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President: Mr SOLTANIEH (Islamic Republic of Iran)

Later: Mr POTTS (Australia)

Later: Mr GRIMA (Malta)

Later: Ms DENGO BENAVIDES (Costa Rica)

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Abbreviations used in this record:

AAEA	Arab Atomic Energy Agency
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
ARCAL	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
AU-PATTEC	African Union's Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign
Brussels Supplementary Convention	Convention Supplementary to the Paris Convention of 29 July 1960 on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Early Notification Convention	Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	gross domestic product
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
HEU	high-enriched uranium
IEC	Incident and Emergency Centre
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INES	International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
INLEX	International Expert Group on Nuclear Liability
INPRO	International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
LEU	low-enriched uranium
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NEA	Nuclear Energy Agency (of OECD)
NPCs	national participation costs
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
Paris Convention	Convention on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
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

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SAGSI	Standing Advisory Group on Safeguards Implementation
SEANWFZ Treaty	Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone
SNSA	Slovenian Nuclear Safety Administration
SQP	small quantities protocol
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
Trilateral Initiative	Trilateral Initiative launched by the Minister of the Russian Federation for Atomic Energy, the Secretary of Energy of the United States and the Agency's Director General on 17 September 1996 to consider practical measures for the application of IAEA verification to fissile material originating from nuclear weapons
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VIC	Vienna International Centre
WENRA	Western European Nuclear Regulators' Association
WINS	World Institute for Nuclear Security

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

1. Ms TAN Yee Woan (Singapore) said that, following the Fukushima accident, it was important that the Agency and the nuclear community draw the right lessons in order to strengthen the global nuclear safety regime, international and regional cooperation, and response to nuclear accidents and emergencies. She welcomed the Director General's initiative to hold the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June 2011 in order for the international community to embark officially on that process.

2. Implausible as it might sound, there were still those who insisted that the global nuclear safety infrastructure was fine as it stood and that all that was required was better adherence to and implementation of current practices. Her delegation urged all parties to keep an open mind on the review of safety, and to accord the highest consideration to ensuring the safety of nuclear installations, as any accident would have serious political, economic, medical and environmental consequences. Without being either alarmist or defensive, Member States needed to engage in an honest and open review of the global nuclear safety framework, which included standards for plant design, siting criteria, operational safety, regulatory effectiveness and emergency preparedness and response. To do less could have grave consequences, and those who had had a chance to do better but had not because of narrow interests would not be forgiven.

3. The Agency needed to step up its work towards ensuring that peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology could benefit as many citizens of the world as possible. Important areas in that connection included the fields of cancer treatment, food security and water management.

4. Nuclear proliferation remained a matter of concern. Singapore urged Iran to extend its fullest cooperation and to comply with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and the Agency's Board of Governors so as to clarify concerns over the possible military dimensions of its nuclear programme.

5. Her country urged the DPRK to return to the NPT and to resume its cooperation with the Agency. She noted from media reports that there were indications that the DPRK was considering resuming talks on its nuclear programme without any preconditions and she hoped that that would lead to definite outcomes in the near future. Her delegation urged all sides to refrain from provocative acts which would deepen the environment of tension and suspicion and threaten the peace and security of the region.

6. Singapore, as a current member of the Board of Governors, reiterated its support for the role and the work of the Agency, which had a unique and important mission to fulfil with regard to nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology. The Agency should be held to high standards in the achievement of those worthy goals. Singapore therefore appealed to all parties to allow the Agency to carry out its mandate, which was primarily highly technical in nature, in a consultative and professional environment free from polarization and unnecessary politicization of issues. The once-celebrated Vienna spirit of consensus was increasingly being honoured more in the breach than the observance, with some decisions being adopted by the Board through voting even though consensus could have been reached had there been genuine attempts to consult and had there not been pressing deadlines.

7. In 2011, Singapore had continued to work with the Agency in several areas. In conjunction with the Agency and Japan, Singapore had hosted an interregional seminar on the Agency's safeguards system for States in south-east and south Asia with limited nuclear material and activities and another regional seminar on the Agency's safeguards system for States in south-east Asia with significant nuclear activities in March 2011. Over the preceding ten years, it had hosted 22 scientific visits, 83 fellowships and 24 regional training events with the Agency in areas such as nuclear medicine, radiotherapy and radiation protection. Singapore would continue to support the Agency in its work, and it expressed its appreciation to the Agency for providing technical advice to support the understanding of various important issues before the start of Singapore's pre-feasibility study on nuclear power.

8. Mr EL-KHOURY (Lebanon) reaffirmed his country's support for the Director General's courageous and responsible decision to convene the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June 2011. Nuclear safety standards were a key element of the post-Fukushima era. The Conference had recognized that all nuclear emergencies had consequences extending beyond the borders of individual States. It had also reaffirmed the importance of the Agency's role, of ensuring compliance with its safety standards and of guaranteeing it sufficient resources to perform that role. Lebanon supported the content of the Ministerial Declaration and hoped that the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety (GC(55)/14) would be endorsed by the General Conference. The importance of the outcome of the Ministerial Conference and the follow-up action was accentuated by the increasing demand in some regions of the world for electricity generation based on nuclear energy. As the destructive impact of a nuclear accident took no account of political or geographical boundaries, every country that possessed nuclear installations had a duty of transparency and a duty to cooperate in adopting control, oversight and modernization measures.

9. In the Middle East, the risk stemmed primarily from Israel's Dimona reactor. Experts and independent commentators in Israel itself had warned that it was high time to review the continued existence of the ageing reactor. It was unreasonable to maintain an information blackout instead of launching an international initiative to assess the possible effects and risks associated with the Israeli reactor, especially since it was not subject to civilian oversight and was located in a region exposed to quasi-permanent seismic movements. That was why all the Arab States consistently demanded that all Israeli nuclear installations should be placed under comprehensive Agency safeguards like those of other countries in the interests of the safety of the region as a whole.

