due attention should be given to improving the Agency's safety standards and implementing them effectively at national level, including with Agency assistance. His country also welcomed the steps taken by the Russian Federation and the European Union to conduct comprehensive risk and safety assessments at nuclear power plants. Belarus had associated itself with the declaration adopted at the June 2011 Brussels summit on the participation of neighbouring countries of the European Union in the programme of stress tests, and it would be making use of the conclusions drawn and lessons learned from that exercise to ensure a high level of safety at Belarus's first nuclear power plant.

168. In 2008, Belarus had taken the decision to launch a nuclear power programme. Preparations for the construction of a nuclear power plant were being made in close collaboration with the Agency. Belarus had hosted a number of Agency expert missions, inter alia on site selection evaluation, assistance in creating a training system for nuclear power sector staff, and infrastructure assessment. It had joined INPRO to build collaboration with the Agency and exchange information and experience relating to innovative nuclear technologies. It was also creating the necessary infrastructure, establishing a legal and regulatory basis and training staff for its nuclear power programme in a

consistent, transparent manner in full compliance with its international obligations, and making extensive use of the Agency's expertise and that of States with extensive experience in the nuclear field.

169. In that connection, he noted the conclusions reached by the Agency mission in October 2010 to assess the country's nuclear emergency preparedness and response system. The mission had acknowledged the establishment of a reliable emergency preparedness and response system in Belarus, and its recommendations would be incorporated in the country's programme.

170. Having borne the brunt of the Chernobyl accident, Belarus saw nuclear safety not as an abstraction but as an absolute priority, which was reflected in its national legislation and applied in practice.

171. He thanked the Agency for its systematic and effective assistance in strengthening the capacities of the country's regulatory body. Agency seminars and training events contributed substantially to the development of human resources and improving the qualifications of national specialists responsible for nuclear and radiation safety. The national seminars — conducted with Agency assistance — on implementing the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and on the financial risks associated with nuclear power plant construction were an important contribution to the work being done in Belarus.

172. Implementing a project as large as a national nuclear power programme was impossible without assistance from the Agency, the leading international organization in the nuclear field. Its advisory and technical assistance was vital to establishing the necessary infrastructure, building a reliable nuclear safety regulatory system and developing scientific, technical and human resources. The Agency's technical cooperation programme was a key tool for achieving those goals. The main priorities of his country's CPF for 2008–2013 were development of nuclear power infrastructure, use of nuclear technologies in health care, and restoration of areas impacted by the Chernobyl accident.

173. The national project on developing human resources and a training system for the country's nuclear power programme had been a success. As the Technical Cooperation Report for 2010 (GC(55)/INF/2) noted, a major accomplishment in 2010 had been the development and supply of a computer-based training system on the basics of nuclear power plant policies, management and technology. Further assistance had been provided in human resources development, workforce planning, and in the development of a strategy for sustaining human resources for the nuclear power programme.

174. Belarus intended to continue its cooperation with the Agency on restoring the areas impacted by the Chernobyl accident. Such collaboration fell squarely within the scope of the United Nations Chernobyl strategy, which envisaged a transition to sustainable socio-economic development of the affected areas. His country expected the Agency to play an active part in implementing the United Nations action plan on Chernobyl and it hoped that the resolution on technical cooperation adopted at the current General Conference would include a reference to the resolution on Chernobyl adopted at the 65th session of the General Assembly (A/RES/65/131), in which the contribution of the Agency was noted. He thanked the Secretariat for posting on the Agency's website in the spring of 2011 a set of video materials and photographs depicting the true situation in the regions impacted by the Chernobyl accident, and the Government's efforts for their restoration and sustainable development.

175. His country had consistently supported the expansion and enhanced effectiveness of the technical cooperation programme. It paid its voluntary contributions to the TCF on time and in full and was pledging its full contribution to the Fund in 2012.

176. The Republic of Belarus assigned high priority to addressing practical aspects of nuclear security and physical protection of nuclear material. He noted the fruitful cooperation between the Agency's Secretariat and Belarus on issues related to strengthening of nuclear security. With assistance from the Office of Nuclear Security, an INSSP had been developed for Belarus and agreed. That document not only defined a strategy for collaboration on that issue, but also provided a basis for joint efforts with other international organizations and donor countries. Belarus saw those activities as an important contribution it made to strengthening nuclear security both domestically and at regional level. The national seminar on design basis threat held in February 2011 in Minsk was an example of such successful collaboration. It had given specialists from the country an opportunity to acquaint themselves with best foreign practices and acquire practical skill in applying design basis threat modelling methods.

177. As a convinced and consistent supporter of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Belarus unswervingly fulfilled, and intended to continue fulfilling, its obligations under the NPT and its safeguards agreement. It attached great importance to strengthening the Agency's safeguards system, including the additional protocol as the verification standard. In that connection, he noted the effective collaboration between Belarus and the Agency Secretariat, and the holding of a national seminar in December 2010 in Minsk on issues related to implementation of the additional protocol, which had been an important milestone in the preparations for Belarus's ratification of that instrument.

178. The Agency was facing the challenge of restoring confidence in nuclear power, which would doubtless require moving to a qualitatively new level in the nuclear safety field. That goal could only be achieved through cooperation between the Agency Secretariat, Member States and other organizations and partners, effective coordination of efforts, and transparency. Any attempt to exploit the current situation for narrow, short-term gain would only delay success in meeting that challenge.

179. Mr RECKER (Belgium) said that 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 material and technologies were not diverted to non-peaceful purposes. The Agency also played an essential role in encouraging and assisting States to apply the most rigorous nuclear safety and security standards, and in preventing terrorism.

180. He expressed his country's deep condolences and sympathy to the Government and people of Japan for the tragic loss of life caused by the earthquake and tsunami on 11 March. Belgium welcomed the declaration adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in June, and saw the recommendations contained in the IAEA Draft Action Plan on Nuclear Safety as a step in the right direction. The task was to translate those recommendations into concrete action. Belgium called on all Member States to demonstrate unwavering commitment to promoting the implementation of all aspects of the action plan.

181. Belgium reaffirmed its commitment to promoting nuclear safety criteria based on the most exacting international safety standards, and it would continue to make every possible effort to ensure high safety levels in its own nuclear facilities. It was in favour of systematic and, ideally, mandatory peer review missions to ensure the progressive implementation of safety standards at all levels. Strengthening of peer reviews among operators was also essential.

182. His country was actively preparing to receive an IRRS mission and was also fully involved in the safety review process for nuclear power plants following the Fukushima accident. In the interests of transparency, the stress tests would be peer reviewed.

183. His country advocated the strengthening of existing mechanisms such as the Response and Assistance Network, which should have wider access to accident-related data as well as the capacity to interpret the results. As regards the review of international nuclear safety conventions, there was a risk

that negotiations could be lengthy and that must not be allowed to impede concrete effective action in the near future.

184. The NPT remained the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and Belgium was committed to contributing to the full implementation of the commitments contained in the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan. The Conference had taken a positive decision regarding implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and, in that connection, Belgium welcomed the Director General's initiative to convene a forum on experience in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. His country had participated actively in the seminar organized by the European Union in July 2010 that had provided a welcome opportunity for a constructive exchange of views on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East.