10. Furthermore, Israel persistently refused to participate in programmes, designed by countries with which it was on friendly terms, aimed at converting scientific research reactors so that they could use LEU rather than HEU. Nobody had asked it, at least not in public, about the hidden intentions underlying its insistence on the use of HEU.

11. He commended other Middle Eastern countries that were preparing to introduce nuclear reactors for energy production on their determination to cooperate fully with the Agency and to abide by its standards, guaranteeing the safety and transparency required by the peoples of the region and ensuring social stability.

12. The Director General had described himself as the guardian of non-proliferation and had stressed that the Agency would be able to perform its mandate effectively only if it struck a balance between two tasks: non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and support for the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Lebanon strongly supported that approach and urged States that had not signed the NPT to do so and to place all their nuclear installations under Agency safeguards. At the same time, the Agency should exercise caution in interpreting the standards laid down in safeguards agreements in order to ensure that its assessments did not exceed the bounds of the objectives for which the standards had been devised.

13. Israel had declared its firm intention to remain the sole State possessing nuclear weapons in the Middle East, even if force was required to maintain that status. Lebanon was opposed to the existence of any nuclear-weapon State in the Middle East and that principle underlay all the positions and actions it adopted.

14. The 2010 NPT Review Conference had decided to convene a conference in 2012 on the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Lebanon was convinced more than ever before, however, that the preparatory steps required to create such a zone were accession by Israel to the NPT and the placement of all its nuclear installations under comprehensive Agency safeguards as a gesture of goodwill.

15. Lebanon and all the other Arab States had agreed on a number of principles: that the universality of the NPT was in the strategic interest of the entire human race and took precedence over all political considerations and circumstantial interests; that all Arab States had acceded to the NPT and the safeguards regime and had not invoked the Arab-Israeli conflict in order to defer compliance with their obligations; that nuclear weapons could not be regarded as an instrument for guaranteeing the security of any party since their possession would trigger a regional arms race that nobody sanctioned or desired; that nuclear non-proliferation efforts should be based on a comprehensive regional approach that guaranteed security for all parties, eschewing double standards and the discretionary selection of standards; that the approach to non-proliferation should cover all aspects of the issue, such as the concept of comprehensiveness, and that any failure to comply with the principle of comprehensiveness and universality would render its objectives and effectiveness null and void.

16. The Agency had recorded many exceptional achievements during the past year in different parts of the world, including the development of expertise and productivity in needy countries. Although the number of States requiring technical cooperation had increased in recent years, there had not been a corresponding increase in the TCF. Beneficiary States therefore requested that effective mechanisms be established to render such assistance predictable, assured and sufficient in order to ensure that their development was sustainable and that they could design programmes capable of being implemented within specific time limits.

17. According to the Annual Report for 2010, human needs remained a top priority in less developed regions. The Agency was thus faithfully discharging its mission under the Statute. The large proportion of budgetary funds devoted to technical cooperation demonstrated that the Agency was responding to requests for assistance from national authorities.

18. Lebanon greatly appreciated the Agency's support for Lebanon, where mutual cooperation was based on transparency, careful planning in the light of existing needs, and speedy implementation where capacities and circumstances permitted. Lebanon was therefore one of the leading countries in terms of average programme implementation. In recent years it had succeeded in reaching high levels of technological competence and in training Lebanese scientists and technical experts. Some of its achievements were currently on display at a Conference side event. His delegation would welcome comments and suggestions from visitors to the exhibition.

19. Lebanon believed that, in the absence of peace and trust, it was impossible to achieve the development to which the world aspired. An effective and goal-oriented partnership between all members of the international community would serve as a vehicle to promote the peace and development process, a process in which the Agency played a vital role.

20. Mr FERDINANDO (Sri Lanka) said that his country fully shared the Director General's views on the lessons of the Fukushima accident. As the representative of a country that had also suffered a tsunami, he expressed sorrow at the loss of life and property in Japan, as well as confidence in the ability of the people to recover from the tragedy and rebuild their lives. The unprecedented accident

had shown that although the peaceful use of the atom had great potential for development and progress, it could also pose great threats to safety, human health and the environment across national borders.

21. The accident had led all stakeholders and the nuclear power industry to review safety standards. Sri Lanka commended the actions taken to mitigate the consequences and hoped that they would enhance public confidence in the safety and viability of nuclear power. He expressed appreciation for the cooperation of the Agency and the CTBTO in providing timely information on the situation.

22. His country commended the Director General on his initiative of holding the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June 2011, and he hoped that the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety would represent the start of a process in which vital issues of safety and emergency preparedness would be considered in a holistic manner. Sri Lanka looked forward to the continuation of that process at the High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security to be held the next day during the 66th session of the UN General Assembly.

23. There was a need for greater cooperation in nuclear emergencies. A system of early warning and notification, measures to minimize the spread of radiation, assessments of environmental and human health impacts, and a compensation mechanism were priority requirements for the safety of populations. There was also a need to review the safety standards for nuclear power plants worldwide. Positive measures that could be taken by States with Agency assistance included stress tests.

24. Following the accident, his Government had taken prompt action to modernize the Atomic Energy Authority and to strengthen it to prepare for emergency situations. The Government had also monitored radiation levels in food and in the environment. As the cost of the measures had been high, his country urged the Agency to enhance its programmes of technical assistance to Member States to build capacity for nuclear emergency preparedness, including through regional cooperation programmes. It thanked the Agency for its assistance so far in that regard. Sri Lanka was establishing some sites to detect increases in background radiation and activating a radiological warning system through its Disaster Management Centre. With the collaboration of the Atomic Energy Authority, the Centre planned to conduct national training programmes in the field of radiological emergencies and similar situations.

25. Energy had been identified as a priority area for development in Sri Lanka and his country also looked forward to receiving greater support from the Agency in that regard.

26. Sri Lanka was embarking on a new era of economic development after overcoming the threat of terrorism it had faced for nearly 30 years. It fully supported global measures to combat terrorism and had become a signatory to a number of international conventions, including the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. It had also joined the Proliferation Security Initiative as well as the Megaports Initiative led by the United States of America to improve the safety and security of radioactive sources and monitor the international movement of nuclear material through its ports. Sri Lanka had also carried out security upgrades at radiotherapy facilities and gamma irradiation centres under the Global Threat Reduction Initiative.

27. General and complete disarmament had been a declared objective of the UN and the international community for several decades, but sadly remained elusive. It had been during Sri Lanka's chairmanship of NAM that the call for the first special session of the UN on disarmament had been made.

28. The NPT was the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and fundamental to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation could not be pursued independently of one another. Also, the obligations and

commitments undertaken by countries should not jeopardize their sovereign and inalienable right to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Peaceful Uses Initiative was important in that context.

29. Sri Lanka welcomed the decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference on holding a conference on the Middle East in 2012. It also welcomed the Director General's initiative to convene the Forum on Experience of Possible Relevance to the Creation of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East in November 2011.

30. Since nuclear science and technology for development was an essential pillar of the Agency's work, Sri Lanka attached great importance to the technical assistance provided to developing countries. Activities should be strengthened further, and sufficient, adequate and predictable resources allocated to the TCF. The delivery of technical cooperation should also take the needs of recipient countries into consideration to enhance the impact of such assistance. Sri Lanka had greatly benefited from the technical cooperation programme in such areas as human health, agriculture, industry, nutrition and radiation protection. During the preceding few years, it had obtained technical assistance for national priority areas such as use of radioisotope-based nuclear techniques for the diagnosis and monitoring of major infectious diseases, including drug-resistant malaria and tuberculosis.

31. PACT was a notable example of the peaceful uses of the atom. As the host of a PACT Model Demonstration Site, Sri Lanka hoped that the success of such Sites would help to provide models for comprehensive cancer care in the developing world. Sri Lanka soon expected to finalize the installation of the Bhabhatron-II radiotherapy machine donated by India.

32. Sri Lanka had also signed its CPF for 2009–2013. The next CPF cycle was expected to reflect the emerging priorities of redeveloping and reconstructing the country's post-conflict zones and he hoped that partnerships through PACT and the Peaceful Uses Initiative could help to strengthen the radiotherapy facility in northern Sri Lanka.

33. A feasibility study on incorporating nuclear power into Sri Lanka's energy mix was under way. Atomic Energy Authority Act No. 19 was being updated to meet present and future requirements in the fields of nuclear power generation, nuclear terrorism, environmental protection and nuclear safety and security. Legislative capacity-building had been identified as an important priority, and he thanked the Secretariat for its initiative to provide training in that area. Sri Lanka would appreciate further Agency assistance in incorporating components on nuclear safety and security into its university curriculum.

34. Under an RCA programme, Sri Lanka had recognized the importance of non-destructive testing to enhance safety and productivity in industry and was planning to establish a national centre for non-destructive testing that would perform such work on a large scale.

35. Mr UZCÁTEGUI DUQUE (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) reiterated his country's support for the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and its conviction that those objectives and principles could be attained by strengthening multilateralism. Venezuela was committed to the NPT and the Agency's Statute.

36. Venezuela defended the sovereign right of States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and supported the Agency's efforts to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and the prosperity throughout the world, as set forth in Article II of the Statute.

37. The nuclear accident at Fukushima Daiichi had reawoken public fears about the risks associated with nuclear reactors, especially as it had occurred in a highly developed country. He expressed his country's solidarity with the people of Japan in the wake of the catastrophe that had befallen them.

38. Recalling that the Fukushima accident had, like the Chernobyl accident of 1986, been classified at the highest level on the INES scale, he commended the work done by the Agency and the Government of Japan in making an initial assessment of its consequences. He urged that such efforts continue so that the full details might be known and to prevent the recurrence of similar accidents in the future.

39. It was important to implement a responsible global public information policy as regards the accident, particularly its technical aspects. People had a right to truthful and timely information, not only to learn about the accident's consequences but also so that society could impact effectively on national decision-making processes.

40. In the days following the accident, President Chávez of Venezuela had announced his Government's decision to suspend temporarily its preliminary nuclear power studies so that Venezuela's energy policy could be assessed in light of the accident.

41. He noted that the Annual Report for 2010, which attached special importance to nuclear power trends in the medium and long term, only covered Agency activities prior to the accident in Japan. Once more information became available and lessons were learned from Fukushima, those projections would undoubtedly need to be revised.

42. The Action Plan on Nuclear Safety did not reflect the urgency required to achieve significant progress. Venezuela was concerned that some countries had taken advantage of their influential positions in order to put their own economic interests first, instead of giving priority to the safety of individuals and the environment. Also, the Action Plan should take into account an in-depth assessment of the Fukushima accident conducted by the Agency, including its potential environmental consequences. In particular, continuous monitoring and a series of evaluations would be needed to determine the accident's long-term effect on marine flora and fauna.

43. Assurance of supply had been a divisive element in the Agency, with decisions having been made without the approval of the majority of its Member States. In Venezuela's view, the scheme put forward was aimed at creating a monopoly with a tight grip being maintained on nuclear fuel production by a small group of countries. The establishment of a nuclear fuel bank should under no circumstances constitute an obstacle to the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

44. The growing interest in nuclear technology meant that efforts should be stepped up to ensure optimal safety levels in all activities related to radioactive sources. The Agency should maintain its leading role in establishing relevant international standards and codes to ensure that the design, operation and decommissioning of nuclear technology met the highest standards. The Fukushima accident had highlighted the need for adequate emergency preparedness and response, nuclear installation safety, radiation and transport safety, and radioactive waste management.