185. A credible and effective safeguards and verification system was essential for countries to have confidence in the use of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes. The international community had everything to gain from the effective functioning of the system and full compliance with the commitments entered into, and everything to lose if corrective action were not taken in cases of non-compliance. Belgium therefore deplored the fact that some countries were breaching their international commitments and called upon the DPRK and Iran to comply fully with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the Board of Governors. No global solution could be found that would allow a resumption of constructive and forward-looking relations with those countries without complete transparency to dispel any doubts regarding the exclusively peaceful nature of their nuclear programmes. Belgium also called upon Syria to cooperate fully and transparently with the Agency.

186. His country considered a safeguards agreement together with an additional protocol to be the current verification standard and it called on all States that had not yet done so to sign, ratify and implement those instruments. Integrated safeguards had been applied in Belgium since the end of 2009 and routine inspections at nuclear power plants had been reduced dramatically as a result.

187. The Agency played a crucial role in the international community's efforts to combat proliferation and Belgium welcomed its tireless efforts to improve the effectiveness of its safeguards system. The unique character and high quality of the Agency's safeguards system were due not only to its analytical and evaluation capabilities, but also to the diversity of the means at its disposal to verify compliance with non-proliferation obligations. All of those means were essential to the accomplishment of the Agency's mandate under its Statute and the NPT, and privileging one over another could only weaken the safeguards system and undermine its credibility.

188. Turning to nuclear security, he said that a law forming the basis of new legislation on physical protection of nuclear material and facilities in his country had been adopted by the Belgian parliament on 31 March 2011. Under it, operators were required to ensure the reliability of their associates and, in that connection, national regulations on security clearances had been adapted to take account of the situation in the nuclear sector.

189. Work was continuing on the development of regulations on security of sources and other radioactive material that would cover all radioactive material with the exception of nuclear material, which was subject to special regulations, and would be based on a sectoral approach. Priority was being given to the security of radioactive waste and of final disposal sites. A project on the establishment of a final disposal site for low- and intermediate- level waste, focusing on site safety and security, was currently being developed.

190. Belgium supported the early entry into force of the amendment to the CPPNM. Its law accepting that amendment had been promulgated and, pursuant to Article 102 of the Euratom Treaty,

Belgium would deposit its instruments of ratification with the Director General together with the European Commission.

191. The actions taken by Belgium were consistent with the international approach of the Nuclear Security Summit. Belgium would continue to contribute actively to the implementation of the Summit's action plan and it looked forward to the next such summit to be held in Seoul in March 2012.

192. The Fukushima accident had highlighted the need for more passive nuclear safety systems and the development of 4th-generation nuclear energy systems. Belgium attached great importance to its MYRRHA (multi-purpose hybrid research reactor for high-tech applications) project and, in 2010, his Government had decided to fund 40% of the total cost of the project, estimated at €960 million. It had allocated €60 million for the period 2010–2014 to advance the project to the front-end engineering design stage, which would involve: establishing an R&D programme to minimize the technological risks and finalizing the advanced project design; paving the way for the licensing process and providing the necessary reports; and establishing an appropriate project management structure and consolidating the international consortium in order to secure funding for implementation of the project which would start in 2015.

193. The LEU fuel bank was only an emergency solution in the event of a supply disruption due to exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, the fuel bank must not distort the functioning of the international market.

194. A structural solution must be found to prevent long-term difficulties in the supply of medical isotopes. His country was concerned about the availability of medical isotopes and had increased the production capacity of the BR2 reactor at Mol and the Institute for Radioisotopes at Fleurus. Meetings of interested parties were regularly organized at European level and several members of the OECD/NEA, as well as non-members, had approved a policy approach involving full cost recovery by all participants in the supply chain, the creation of a reserve capacity funded by all participants in the supply chain, and the establishment of an environment conducive to investment in infrastructure and of a regulatory framework for effective market operation. Belgium hoped that that approach would be accepted by all and called upon the Agency to promote its application.

195. HEU was used in Belgium for the production of medical radioisotopes. However, his country was aware of the proliferation risks associated with the use of HEU and supported the conversion from HEU to LEU provided that it was technically and economically feasible. It had already taken bilateral steps to convert the BR2 research reactor at Mol and was considering conversion options at the Institute for Radioisotopes. However, it wished to remain flexible, in particular concerning the time frame for conversion.

196. Monsignor BANACH (Holy See) said that the Holy See continued to support the search for political solutions that not only helped prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also helped ensure that war was not seen as a means of resolving conflicts between nations. Some of the resources allocated for weapons could be redeployed for economic, educational and health-care projects, thereby contributing to domestic and international stability.

197. The Agency could look back with satisfaction on what had been achieved under the three pillars of its mandate since its establishment. However, many challenges remained. The Holy See regarded the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the basis for pursuing nuclear disarmament, and an important factor for further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. As the Treaty was the only multilateral legal instrument in force that was intended to bring about a world free of nuclear weapons, it must never be allowed to be weakened. Other priorities were the entry into force of the CTBT and the ratification by all States — and

particularly the nuclear-weapon States — of the protocols to the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. The Holy See strongly supported efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and looked forward to participating in the Agency forum on experience of possible relevance to the creation of such a zone in that region.

198. The Holy See had attended the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in Vienna in June, from which it had clearly emerged that the nuclear crisis in Fukushima was a global issue, that the world was exposed to real and systemic risks and not just hypothetical ones, with incalculable costs, and that there was a need to develop a new form of international political coordination. Many basic questions had to be addressed to improve the planning and management of nuclear power plants and bring them in line with the highest standards of safety and security.

199. There had been recent calls to develop new safety and security standards, and for international monitoring of all existing nuclear plants. Without transparency, safety and security could not be pursued. Programmes to promote a culture of safety and security both in the nuclear sector and among the public at large were of vital importance. A special place must be reserved for codes of conduct for human resources. Security depended not only on the State but on the sense of responsibility of each person. The IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety was an important contribution to the discussion, especially in the context of radiation protection of persons and the environment worldwide.

200. The Holy See appreciated the efforts of the Agency and its partners to plan and promote cancer control programmes, including the provision and upgrading of essential equipment, appropriate training of doctors, physicists and technicians, and international exchange of relevant information. It encouraged the Agency to continue and strengthen all such activities, particularly PACT, which assisted Member States in the tremendous task of combating cancer and creating regional centres of excellence for radiotherapy.

201. The peaceful applications of nuclear techniques could make a contribution to meeting the most pressing needs, such as production of crops with improved yields or greater salt tolerance in arid climates, or the eradication of disease-transmitting and otherwise harmful pests in an environmentally friendly manner. They could also be used effectively in the study of child malnutrition and in disease diagnosis and treatment.

202. However, the management of drinking water supplies was of paramount importance and choosing water as the topic for the Scientific Forum at the current General Conference was most timely. Access to safe drinking water was at the root of some of society's most pressing concerns. The problem of water scarcity and water deprivation was experienced most dramatically by those living in poverty and in the poorest countries. The responsibility for the destiny of less favoured countries must be borne by those more richly blessed. The many children who died each year in poor countries owing to the lack of access to safe water and sanitation were a loss for humanity as a whole. The challenge currently faced in the water and sanitation sector was also an opportunity, from both a social and an economic perspective. Investments in safe water and sanitation could be an engine for accelerated economic growth, sustainable development, improved health and reduced poverty. The reduction of poverty was also one of the Agency's goals. The water issue related to the right to life. The primary objective of all efforts must be the well-being of those who lived in the poorest parts of the world and suffered most from a scarcity or misuse of water resources.