45. Training in the nuclear sphere should continue to be an Agency priority. Venezuela welcomed the number of workshops, training courses and seminars that the Agency had held in 2010 and urged it to expand that role. In addition, it was important that the Agency continued to be capable of providing the full range of relevant assistance, ranging from routine activities to accidents.

46. While important, nuclear security activities were not mandated under the Statute and thus must be financed through extrabudgetary contributions. Cooperation in that regard should be given without the attachment of conditions and must be in the national interests of the country concerned. A clear distinction needed to be made between the two concepts of nuclear safety and nuclear security.

47. Venezuela had benefited from various national and regional technical cooperation projects in a number of areas. Some of those projects had been implemented within the framework of ARCAL. Funding for technical cooperation, as a main statutory activity, should be sufficient, assured and

predictable. Venezuela believed that technical cooperation should be funded from the Regular Budget, which would guarantee project continuity as well as an appropriate balance as regards national nuclear energy policy priorities. It also believed that footnote-a/ projects should not have to depend on extrabudgetary resources. Caution should be exercised in seeking partnerships with other UN organizations, given the highly specialized nature of the Agency's technical cooperation activities.

48. The Agency was the sole competent authority as regards verification. Its activities in that respect should be based exclusively on technical and objective considerations. Regretfully, in succumbing to the influence of a small number of countries, the Agency was allowing its authority and impartiality to be undermined. The Agency was being used as a tool in the imperialist military intervention policy of some countries to achieve their aims in the UN Security Council.

49. The NPT regime could not be implemented in an imbalanced fashion. A fundamental aspect of that Treaty was the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to general and complete disarmament of their nuclear arsenals under strict and effective international control. The Agency should play an active role in informing Member States about disarmament-related aspects with a view to strengthening the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

50. It was a matter for concern that some countries had developed military doctrines that contemplated the use or threat of the use of force employing nuclear weapons, and that expanded the possible reasons for using such weapons or justified the development of more sophisticated nuclear weapons, even though it was clear that the existence and proliferation of nuclear weapons, instead of enhancing security, reduced the scope for achieving lasting and sustainable peace. Such doctrines posed a constant threat to international peace and security and so efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation should be intensified. Venezuela had consistently advocated the total elimination of nuclear weapons in the relevant forums.

51. The NPT, which was recognized by all as the cornerstone of the regime for disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, was still under great pressure. Agreements were being signed with States that were not party to the Treaty. The existence of military nuclear programmes not under Agency supervision was being ignored, while other countries were being cynically hounded for exercising their right to have nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Moreover, using the terrorist threat as a pretext, the production of new and more powerful nuclear weapons had been resumed. Responsibility lay first and foremost with the nuclear-weapon States to work towards reducing and eliminating their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the NPT.

52. With respect to the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Venezuela underscored the inalienable right of the developing countries to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. After the Islamic revolution had reached Iran, some countries had, for political reasons, terminated their cooperation with the Iranian nuclear programme, thereby not only reneging on commercial agreements with that country, but also contravening the NPT and the Agency's Statute. Iran had then been forced to develop its nuclear programme independently. Recently, Iran had made the important step of connecting its nuclear reactor at Bushehr to the grid, with the cooperation of the Russian Federation.

53. He noted in that context that the Agency had found no evidence that Iran's nuclear programme was anything but peaceful in nature. Venezuela called for an end to the threats and persecution by a group of countries which seemed not to be committed to resolving that issue and which, to justify their imperialist geopolitical and commercial ambitions in the region, had fuelled a media slur campaign against Iran. That privileged group of countries had brought numerous resolutions to the Security Council, assuming de facto, though not de jure, competencies which belonged exclusively to the

Agency and jeopardizing the Agency's credibility and the independence that was essential to its functioning.

54. A discriminatory campaign was also being waged against Syria, and several countries had had undue influence on the Director General's reports. Venezuela roundly condemned the September 2007 attack by Israel on Syria. It was regrettable that a country which was the victim of a brutal attack was having an accusing finger pointed at it without there being any convincing proof. The Agency was running the risk of losing its credibility as an objective verification body. The resolution adopted by the Board of Governors on 9 June 2011 (GOV/2011/41) had set a grave precedent by establishing supposed non-compliance by Syria on the basis of suppositions, not solid arguments. It was clear that the purpose of the resolution had been to facilitate the plan of imperialist governments to intervene in Arab countries with the complicity of the Security Council.

55. The Middle East was marked by deep military asymmetry: Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and its failure to cooperate with the Agency were major threats to its Arab neighbours. From the reports submitted by the Director General to the Board it could be concluded that Israel was continuing to use regional conflict as a justification for not collaborating with Agency safeguards and maintaining its nuclear military ambitions.

56. Venezuela did not believe in the premise that the conclusion of a peace treaty in the region should be a precondition for a country to accept comprehensive safeguards. On the contrary, Israel's accession to the international safeguards regime was a necessary step to the achievement of peace in the Middle East. Israel should, therefore, place its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards to ensure that all its nuclear activities were of a peaceful nature. It was regrettable that Israel was the only country in the Middle East not to have acceded to the NPT or expressed any intention to do so. It was imperative that Israel renounce its ambition to possess nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without further delay and make a commitment to enter into frank dialogue with the international community with a view to making the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Venezuela firmly supported the aspiration of the Arab countries to achieve such a zone as soon as possible in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Venezuela called on the international community to continue its efforts to that end and was convinced that the Agency had a major role to play in that regard.

57. Mr BORGES (Angola), offering his country's condolences to the people and Government of Japan on account of the tragic events at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, applauded the Director General's initiative to hold a Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June 2011. It had offered an opportunity to discuss the disaster's consequences and the lessons to be learned. Angola set great store by the Declaration adopted at the Conference, highlighting Member States' commitment to improve nuclear safety standards, enhance emergency and response mechanisms, and ensure the safe and viable use of nuclear energy. A clear message had been sent to restore public confidence.

58. Angola attached great importance to the technical cooperation programme and its role in the use of science and nuclear technology to solve socio-economic problems in the areas of agriculture, human health, nutrition, industry and the environment. He reiterated Angola's profound gratitude to the Agency, in particular the Division for Africa.

59. On the subject of human health, he welcomed the Agency's considerable efforts to train professionals in oncological medicine and radiotherapy. Much remained to be done, however, as the numbers of cancer patients had risen drastically, with serious consequences for the population. He requested greater cooperation with and assistance from the Agency through PACT, in particular for training human resources specializing in oncology and related areas. Under the new CPF for

2011–2016, Angola intended to build three new oncology centres and hoped for the Agency's full support.

60. The new draft CPF was ready and Angola intended to sign it as soon as possible. It was in keeping with the priority areas identified in the medium- and long-term policies to be implemented by the Angolan Government. The new CPF continued to emphasize human resource development, the establishment of national regulatory infrastructures for radiation protection, human health, agriculture, the control of marine and land-based pollution, nuclear applications in industry, nuclear safety and general support for activities meeting national needs.

Mr Potts (Australia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

61. Mr BERNHARD (Denmark) expressed the general mood of horror at the destruction caused by the Japanese earthquake and tsunami. The Fukushima accident had demonstrated the need for international cooperation in substantially strengthening nuclear safety worldwide, as well as making it clear that the Agency's increasing role in providing assistance and information to Member States was a pressing necessity in order to prevent nuclear accidents and ensure timely, precise and accessible information in cases of emergency. The Agency had begun to address that challenge with the Ministerial Conference in June. The Action Plan that was before the Conference for endorsement set out a number of commitments on behalf of the Secretariat and Member States, and certainly represented a step forward. Nonetheless, there was more to be accomplished as experience was accrued during the Plan's implementation.

62. It was of continuing importance to improve peer review mechanisms and make them more binding, as well as to implement mandatory Agency safety inspections and make reports public. Proposals to strengthen the Nuclear Safety Convention, inter alia with legally binding Agency safety standards, also continued to merit a great deal of attention. The Action Plan could not be the end of the process of reinforcing nuclear safety post-Fukushima; it was the beginning. The High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security to be held in New York the next day would hopefully provide further impetus to the Agency's concerted efforts in the field.

63. The Agency would continue to play a central role in international efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. With its highly professional and dedicated staff, the Agency, through its inspection procedures, served to verify the peaceful use of nuclear technologies and offered all Member States essential assurances in that regard. Member States had the opportunity to clear themselves of any suspicion of wrongdoing through full and unrestricted cooperation with the Agency. As experience showed, however, the Agency could only play that role fully when it had the necessary tools at its disposal. His country was convinced that a comprehensive safeguards agreement in combination with an additional protocol constituted the standard for verification pursuant to the NPT, and called for universal conclusion of both instruments.

64. The UN Security Council also bore key responsibility for non-proliferation. Denmark continued to support fully Security Council resolutions 1887 (2009) and 1540 (2004), whose adoption had marked a fundamental step forward. The Security Council had also adopted a number of country-specific resolutions with the object of upholding the integrity and efficiency of the non-proliferation regime. It was essential that all countries fully implement the Security Council's resolutions on the DPRK and Iran.

65. His country shared the serious concerns expressed in a succession of reports by the Director General regarding Iran's failure to cooperate with the Agency in such a way as to enable it to confirm that all nuclear material in Iran was being used for peaceful activities and dispel doubts about possible military dimensions of its nuclear programme. His country urged Iran to comply fully with all resolutions of the Security Council and the Board of Governors, and with the provisions of its

safeguards agreement. Iran's continuing enrichment of uranium to the 20% level in contravention of those resolutions was particularly alarming.

66. Regarding Syria, his country had noted with serious concern the Agency's conclusion in the Director General's report² to the June Board that the destroyed building at Dair Alzour had very likely been a nuclear reactor and should have been declared. Denmark therefore found necessary the resolution³ adopted by the Board on the implementation of Syria's safeguards agreement, which referred the matter to the Security Council. His country joined the Director General in urging Syria to fully implement its safeguards agreement and bring into force an additional protocol in order to facilitate the work of the Agency to verify the completeness and correctness of Syria's declarations. It was his country's firm hope that Syria would implement the promise of increased cooperation that it had made in June.

67. With regard to the DPRK, his country was very concerned that the Agency was not being permitted to fulfil its mandate and strongly supported calls on the DPRK to comply with its international obligations and commitments, as well as to allow an early return of Agency inspectors.

68. Following the successful NPT Review Conference in 2010, it was important that all Member States prioritized the implementation of the action plan adopted there and avoid steps that might jeopardize that work. His country supported the Agency in its role under the action plan and welcomed the consensus reached on holding a forum on the creation of an NWFZ in the Middle East, which would undoubtedly provide valuable input in the run-up to the 2012 conference mandated by the NPT Review Conference.

69. Denmark greatly valued the Agency's work on nuclear security. The need for protection against nuclear terrorism and other malicious acts involving nuclear material was moving ever higher up the international agenda, and rightly so. Denmark was pleased to have been able to contribute to the NSF in the past and was committed to working to ensure that the Fund had sufficient resources to step up its help to all Member States in protecting themselves and each other against nuclear terrorism. His country was pleased that the Agency budget for 2012 continued the positive trend in that regard and was ready to increase its involvement in the promotion of nuclear security. It would contribute to implementing the Work Plan adopted at the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit and to taking that process forward.