203. Mr TZOTCHEV (Bulgaria) said that, in the light of the tragic events in Fukushima, the 2011 General Conference and other high-level political activities provided a prime opportunity to address the important issues of nuclear safety and security. Reiterating his country's full solidarity with the Japanese people, he paid tribute to the courage of the workers and authorities in handling the crisis.

204. Bulgaria supported multilateral efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The NPT remained the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Along with the Agency's nuclear non-proliferation safeguards system, the Treaty made a crucial contribution to regional and international peace and security. The peaceful use of nuclear energy should be based on full compliance with the NPT and transparency in nuclear programmes. His country was committed to strengthening all three pillars of the NPT and would continue its efforts to implement the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The Agency must continue to play its crucial role in the implementation of the NPT. Its safeguards mechanism was a key instrument to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. As one of the first countries to sign and ratify an additional protocol, Bulgaria called for the swift universalization of that instrument.

205. His country fully supported the creation of zones free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, including nuclear weapons. Such zones had been identified in many international forums as positive steps towards nuclear disarmament. Bulgaria welcomed the agreement at the 2010 NPT Review Conference on the implementation of the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East, including the convening of a conference in 2012. The successful European Union seminar held in July 2011 had demonstrated the importance of inclusive participation and open and constructive dialogue for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Agency forum to be held in that connection in November should be a positive step leading up to the 2012 conference.

206. Bulgaria was following the development of the Iranian nuclear programme and noted with serious concern the Director General's latest report (GOV/2011/54), in particular as regards the reported expansion of Iran's enrichment activities and capacity and that country's non-compliance with its international obligations. It urged Iran to comply fully with all relevant United Nations Security Council and Agency resolutions and to cooperate with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues so that international confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme could be restored. He called on Iran to meet with the European Union High Representative and the representatives of China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

207. His country also noted the Director General's latest report (GC(55)/24) confirming that, from the end of 2002 until July 2007 and since April 2009, the Agency had been unable to implement safeguards measures in the DPRK. That, along with information about the construction of a new uranium enrichment facility and a light water reactor, raised serious concerns about the DPRK's nuclear programme and made the resumption of dialogue and the return of Agency inspectors all the more urgent. The DPRK must comply with its international obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions and its comprehensive safeguard agreement, abandoning and dismantling any nuclear weapon-related programme in a prompt, transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner. It should also return to the six-party talks process.

208. Bulgaria noted with serious concern the conclusions of the Agency's report to the Board of Governors in June regarding Syria's non-compliance with its safeguards agreement (GOV/2011/30). It urged Syria to cooperate with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues and fulfil its international obligations.

209. The Annual Report for 2010 offered an informative and comprehensive picture of the Agency's activities over the year. His country appreciated the fact that the international nuclear community had maintained a high level of safety performance during that period. The increasingly important role played by nuclear energy in Member States required further enhancement of their national infrastructures and safety improvements. Hence, Agency assistance to Member States with developing their governmental and regulatory frameworks, especially for States interested in developing new, or

expanding existing nuclear power programmes, was crucial to ensuring a high level of nuclear safety. The Agency should also continue its work in the sphere of non-power applications of nuclear energy, which helped Member States find appropriate solutions in the areas of human health, agriculture, industry and education, inter alia.

210. Bulgaria shared the view expressed in the Annual Report that the Agency's technical cooperation programme was the primary mechanism for supporting Member States in the peaceful and safe use of nuclear technology for development. The quality of national, regional and interregional projects, and their adequate financing, played a key role in successful implementation and in the achievement of the targeted results. In the Europe region, projects to support the development of nuclear power and the use of radiation in health care, and to maintain appropriate levels of safety and security in all aspects of the peaceful use of nuclear technology, were an important area of activity. Recognizing the need for assured, sufficient and predictable financing of technical cooperation activities, Bulgaria paid its annual contribution to the TCF in full and on time.

211. In October 2010, the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria had passed an act amending and supplementing its law on the safe use of nuclear energy, in fulfilment of the Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency's policy of updating legislative requirements in line with the latest international standards and European legislation. Amendments to international conventions and treaties, new European Union legislation and updated Agency documents had been taken into consideration, together with practical experience gained in applying the law. To ensure widespread distribution and easy access, the new legislation had been published in electronic form on the Nuclear Regulatory Agency's website. In the same month, the Nuclear Regulatory Agency had issued five-year licences to the State radioactive waste enterprise to operate units 1 and 2 of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant as facilities for radioactive waste management. Those licences terminated the validity of the operating licences for those units.

212. Following the Fukushima nuclear accident the European Commission had demanded a reassessment of all nuclear power plants in the European Union with a view to learning from that event and ensuring that no similar disaster could occur in the Union. All nuclear facilities at the Kozloduy site had been reassessed and, in September 2011, a progress report had been sent to the European Commission.

213. In 2010, the Nuclear Regulatory Agency had received a new version of the technical design for the Belene nuclear power plant which took into account the regulatory authority's comments and recommendations on the previous version. The new version had been reviewed by national and international experts in order to verify whether all the comments and recommendations had been taken into consideration, and the final reports had been submitted to the national electricity company. For the design to be approved, the company would have to amend the design in line with the results of the expert review. The Nuclear Regulatory Agency had been continuing its review and assessment of the design in 2011.

214. Mr VALLIM GUERREIRO (Brazil) said that 2011 had been a year in which nuclear power generation had come under close scrutiny and had raised apprehensions worldwide as to its cost-benefit relationship. The Fukushima accident had exposed the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the Agency in meeting the expectations of the international community.

215. His country once again extended its heartfelt condolences to the Japanese people for the suffering caused by the earthquake and tsunami in March. Brazil had the largest Japanese community outside Japan, and Brazilians constituted the third largest foreign community in Japan, mostly descendants of those who had moved to Brazil over a century earlier and had contributed so much to Brazil's development in all walks of life.

216. Brazil had supported the decision of the Director General to convene a Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety to discuss issues relating to nuclear safety in the aftermath of the Fukushima accident. It had presided over the Conference and the coordinating process which had eventually led to its successful conclusion. The Conference had adopted a declaration, negotiated among all Member States, which had entrusted the Director General with the task of submitting to the Board of Governors and the General Conference an action plan on nuclear power reactor safety, emergency response and preparedness, and radiation protection of people and the environment. He commended the Director General for diligently carrying out that mandate and welcomed the fact that, in the preceding week, the Board of Governors had recommended that the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety be endorsed at the General Conference.

217. For some, the action plan fell short in many areas, while for others it was too ambitious. What was important, however, was that a process was being initiated which, in some respects, might take months to be accomplished and, in others, years or even decades. It would be inappropriate at the current juncture to be too prescriptive about what the end result should be. The proposal the Board of Governors had asked the General Conference to endorse was the most that was politically possible in the current circumstances.

218. Nuclear energy was an emotional issue, but some comments made in the aftermath of the Fukushima accident had defied rationality and, in some cases, the laws of physics. There was no simple way to dispel public anxieties about nuclear energy, but Member States must not shirk their common responsibility to take seriously the lessons to be learned from Fukushima. That would require courageous political leadership. Implementation of the action plan by Member States, the Secretariat and other stakeholders, such as other international organizations, would be a test of that leadership. Brazil was prepared to assume its share of responsibility in that endeavour.