70. With regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, his country had made the decision that nuclear power should not be included in its own energy mix, as it did not consider it a sustainable form of energy. While Denmark was not, therefore, in favour of a promotional role for the Agency in the field of nuclear power for electricity generation, it did respect the choice of other Member States and the Agency's statutory obligations. It also recognized that an increasing number of States were interested in introducing nuclear power and highly valued the Agency's contribution to ensuring that that happened in the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions.

71. Since the previous session of the General Conference, the Board had decided to establish an Agency LEU bank to assure LEU supply for nuclear fuel. His country supported that initiative and others in the area of multilateral assurances of supply aimed at providing proliferation-safe options for those countries that had chosen or would choose to use nuclear power.

72. His country appreciated the Agency's highly professional work in the field of technical cooperation on peaceful applications of nuclear technology. In 2011, Denmark had once again pledged

² GOV/2011/30.

³ GOV/2011/41.

its full contribution to the TCF in order to support the Agency's work in combating hunger, disease and poverty. His country considered it highly relevant that the Director General had chosen the use of nuclear techniques in tackling water scarcity as the topic for the 2011 Scientific Forum.

73. Mr MARSÁN AGUILERA (Cuba) said that the Fukushima accident had focused attention on key aspects of nuclear safety. The Ministerial Conference on the topic in June, the development of the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety and the forthcoming High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security at the General Assembly undoubtedly reflected the growing importance of the issue.

74. Primary responsibility for nuclear safety and security lay with States, although the Agency had an important role to play in promoting and coordinating global efforts to strengthen the nuclear safety and security regime. In view of their special nature, such activities should, however, be financed from extrabudgetary resources.

75. The Fukushima accident and subsequent actions by the international community were a reminder that nuclear safety and security were a shared responsibility, and that all Member States had a duty to find solutions. The breadth of the issue had to be reflected in all discussions of nuclear safety, including summits. It was to be hoped that the necessary corrective measures would be taken so that all Member States with an interest in such events could participate. His country could not support meetings that excluded certain Member States or resolutions that made reference to such meetings.

76. Nuclear security was closely tied to disarmament. The only effective way to avoid nuclear terrorism was to do away with nuclear arsenals. His country sincerely hoped that nuclear security summits would result in decisions leading to universal and full nuclear disarmament. Humanity, whose very existence was threatened by the existence of nuclear weapons, would be grateful.

77. The Agency's role in verification regarding nuclear disarmament should be strengthened. A decisive step towards that would be the fulfilment of NPT obligations by the nuclear Powers. The Treaty's three pillars had to be applied in a strict and non-discriminatory fashion. There should be an end to manipulation and double standards on non-proliferation whose unacceptable result was the existence of a club of privileged States that were developing their nuclear arsenals while paradoxically denying southern countries their inalienable right to make use of nuclear energy.

78. His country's full support for nuclear disarmament was unwavering, and it endorsed the declaration on the total abolition of nuclear weapons that had been adopted at the 16th Ministerial Conference of the NAM in Bali, where calls had been made to convene a high-level conference to examine the issue. It was to be hoped that the international community, and particularly nuclear-weapon States, would support such an event.

79. The delicate issue of safeguards and the impartial and professional conduct of the Secretariat in carrying out its safeguards activities were of great importance. His country had repeatedly criticized the manipulation and politicization of the safeguards regime for geopolitical ends, as well as the double standards that were, unfortunately, so pervasive. The Agency was the sole organization with authority in that area, and it had been inappropriate for the Security Council to intervene in matters that should have been handled in Vienna. It was time for cases that had been referred to New York to be returned to their rightful place.

80. Finding solutions to safeguards issues would require political determination, diplomacy, and a real willingness to negotiate. Such conditions were at odds with some of the statements that had been made at the present Conference, which had been riddled with threats and demonstrated a lack of respect for the sovereignty of other Member States. Under Article IV.C of the Statute, the Agency was based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members. Cuba would not accept the

imposition of limits or conditions on sovereignty, as that would violate the fundamental principles of international law as set out in the UN Charter.

81. His country had demonstrated its political will and firm commitment to fulfil its NPT obligations. It was proud to be amongst those States in which the Secretariat had found no evidence of diverted nuclear material or of undeclared nuclear activities.

82. The Agency's efforts to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear and radiation safety, as well as the Secretariat's assistance in bolstering national regulatory structures, were laudable. It was to be hoped that such assistance would continue in future.

83. The Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies had continued to make progress towards its objective of maintaining a high level of radiation safety and nuclear security in its member States under Cuba's presidency. He reaffirmed the commitment of his country's regulatory authorities to strengthen cooperation in the Latin American region with the Agency's support.

84. The Agency's technical cooperation activities were of great importance and should be provided with all the necessary financial and human resources in a stable and consistent manner, through the Regular Budget. In spite of five decades of United States-imposed sanctions, his country had systematically met its financial obligations to the Agency, including the TCF. It had also improved the efficiency of the management of its cooperation programme and provided increasing numbers of experts to many Member States.

85. Cuba supported ARCAL and welcomed the measures being taken to strengthen it by its member countries and the Agency alike, a process in which Cuba had participated actively.

86. The Secretariat had provided valuable support in the implementation of his country's national technical cooperation programme and in helping it to overcome the difficulties caused by sanctions.

87. The Agency's commitment to finding solutions to urgent problems facing humanity was noteworthy. Examples included PACT and the work it was doing to tackle the shortage of safe drinking water, as demonstrated by the Scientific Forum.

88. Given the importance of the Agency's remit, the General Conference needed to be revitalized and strengthened as a democratic supreme legislative organ involving all Member States. Similarly, the composition and functions of the Board of Governors should be analysed with a view to amending Article VI of the Statute. In Cuba's opinion, the Board's membership should be expanded in line with the overall number of Member States.

89. Mr LEBAI JURI (Malaysia) joined other Member States in expressing his country's deepest condolences to the Government and people of Japan following the earthquake and tsunami of 11 March 2011 which had led to the Fukushima nuclear accident. His country stood in solidarity with Japan and the international community, and appreciated the tireless efforts of the Japanese authorities to bring the situation under control after that unprecedented event. He commended the Director General for the Agency's efforts in addressing the issue and the regular briefings given to Member States at the height of the accident.