219. Brazil was not taking lightly the lessons which could be learned from the Fukushima accident. It and other members of the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies had decided to submit nuclear power plants in operation in their countries to similar stress tests to those to be applied in Europe and elsewhere with a view to re-evaluating the safety parameters of those facilities.

220. At the 2010 General Conference, he had stressed that it was important not to yield to the temptation of thinking that one size fits all. His country fully recognized the important role played by the Agency in developing standards in many fields. Such standards provided Member States with essential guidance. However, an understanding of the technical issues involved might sometimes lead to procedures and practices which, although different, were as effective as those prescribed, or even more so. Common sense based on sound technical and scientific knowledge was the best guide to success.

221. The current year marked the 20th anniversary of ABACC, which had been a real success story. Whereas, in the past, rivalry and mistrust had predominated, now confidence and trust prevailed, thanks to full transparency. Brazil had a complete picture of the nuclear activities carried out in Argentina and vice-versa. The Quadripartite Agreement had entered into force before either country had acceded to the NPT. That experience might prove to be of value in other regions of the world and, in that connection, Brazil looked forward to the participation of ABACC officials in the forum on experience of possible relevance to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East to be convened in Vienna in November.

222. Mr WURST CALLE (Peru) said that the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant had a major impact on the work of the Agency. The primary responsibility for nuclear

safety lay with individual States. At the same time, the Agency played an important role in promoting international cooperation and coordinating global efforts to strengthen the nuclear safety regime.

223. Although Peru did not have nuclear power plants, and its use of nuclear energy was mainly confined to research and nuclear applications in agriculture and human health, implementation of adequate nuclear safety standards remained a priority. Thus, his country welcomed the recent approval by the Board of Governors of the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, developed in the aftermath of the Fukushima accident, which contained practical measures for strengthening nuclear safety. It would have preferred the action plan to be more ambitious, but it recognized that the plan was realistic and incorporated the concerns of all Member States. The action plan and its future implementation should be seen as two parts of a broader process that had begun after the Fukushima accident and that also included the initiative of the Director General to convene a Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June 2011, the high-level meeting on nuclear safety to be convened by the Secretary-General during the current week in New York, the extraordinary meeting of the parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety scheduled for 2012, and the initiative of the Prime Minister of Japan to hold an international conference on nuclear safety in late 2012 with the support of the Agency.

224. His country was aware that many countries were reluctant to address the questions of nuclear safety and nuclear security together, but the eminently technical nature of both issues should make it possible to do so, particularly for countries that were just embarking on a nuclear programme. After all, the consequences of a nuclear accident were equally serious in terms of loss of life and environmental and material damage whether it was caused by a natural disaster or a malicious act.

225. He commended the Agency's efforts to coordinate its activities with other United Nations bodies in order to avoid duplication of work, and to publicize the mandate and competencies of the organization. In that connection, the Agency had sent experts to Peru to attend a regional workshop in November 2010 in Lima on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

226. Peru had followed with interest the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington in 2010 and was firmly committed to the objectives of that process, namely non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament, the peaceful use of nuclear energy and strengthening of nuclear security to prevent malicious acts. It had attended a workshop on nuclear security held in June 2011 in Chile and hoped to be able to take part in the Nuclear Security Summit to be held in March 2012 in the Republic of Korea.

227. At national level, Peru had finalized a draft document with the Agency identifying practical measures for strengthening the physical protection of radioactive material. It hoped that that plan could be implemented soon, with the assistance of the Agency and the international community.

228. His country supported the Agency's missions to evaluate nuclear security and it had initiated preliminary discussions on a mission to assess its border control capabilities.

229. With regard to technical cooperation, in order to meet the needs of developing countries the Agency should focus on the following areas: combating cancer through the creation of national capacities both with respect to training of professionals and the acquisition of diagnostic and therapeutic equipment; improving food security through the use of nuclear applications in agriculture; provision of technical, economic and legal assistance to Member States embarking on nuclear power programmes; and use of isotopic techniques in water resources management.

230. In June 2011, the Director General had visited Peru, when he had been able to see for himself the various projects that were being carried out involving nuclear applications in the areas of medicine, agriculture and water management. Peru was committed to continuing its productive cooperation with

the Agency. It had submitted a number of project proposals directly linked to its sustainable development plans. Via nuclear applications in the field of health, agriculture and water resources management, inter alia, the Agency played an important role in helping countries meet the Millennium Development Goals.

231. At regional level, Peru had been an active participant in ARCAL since 1984. It took part in a large number of ARCAL projects ranging in subject area from human resources development to infrastructure development in such areas as energy, health, agriculture, hydrology, industry, nuclear safety and radiation protection.

232. In 2010, his country had joined the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies and had been working actively to standardize national legislation, drawing on the valuable experience of regulatory authorities in countries with a more advanced nuclear programme.

233. Mr AL-SALAL (Kuwait) said that a major increase in energy supplies would be required in the coming decades to meet the needs of global socio-economic development. As nuclear energy was deemed to be a supplementary rather than an alternative source of energy, the decision to opt for nuclear energy depended on national policies, which were in turn determined by needs, aspirations and capacities. Kuwait was cooperating with the Agency with a view to building its national capacity and developing the institutions required for the implementation of key nuclear projects. It looked forward to further consultations and close cooperation to that end.

234. His country was also engaged in consultations between experts from member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Agency experts on the implementation of a joint programme on peaceful uses of nuclear energy. A great deal had been achieved during the preceding four years and Kuwait looked forward to further close cooperation in the years ahead.

235. The technical cooperation programme was a cornerstone of the Agency's work in support of capacity building and the transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries for peaceful purposes. Kuwait had long attached special importance to technical cooperation activities and greatly appreciated the Agency's activities in support of Asia and the Pacific region, especially the organization of regional workshops and training courses. It looked forward to further constructive cooperation and thanked the Agency staff that had visited Kuwait for their valuable assistance.

236. Kuwait attached great importance to the safety and security of radioactive sources and nuclear material, and he emphasized the need for strict application of the rules and guidelines aimed at controlling movements of such material. His country followed with keen interest developments in the Agency's integrated nuclear security support plans and it had agreed with the Agency to hold a training workshop on advanced equipment for the detection of radioactive material.

237. The painful lessons learned from nuclear accidents had made States more determined to enhance their collective capacity to respond to nuclear accidents in the future — including those caused by major natural disasters — by taking practical steps to apply safety measures to all activities relating to the use of nuclear energy. Failure to take such action would have an adverse impact on the sustainability of the role of nuclear energy and its potential contribution to the economic development of most societies. A constructive and transparent dialogue must therefore begin at once with a view to identifying a solid basis for the development of new and effective strategies and mechanisms in the area of nuclear safety.

238. Nuclear safety was not only a global and regional issue but also a national responsibility and it must be addressed at all three levels. The importance of universal application of nuclear safety conventions and emergency response mechanisms should be recognized, and emphasis should be placed on the binding nature of such international obligations. Close and transparent international

cooperation was required as a first step towards expanding the use of nuclear energy as and when required.

239. All present and future users of nuclear energy should be required to meet the highest safety standards. The Agency had a key role to play in all areas relating to peaceful uses of nuclear energy, especially that of nuclear safety, and it should be accorded greater authority to undertake regular inspections of national arrangements to deal with emergencies and improve the safety of nuclear installations in accordance with internationally agreed norms. Clearly, such steps might call for an increase in the Agency's financial resources, but the benefits to be gained would greatly exceed the additional costs. His country called on all States that had not yet acceded to the Convention on Nuclear Safety to do so as soon as possible.

240. Kuwait was following developments with respect to the implementation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of its safeguards agreement. While it affirmed the right of all States to produce, develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with the provisions of the NPT, it called on Iran to cooperate more closely with the Agency, and to respond to the latter's queries, in order to dispel any fears or doubts regarding the nature of its nuclear programme and resolve outstanding issues. It further called on all parties concerned to step up diplomatic efforts to resume the dialogue and negotiations in the interests of security and stability in the Middle East region and the world as a whole.

241. The safeguards system, as a cornerstone of the Agency's work and of the non-proliferation regime, enjoyed the support of most countries in the world. His country therefore urged all States that had not yet signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency to do so, and it encouraged States that had signed such an agreement to proceed with the signing of an additional protocol. All States party to the NPT should abide by their obligations under the Treaty and under their safeguards agreements, and should work closely with the Agency in resolving any doubts regarding their programmes through constructive and transparent negotiations and dialogue.

242. Kuwait attached great importance to the application of Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East. It noted with deep regret that, although all other States in the region were party to the NPT and were committed to the application of the provisions of their safeguards agreements, Israel persisted in its refusal to sign the NPT and place its installations under comprehensive Agency safeguards, thereby impeding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Its attitude undermined security and stability in the region and hence in the world as a whole.

243. His country welcomed the convening by the Director General in November 2011 — pursuant to General Conference decision GC(44)/DEC/12 adopted in 2000 — of a forum on experience that might be of relevance to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It also welcomed the efforts by peace-loving nations to convene an international conference in 2012 on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Those were important first steps towards raising international awareness of the risk posed by Israel's failure to accede to the NPT, and towards achieving the universality of the Treaty.

244. Kuwait reaffirmed the inalienable right of all States without discrimination to possess and develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. It therefore welcomed the decision to establish a nuclear fuel bank under the Agency's auspices and had donated a sum of US \$10 million for that purpose.

245. In conclusion, Kuwait had full confidence in the Agency's ability to make an effective contribution to sustainable development in countries that were faced with economic and financial crises and with problems of food security and climate change. The organization deserved Member

States' unstinting support for its efforts to guarantee security, safety, peace and prosperity throughout the world.

246. Mr AL RAISI (Oman) expressed his country's solidarity with the Japanese people and Government, and with all those who had sought to alleviate the impact of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. A number of scientific meetings had been held at different levels in the intervening period to study all the implications of the nuclear disaster and to draw the necessary lessons for the future. It was essential to undertake a transparent and comprehensive assessment and to share the resulting data speedily with all countries, in accordance with the declaration adopted at the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in June 2011.

247. The Sultanate of Oman agreed with other States that it was necessary to consider ways and means of strengthening the international legal framework, including nuclear safety conventions, which should be effectively implemented and regularly reviewed. It was also necessary to improve early warning procedures, and emergency preparedness and response at national, regional and international level.

248. Since joining the Agency in 2009, Oman had attached great importance to national and regional projects under the technical cooperation programme in the areas of energy planning, human health, agriculture, food, water resources management, protection of the environment and radiation safety infrastructure. Such projects formed part of the Sultanate's comprehensive development plan. Oman had signed a CPF with the Agency in October 2010 covering the period 2012–2017 which tied in with the country's development plan for 2011–2015. It trusted it could rely on the Agency's support for the projects it had submitted for the 2012–2013 technical cooperation cycle.

249. His country greatly appreciated the action being taken to avert the risk of nuclear proliferation and it reiterated its call for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, in the Middle East. The General Conference should take the requisite steps to achieve that goal by ensuring that all nuclear facilities, including those of Israel, were placed under Agency safeguards.

250. Finally, Oman was confident that the Agency would continue to promote nuclear and radiation safety in order to secure the support of international civil society for peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

251. Mr BELFORT (Haiti) encouraged the Agency to engage more with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) in general, and with Barbados in particular, to help it associate itself more effectively with the programme for sustainable management of the Caribbean Sea. Isotopic techniques could certainly be of assistance in developing that programme.

252. The Government and people of Haiti extended their sympathy to the Japanese people following the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant and thanked the Agency for the support it had given, and for having organized the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety earlier in the year.

253. His Government attached great importance to the Agency's technical cooperation programme, from which it had benefited in the areas of public health, agriculture, energy planning and the environment. The Haitian Government was looking at ways in which the Agency could become involved in the development activities that were being undertaken in Haiti by the United Nations and other United Nations bodies. Such integration would be difficult because the Agency did not have a system of permanent representation, however it could certainly be achieved through UNDAF or ad hoc missions. Haiti hoped that such technical missions could be sent soon to discuss with the UNDP the possibility of the Agency participating in the UNDAF system and thereby strengthening its cooperation programme in Haiti.

254. The solution to many of Haiti's current development problems could be found in more strategic cooperation with the Agency in agriculture, the environment, energy planning and public health. His country was experiencing difficulties in implementing its radiotherapy centre project but hoped those problems would very soon be resolved because, with almost 10 000 cancer cases per year, the project was of vital importance. His Government would welcome an imPACT mission to undertake a systematic evaluation of the country's cancer therapy needs.

255. Before the turn of the century, there had been practically no Agency activities in Haiti, even though the country had been one of the organization's founding members. Between 2002 and 2009, great progress had been made in cooperation between Haiti and the Agency through its participation in numerous regional and national projects, and thanks to greater awareness on the part of the Haitian authorities and public of the issues surrounding the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and in the service of sustainable development. However, ten years of patient work had been severely undermined by the earthquake of 12 January 2010, and discouragement was beginning to set in. Then, in March 2010, the innovative and fruitful idea of a 'special project' for Haiti had emerged following discussions involving Haiti, the Agency and the member countries of ARCAL, an idea which also represented a new approach to the problems of LDCs. That project should not only help repair the immense damage caused to the country's basic infrastructure but should also help restore the pace of development prior to the earthquake. He thanked all those who had supported the idea.

256. For many years, his country had been telling the General Conference that the Agency needed to give special attention to LDCs, which had their own special difficulties and development needs that could not be compared with those of other developing countries or the developed countries, as had been recognized in various international forums. It was important that the Agency find viable, fair and sustainable solutions to their problems, and LDCs should have a permanent place on the Agency's agenda. The foundations needed to be laid to ensure that the technical assistance provided by the Agency was better absorbed and integrated into countries' development programmes, with a view to achieving the fundamental objectives of elimination of poverty and respect for human dignity, ensuring that globalization was not a dehumanizing process but a truly positive force for the world's population as a whole. There should also be better integration of LDCs into the global economy in order to counter their marginalization.

257. The Seoul Development Consensus adopted by the G20 in November 2010 emphasized the need for strong infrastructures and for food security. The trend towards new approaches would no doubt be reinforced at the G20 meeting to be held in Cannes, France, in November 2011. The Agency was not only a scientific organization; it was also becoming a development body with activities extending over the five fields of water, energy, health, agriculture and biological diversity. His country was convinced that the Agency could assist LDCs in achieving the objectives of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Brussels Declaration, United Nations action plans for the LDCs and the Millennium Declaration.