90. The accident highlighted the importance of adhering to nuclear and radiation safety standards and of the Agency assuming a coordinating role in that regard. Malaysia therefore applauded the Director General's initiative to hold the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June 2011. The Conference had achieved its objective of providing political impetus to the process of drawing lessons from the Fukushima accident, but his country hoped to see more practical solutions for enhancing nuclear safety, particularly in nuclear power plants. In that regard, his country extended its support to

Japan's proposal to organize a conference on nuclear safety in the second half of 2012 in partnership with the Agency.

91. The Fukushima accident had also highlighted the importance of ensuring that nuclear power plants were safe in the face of unprecedented natural disasters. It was important to explore innovative technical design and construction techniques, to review safety policies and management procedures, to ensure emergency preparedness, and to establish a regulatory framework. His country called on all policy makers, nuclear technocrats, scientists and engineers to come together to review and conduct R&D work to design innovative, safer nuclear power plants for future generations. As the foremost international body in its field, the Agency would be the only logical candidate to lead such efforts, and his country looked forward to participating in the process.

92. As a developing nation, Malaysia valued the technical cooperation programme and its work to promote the safe use of nuclear technology. His country reiterated its stand that the programme should be based upon Member States' needs and requests. It should therefore be formulated according to the guidelines established in INFCIRC/267. As the capabilities, needs and priorities of Member States varied, the prerogative to identify the types of assistance that they might request from the Agency should remain primarily with Member States, in line with their respective national development requirements. The process of formulating complementary regional and interregional projects should be carried out with a high level of transparency, in consultation with Member States.

93. His country reiterated that the resources for technical cooperation had to be sufficient, assured and predictable. In that regard, his country looked forward to discussions in the working group on financing of the Agency's activities about the nature and level of the TCF and its relationship to the Regular Budget. His country would play an active role in the debate. The Medium Term Strategy, which provided overarching guidance and a general framework for preparing the Agency's programme and budgetary cycles, was also important in order to ensure the necessary balance in future activities in line with the mandate set out in the Statute.

94. The Agency's technical cooperation projects in Malaysia were always formulated through active engagement and constructive dialogue with the technical cooperation programme and in accordance with the needs and priorities identified in the country's national development plans. The formulation of effective projects required a dynamic process that took evolving national stakeholder requirements into account. As the current technical cooperation cycle was ending, his country had made every effort to complete the projects and utilize all available funding.

95. Technical cooperation was also of relevance in the aftermath of the Fukushima accident. There was concern about possible marine contamination in the region. At the April 2011 National Representative Meeting in Bali, RCA members had decided to start a project for monitoring and benchmarking the regional marine environment. As an RCA member, Malaysia would participate in a regional marine benchmark study on the possible impact of the Fukushima radioactive releases in the Asia-Pacific region. His country was greatly appreciative of the financial contributions made to that project by all donor countries.

96. Malaysia had always recognized the importance of regional cooperation and had participated actively in many regional projects under the aegis of the Agency. It welcomed the Agency's efforts to create a common framework for nuclear waste and spent fuel management for ASEAN countries through a consultancy meeting held in March 2011 and other work in the field of nuclear security and safety. It was to be hoped that such efforts would intensify as countries in the region progressed. Malaysia further proposed to strengthen regional efforts with more joint activities and sharing of regional resources in order to improve the economics of nuclear applications for the benefit of the

regional population. It called on the Agency to support and coordinate efforts towards achieving those goals, and to make greater use of existing regional groupings.

97. The availability of qualified personnel was vital in developing and sustaining a radiation protection infrastructure. The Agency had made it a top priority to develop the skills, knowledge and expertise of individuals across many disciplines where radioactive sources were employed, and now offered postgraduate education courses on radiation protection and the safety of radiation sources on a regular basis. Since 2000, Malaysia had been one of the countries to host such courses under the technical cooperation programme, and a major outcome had been that the Universiti Sains Malaysia had launched an MSc in Radiation Science based on the syllabus of those courses. His country appreciated the confidence that the Agency had shown by continuing to allow it to host the courses and would continue to do so to the best of its ability.

98. The unprecedented events at Fukushima, coupled with domestic issues, had undoubtedly dented public confidence in the use of nuclear technology for peaceful ends. His country looked forward to working together with the Agency to address that issue through a systematic programme of public information to provide reassurance and encourage acceptance.

99. Regarding assurances of nuclear fuel supply, Malaysia welcomed continued non-discriminatory and transparent discussions under the auspices of the Agency. Developing multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle included, amongst other elements, holding discussions on options for creating mechanisms to assure the supply of nuclear fuel and on possible schemes dealing with the back-end of the fuel cycle. Malaysia took note of the Agency's ongoing efforts to establish and improve the concept of the LEU bank facility, but was insistent that any such arrangement should not in any way compromise Member States' inalienable rights to nuclear technology, including the fuel cycle.

100. Alongside increasing and renewed interest in nuclear power generation from many Member States, his country continued to accord high priority to the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology for enhanced food and water security, natural resource and environmental management, industrial development, and medical applications. Activities in those areas would be underpinned by further development in national capabilities for R&D on peaceful nuclear technologies, commercialization, development of a more comprehensive legislative and regulatory framework, technological infrastructure, human capital development, competency verification, public information, compliance with the international system of nuclear governance, and engagement in international cooperation and relations.

101. With regard to the development of a more comprehensive legislative and regulatory framework, he expressed Malaysia's appreciation to the Agency for having reviewed its new comprehensive nuclear law and suggested relevant improvements to strengthen existing legislation. Malaysia had enacted a Strategic Trade Act with heavy penalties encompassing export control measures for all single- and dual-use strategic goods, including nuclear, chemical, biological, and missile-related items, as well as conventional arms.