258. His country was pleased to note that, despite the Fukushima accident, the Agency was as determined as ever to continue developing its activities relating to the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in support of sustainable development. In performing its functions, the organization sometimes faced financial problems. Despite its own numerous problems, Haiti would do everything in its power to make its own very modest contribution to the Agency's finances, in particular through its contribution to the TCF.

259. Haiti was committed to combating terrorism, in particular nuclear and radiological terrorism, as well as weapons of mass destruction and everything that could pose a threat to international peace and security. It urged all Member States to follow the Agency's recommendations on nuclear safety and security with the utmost rigour.

260. Finally, many international officials of the highest standing would have wished to attend the Agency's General Conference had it not coincided with the autumn session of the United Nations General Assembly. Thus, that it would be both desirable and a positive move if the Secretariat, together with the Board of Governors, were to give consideration to scheduling the General Conference either slightly earlier or slightly later.

261. Mr NYAPHISI (Lesotho) offered his country's profound condolences to the Government and people of Japan in the wake of the events of March 2011.

262. Expressing support for the Peaceful Uses Initiative, from which his country had benefited, he thanked those Member States that had contributed to it, calling on others to do likewise with a view to reaching the target of \$100 million by 2015.

263. As a relatively new member of the Agency, the Kingdom of Lesotho had signed the Revised Supplementary Agreement Concerning the Provision of Technical Assistance by the IAEA in September 2010 and was in the process of developing a CPF. Following a fact-finding and programming mission to the country, potential areas of technical cooperation had been identified, which included human health, animal disease control, energy planning, support for capacity building, and establishment of a legislative framework and national infrastructure for radiation protection.

264. His country was committed to establishing a comprehensive, efficient and effective national regulatory infrastructure, in compliance with international safety standards, in the shortest possible time, and a bill had been drafted to that end.

265. He expressed appreciation to the Director General for convening the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June 2011, and support for the resultant IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety which aimed to strengthen the global nuclear safety and security framework.

266. He also welcomed the Director General's initiative in dedicating the 2011 Scientific Forum to water matters. Such events were important, as they sought to address the plight of millions of people in developing countries and contributed to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Addressing the increasing burden of cancer, and improving management of and access to safe drinking water, were important for millions of people in developing countries and were key components of Lesotho's development agenda to improve the quality of life of its people. He thanked the Agency for the support it had given to his country and encouraged Member States to provide extrabudgetary resources for Agency activities in those key areas. Lesotho would be seeking support from Member States for the establishment of its national regulatory authority and for capacity building in that connection.

267. His country had honoured its pledge to the TCF and would continue to do so in future years. It encouraged other Member States to contribute to the Fund.

268. Mr PALAI (Botswana) offered condolences to the people of Japan in the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident.

269. That tragic event had given rise to much debate about the safety and future of nuclear energy. As the Director General had pointed out, confidence had been shaken and many countries were now considering scaling down or withdrawing from their nuclear programmes and searching for alternative energy sources. Confidence building was thus one of the Agency's most critical tasks following the accident and efforts should be made not only to ensure the soundness of the science, but also to explore how the technology could meet current and future demands while being environmentally friendly.

270. That issue was of particular concern for developing countries. One of the biggest constraints on foreign investment was inadequate energy supplies. However, energy generation was only one of several peaceful uses of nuclear technology, which also had applications in areas such as agriculture and water resources management.

271. The events in Japan demonstrated humanity's vulnerability even where optimum safety measures were in place. The importance of complying with relevant Agency instruments and standards could not be overemphasized. Successful implementation of the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency required international cooperation.

272. Strengthening the Agency's safeguards system and the additional protocol was of key importance for reinforcing the NPT. His country encouraged Member States that had not yet acceded to those instruments to do so as a matter of urgency, and it urged all Member States to cooperate fully with the Agency in its safeguards monitoring activities as well as to provide assurances regarding compliance with the aforementioned instruments. The diversion of nuclear material for military uses in whatever form must never be tolerated.

273. The proposed IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, elaborated in the aftermath of the Fukushima accident, was a positive development and his country hoped that it would help promote greater transparency, which was a prerequisite for building confidence and dispelling fear.

274. Botswana viewed AFRA as an important initiative for addressing regional challenges in the fields of agriculture, health, water resources, food and nutrition. AFRA had been particularly effective in addressing transboundary challenges such as animal diseases and human capacity building in nuclear technology in Africa. Such cooperation could reduce the failures associated with a fragmented approach to funding regional projects. Technical cooperation remained a crucial vehicle for delivering the promises of nuclear technology, and so a significant proportion of the Agency's resources should be devoted to it. His country was encouraged by the increase in contributions to the programme, and it was grateful for the collaboration, support and assistance provided. It used nuclear technology in agriculture, health, water resources management, food and nutrition, and in numerous industrial applications.

275. The assistance Botswana received from the Agency and other international partners was crucial in health-related coordinated research projects. HIV/AIDS remained the country's highest priority. Research into food and nutrition, and into intervention techniques employing stable isotopes, gave hope that a sustainable solution could be found to problems in that area, while the establishment of a radiotherapy centre should alleviate challenges in cancer treatment. Support in human resources development would remain essential. In the agricultural sector, Botswana had made advances in animal disease diagnosis and plant breeding. The effective prevention, management and containment of animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease showed the value of assistance from the Agency and other international partners. His country was also confident that a combination of traditional tsetse fly eradication methods and the SIT could effectively contain further outbreaks. Because of its dry climate, Botswana needed to employ nuclear techniques for groundwater and soil management. That work complemented research initiatives in plant breeding aimed at developing high-yield mutant crop varieties. His Government continued to support strengthening of the regulatory framework for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and for radiation safety. Since Botswana's legislative framework had come into effect in 2006, the functions of the national regulator had been enhanced through the provision of a personal exposure monitoring service for occupationally exposed workers. In addition, background radiation monitoring equipment had been installed in most parts of Botswana. His Government was optimistic about the forthcoming project cycle.

276. In line with Botswana's efforts to enhance nuclear security and combat nuclear terrorism, the country's major border entry points, including airports, had been equipped with radiation detection devices. Botswana took nuclear safety and security seriously and strongly felt that even a small effort aimed at preventing nuclear terrorism would contribute to regional and global security. It urged all nations to ensure that nuclear material did not fall into terrorist hands.

277. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his Government's commitment to meeting its obligations and maximizing its support for the Agency.

278. Mr SAIZONOU (Benin) offered his country's condolences to the people and Government of Japan in the wake of the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant and commended the measures taken by the Agency in that connection. Benin remained convinced that lessons would be learned from the accident which would help promote nuclear safety and security culture.

279. Benin welcomed the significant progress made at the recent NPT Review Conference as well as the various initiatives to facilitate the entry into force of the CTBT. It was becoming increasingly urgent to give full force to international commitments in that area and to work towards a real reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in security policies.

280. His country supported international initiatives promoting the universal application of the nuclear safeguards system, which was both a prerequisite and an effective tool for combating nuclear terrorism.

281. Benin appreciated the tireless efforts of the Agency to assist States with the peaceful application of nuclear energy in the service of sustainable development, and with accident clean-up.

282. His country had made only minimal use of nuclear applications for many years, but it was now increasingly working towards meeting the criteria for more regular cooperation with the Agency. In that regard, it particularly appreciated the Agency's ongoing technical and financial support which had made possible the signing of a CPF at the end of 2010.

283. Benin attached great importance to the technical cooperation programme as one of the Agency's core activities. It greatly appreciated the Agency's support, which had helped the country develop several projects in such areas as agriculture, energy planning, environment, health and water resources. It was working on a number of priority projects in the same areas for the 2012–2013 cycle.

284. With the aim of optimizing its cooperation with the Agency, Benin was currently in the final stages of introducing national legislation governing ionizing radiation, which it had hitherto lacked. In that connection, he thanked the Agency for its recent support in sending an expert mission to Cotonou which had given that process a significant boost. Implementing a legal framework for the safe management of all nuclear technology applications at national level was a major challenge for Benin. It therefore welcomed the multifarious support it received from the Agency, which should serve to strengthen the operational capacities of the national regulatory framework it was planning.

285. In addition, a project to establish Benin's first national radiotherapy and nuclear medicine centre was already under way and had received Agency backing via a feasibility study, training programmes and expert missions.

286. However, his country's ambitions did not end there. It was also seeking to promote education and research in nuclear technology and science, to improve management of its water resources and to control air quality in built-up areas. It thus welcomed the choice of water resources as the theme for the 2011 Scientific Forum.

287. Benin fully recognized the need for States to meet their financial obligations vis-à-vis the Agency so that the Agency could fulfil its mandate. Thus, his Government had recently paid \$31 575.89 towards its arrears in contributions to the Regular Budget and it undertook to pay its other contributions in 2012.

288. In conclusion, he praised the positive atmosphere of the General Conference and agreed with the proposal of the representative of Haiti to change the dates of the General Conference in future so that it did not conflict with the United Nations General Assembly.

289. Mr MCCOOK (Jamaica) joined other delegations in extending his country's sympathy and solidarity to the people of Japan in the wake of the earthquake and tsunami, and the subsequent accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

290. His country welcomed the opportunity to participate in the General Conference, particularly as its developmental challenges often constrained the scope of its engagement in the work of the Agency. Having joined the Agency in 1965, it remained committed to the vision and mission of the organization and particularly appreciated the cooperation and support given to least developed and developing countries.

291. The Agency's mission was to secure global commitment to the safe, effective and peaceful use of nuclear technology, harnessing its tremendous benefits while preventing the catastrophic potential effects of accidents or malicious use. It was the capacity of nuclear technology both to help and harm that made the agenda of international cooperation on nuclear technology so critical, requiring the commitment of all. With its uses ranging from medicine to the generation of energy to power great cities, nuclear energy affected every member of the international community, albeit in different ways and at different levels. The Agency had played and must continue to play a unique and vital role in efforts in that area.

292. Jamaica saw the Agency's role in promoting the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies as one of its most important mandates. Recent events had highlighted the importance of coherent and coordinated international approaches to dealing with nuclear safety issues. Thus, his country welcomed the proposals for strengthening nuclear safety and emergency preparedness. It had listened with interest to the reports of steps taken to assess and reinforce safety and risk reduction measures in several countries with extensive nuclear facilities, and it hoped that those efforts would help to prevent the recurrence of nuclear accidents.

293. As challenging as the mission to promote the peaceful use of nuclear technology was, preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons was no less important. Jamaica wished to see a world in which there were no nuclear weapons, and it therefore welcomed initiatives to promote the expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones and efforts to reduce and downgrade stocks of nuclear weapons and related material. All Member States should comply with their obligations under relevant treaties governing the peaceful use of nuclear technology and prohibiting the testing, development and proliferation of nuclear weapons. Jamaica supported the verification and safeguards procedures that the Agency conducted in accordance with its mandate and remained hopeful that outstanding concerns in that area would be resolved through full and effective cooperation among all parties.

294. One feature of protecting society from the malicious use of nuclear technology was the safekeeping of nuclear supplies and effective measures to prevent nuclear technology from falling into the hands of terrorists. His country was fully committed to supporting the Agency's efforts to strengthen cooperation in nuclear safety and remain alert to any attempt by unauthorized persons to possess or move nuclear material.

295. Not unrelated to that issue was the safe transport of nuclear material, and he welcomed the proposals developed in that area. He drew attention to the oft-repeated and deeply held concerns of his country and its neighbours regarding the transit of nuclear waste through the vulnerable Caribbean region, and he urged shipping States to take those concerns into account and discontinue the practice.

296. For Jamaica, nuclear technology was of greatest relevance in the field of social and economic development. His country appreciated the valuable technical assistance provided by the Agency. That assistance had spanned several areas, expanding from a focus on programmes undertaken with the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Science at the University of the West Indies to encompass programmes in other areas and with other institutions. Jamaica had benefited from training and capacity building programmes offered by the Agency and was particularly appreciative of projects in such areas as New World screw worm eradication and groundwater testing, including the Agency's pioneering work on research into lead and other toxic metals in Jamaican soil, as well as assistance with enhanced testing of residue levels of certain materials in foods. It had also benefited from the expansion of radiology, radiotherapy and nuclear medicine projects, strengthening of capacities for the application of nuclear sciences, and assistance in drafting legislation relating to nuclear matters.

297. At a time when global attention was focused on the grave challenges posed by non-communicable diseases, it was fitting to underline the importance of nuclear medicine. The application of nuclear technology in oncology had made a difference to people's lives in almost every community. Agency cooperation with Member States for the purposes of capacity building in nuclear medicine was thus of great significance.

298. Agriculture was an important economic sector in Jamaica and one with a significant social dimension. Having witnessed the tremendous success of the campaign against rinderpest, his country welcomed the efforts that were being made to apply nuclear technology more widely in that area, both in addressing animal health issues and in water resources management and testing. Jamaica had also benefited from practical support in the application of nuclear technology and related measures in a number of agricultural initiatives.

299. He commended the work of the Agency and acknowledged the contribution of partner countries and other intergovernmental bodies to facilitating technical cooperation programmes. His country looked forward to continued support from such programmes as the Peaceful Uses Initiative. ARCAL provided further opportunities for participation in Agency cooperation programmes, and Jamaica was giving serious consideration to joining the Agreement in view of the importance of enhanced regional cooperation.

300. Mr FAROSS (European Commission) said that the General Conference was meeting at a time when the entire international community was focused on ensuring and continuously improving nuclear safety in the light of the consequences of the recent tragic natural disasters in Japan. The European Commission welcomed the role that the Agency had played in the aftermath of the crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. In particular, he thanked the Agency's Incident and Emergency Centre for the information provided during the events, and for its excellent cooperation with the European Community Urgent Radiological Information Exchange System. The European Commission looked forward to the follow-up to the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in June, and to the effective implementation of the IAEA Action Plan on nuclear safety.

301. Nuclear safety continued to be an absolute priority for the European Union. The European Commission and European Union member States were working together to ensure the safety of their nuclear installations. The European Commission's role was to ensure that the Union developed and implemented the most advanced legal framework for safe and sustainable use of nuclear energy, and that the highest nuclear safety standards were applied in the Union and promoted internationally.

302. After the disaster in Japan, the European Union had thought it important to reassess the level of nuclear safety in the Union and elsewhere in the world. Accordingly, the Commission had launched an initiative to carry out comprehensive safety and risk assessments of nuclear power plants throughout the European Union. That initiative had received broad support from the European Council and the European Parliament. Acting on the mandate from the European Council, the Commission and the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group had defined a methodology and a time frame. The assessment process had been under way since 1 June in all 14 European Union member States that operated nuclear power plants. The agreed approach encompassed two convergent tracks. The safety track focused on assessing how nuclear installations could withstand the consequences of unexpected events, from natural disasters to man-made actions and other accidental impacts, such as transport accidents. Those assessments went beyond previous safety evaluations made during the licensing process. The security track, which lay outside the mandate of the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group, focused on analysing security threats and prevention of and response to incidents due to malevolent or terrorist acts. That process was running under a separate framework.

303. Safety and risk assessments were being conducted in a three-step process: nuclear operators had carried out self-assessments; independent national regulators had verified operators' self-assessments and compiled national progress reports; and final national reports would be available by the end of the year and would be subject to peer reviews, which would start in January 2012.

304. On the basis of the national reports, the Commission would prepare a progress report for the European Council meeting on 9 December, and a consolidated final report in June 2012. Member States would have to decide how to follow up on the assessment at national level, while European Union institutions would have to take decisions on further common safety policy and legislative initiatives.

305. The establishment of a peer review mechanism was essential to guarantee the accountability and credibility of the process. Peers from all European Union member States, both nuclear and non-nuclear, would participate. The mechanism could also be open, on the basis of reciprocity, to European Union neighbouring countries that agreed to apply Union stress tests using a similar methodology.

306. There was no specific European Union legislation on such stress tests. The fact that the European Commission and nuclear safety regulators had agreed on shared criteria and methodology, and that all European Union member States had accepted them as a basis for their assessments, was an important achievement not only for the Union but also from a global perspective.

307. The European Council had also called on the European Commission to review the European Union's nuclear safety framework by the end of the year and, if necessary, to propose improvements. The Commission intended to present its initial findings in a report to the European Council in December 2011. That would be followed by a public consultation involving all relevant stakeholders.

308. In the meantime, the European Union continued to put in place a legally binding common framework. After the adoption in 2009 of a directive on the safety of nuclear installations, in July the Council of the European Union had adopted a directive on the responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste, which was the second pillar of the most advanced supranational safety legislation, with which the Union confirmed its leading role in the responsible use of nuclear energy. It was anchored in the principles and requirements of the Agency's safety standards and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and made them legally binding and enforceable.

309. European Union member States were being requested to establish a national policy and a precise programme for the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste from generation to disposal based

on safety demonstrations and public involvement in the decision-making process, and including international peer review.

310. International cooperation on nuclear safety was more important than ever to strengthen safety culture and emergency preparedness worldwide. Building on the statement by G8 leaders in Deauville, the European Union considered that all countries operating nuclear power plants should carry out similar safety assessments as soon as possible. That was in line with its conviction that safety was of paramount importance, and with its policy of promoting safety beyond its borders. Over the years, several cooperation mechanisms between the European Commission and European Union neighbouring countries had been put in place. After the Fukushima accident, the Commission had established contacts with those neighbouring countries which operated or owned nuclear installations, namely Switzerland, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Armenia and Croatia, or which planned to develop nuclear power, like Turkey and Belarus. In June, it had convened a ministerial-level meeting with those countries. In a joint declaration, the participants had agreed to undertake voluntary safety and risk assessments, taking into account the European Union's specifications and methodology, including the principle of peer reviews. The participation of those countries created a very large regional space — practically the whole continent — with coherent action on nuclear safety, and it set a leading example for the global community.

311. The European Union also cooperated on ensuring nuclear safety at global level. Under the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation, it had established cooperation with some 15 countries worldwide to promote a high level of nuclear safety and radiation protection and the application of efficient and effective safeguards.

312. Cooperation between the Agency and Euratom was well developed. Recent events, and the lessons to be learned from them, should motivate closer cooperation and the establishment of a common approach to nuclear safety.

313. Further progress could still be made in nuclear safety cooperation. The Agency could play a key role in involving European Union neighbours, and other countries worldwide, in a global approach to nuclear safety. It could build on the Union's safety and risk assessment process to determine specific global action in the light of the Fukushima accident. The Agency's participation in the European mechanism for in-depth analysis of nuclear incidents (EU Clearinghouse) could also be increased.

314. A general trend in favour of revising the international nuclear safety framework had lately emerged in various international forums. The fifth review meeting under the Convention on Nuclear Safety in April had shown the need to make the Convention more legally binding. At the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June, the Convention's Contracting Parties had been encouraged to initiate a review of that instrument in the light of the Fukushima accident. The European Commission was prepared to contribute actively to that process and welcomed in particular the initiatives aimed at enhancing and updating the provisions of the Convention in order to enhance its effectiveness, governance and enforceability.

315. In the area of nuclear safeguards, cooperation between the Agency and the Commission was well developed and operating smoothly. Integrated safeguards had been fully implemented in the European Union since January 2010. The Commission welcomed the recent statements made by the Deputy Director General for Safeguards on future verification challenges, and especially the intention of the Agency to develop further the State-level concept by taking better account of all information available to the organization. The Commission was of the view that the Agency could make better use of Euratom inspection activities and results when devising State-level approaches. It therefore fully supported closer cooperation between the Agency and State and regional nuclear material and

accounting and control systems with the aim of achieving more effective and efficient safeguards worldwide.

316. Ensuring and continuously improving nuclear safety was a joint responsibility that was in the interest of all countries, regardless of whether they used nuclear energy or not. Every effort must be made to put in place and implement the highest achievable standards at national, regional and global level.

317. Mr GRANSEER (Sovereign Order of Malta) expressed confidence in the Director General's ability to ensure that the Agency continued to contribute to sustainable strategies that addressed the challenges of hunger, disease and poverty.

318. The Sovereign Order of Malta had been founded over 950 years ago and had a unique sovereign status. It had diplomatic relations with 104 States, permanent observer status at the United Nations and affiliated organizations, and official relations with the European Union and numerous other international organizations, forming a unique diplomatic humanitarian network. The Order initiated and maintained projects designed to deliver emergency aid, health care, training and education. Responses to urgent needs were complemented by long-term relief programmes in the fields of reconstruction, health, nutrition, livelihood and disaster preparedness.

319. Humanity was faced with critical challenges related to maintaining and enhancing its prosperity in the context of ever increasing demands as regards food production, health and security. The Agency was well placed to assist Member States in meeting such challenges, and to foster sustainable development. Poverty was a breeding ground for the world's collective insecurity and lack of peace. Thus, prosperity depended on poverty alleviation. Strategic applications of nuclear technology in such areas as health, food crop and livestock improvement, and sanitation could contribute immensely to that end.

320. The Order noted with appreciation the growing attention given to cancer therapy in developing countries under PACT, and it was particularly pleased that its own contribution to the expansion of cancer treatment services was soon to be formalized by the signing of a practical arrangement between it and PACT. Cooperation between the Agency and the Order would contribute greatly to saving the lives of people in developing countries.

321. The world's water resources were increasingly vulnerable and threatened by humanity's need for water, food, raw materials and energy. With a view to contributing to cooperation in that important field, the Order had sent one of its own water resource management scientists to the 2011 Scientific Forum.

322. In conclusion, the Order remained committed to its mission of helping to reduce pain and suffering around the world in close cooperation with its partners, including the Agency.

The meeting rose at 9.05 p.m.