102. Malaysia firmly supported the call of the 2010 NPT Review Conference for the convening, in consultation with the States of the region, of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. It also therefore supported the Director General's initiative in convening a forum on that subject to be held in Vienna in November 2011 in order to start that process. Other initiatives to create NWFZs in all regions of the world, including the South East Asia, the Pacific and the Far East regions, were to be welcomed.

103. Mr GRIFFITHS (New Zealand) expressed his country's strong support for the NPT and its three pillars. New Zealand was dedicated to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and continued to encourage national, regional and global efforts to realize that goal.

104. New Zealand had welcomed the reaffirmation at the 2010 NPT Review Conference of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and the agreement 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. The implementation of that significant agreement would require that all Member States play their part. His country also supported the Director General's decision to convene a forum on that subject in Vienna in November 2011 and was encouraged by the positive momentum that was building towards the forum, which it saw as an important building block in achieving the Member States' shared goal.

105. New Zealand was committed to helping to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons through the implementation of safeguards under the NPT and recognized the vital role of the Agency in underpinning and advancing the non-proliferation agenda.

106. New Zealand also endorsed the principle that nuclear technology should be available for peaceful uses in conformity with Articles II and III of the NPT. It welcomed and supported the Agency's work in applying the benefits of nuclear technology to the fields of human health, water quality, crop enhancement, and pest control, and was pleased to be an early supporter of the Peaceful Uses Initiative. Safeguards, safety, security and waste management all had to be an integral part of the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

107. The nuclear accident at Fukushima Daiichi had highlighted the vulnerabilities associated with nuclear energy, as well as a number of limitations in the existing international framework for nuclear safety and emergency response. Although efforts were still under way to resolve the accident and lessons might continue to emerge, Japan, the Agency and the international community had taken many useful steps to protect against such an accident recurring in the future. The June Ministerial Conference and Ministerial Declaration on nuclear safety had been very timely initiatives that had enabled Member States to share experiences and preliminary conclusions and that had recognized the Agency's central role in coordinating and promoting international cooperation in enhancing global nuclear safety.

108. Full implementation of the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, which he trusted the Conference would endorse the following day, would strengthen the global nuclear safety regime. Giving urgent and full practical effect to the Action Plan was necessary to maintain international confidence, including among the public, in a global nuclear safety framework that protected the interests of nuclear and non-nuclear countries alike. New Zealand encouraged all Member States, the Secretariat, and other relevant bodies to implement the Action Plan as quickly as practicable and to take additional measures wherever possible to strengthen nuclear safety in all its aspects.

109. Beyond the response to Fukushima, New Zealand welcomed the Agency's ongoing work to support Member States in strengthening nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety, as well as emergency preparedness and response.

110. As New Zealand was an island nation, the safe maritime transport of radioactive materials was an issue of fundamental importance to it. Such shipments ought to take place against a backdrop of the highest possible safety and security standards, and appropriate information in advance of any transports that might take place must be provided to relevant coastal States. Proper emergency response systems must be in operation, and there must be an effective international liability regime in place to insure against harm to human health and the environment, as well as possible economic loss due to an incident or accident during the transport of radioactive materials.

111. New Zealand continued to work with interested Member States and the Secretariat to make progress on those issues in various ways, including through the annual dialogue between coastal and shipping States which had taken place earlier that day. His country also looked forward to a

constructive outcome from the Agency's International Conference on the Safe and Secure Transport of Radioactive Material to be held in Vienna in October 2011.

112. New Zealand remained a strong supporter of INLEX and welcomed the proposal in the Action Plan to mandate INLEX to facilitate the development of a global nuclear liability regime that would address the concerns of all States that might be affected by a nuclear accident or incident, with a view to providing appropriate compensation.

113. The threat of nuclear terrorism remained, and the maintenance of stringent standards of physical protection for nuclear material and nuclear facilities was of paramount importance. New Zealand recognized the Agency's important role in helping Member States to improve the global nuclear security framework and was pleased to have made a further contribution to the NSF in 2011. In addition, his country would play an active role in the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul and would support the work of the WINS on further initiatives to strengthen nuclear security worldwide.

114. New Zealand attached importance to ensuring that the Agency had all the tools necessary to provide robust assurances to the international community that nuclear activities undertaken by States were solely for peaceful purposes.

115. Current proliferation challenges meant that the comprehensive safeguards agreement alone was insufficient to provide the Agency with the necessary authority to carry out its verification mandate to the full. The additional protocol formed the contemporary verification standard and should always feature as a condition in new supply arrangements for nuclear and associated material. All States that had not yet done so should conclude and bring into force additional protocols as soon as possible and implement them provisionally in the interim.

116. It remained critical for all cases of non-compliance with safeguards obligations to be resolved in full conformity with the Statute and Member States' respective legal obligations.

117. New Zealand deplored the DPRK's refusal to comply with UN Security Council resolutions and cooperate with the Agency. It was deeply concerned by recent reports of a centrifuge enrichment facility at the Yongbyon nuclear site and the possible construction of a prototype light water reactor, as well as the DPRK's extensive and clandestine procurement activities. His country urged the DPRK to refrain from further destabilizing acts and to refocus its efforts towards peace and dialogue, including its Six-Party Talks commitment to abandon its existing nuclear programme.

118. His country also shared the international community's concerns about the outstanding questions regarding the nature of Iran's nuclear programme. It was very troubled by the Agency's increasing concern about the possible presence in Iran of past or current undisclosed nuclear-related activities with a military dimension and urged Iran to fully implement its safeguards agreement and other obligations, including the modified Code 3.1 of the Subsidiary Arrangements and the additional protocol.

119. In June, the Board of Governors had decided that Syria had not met its obligations under its safeguards agreement. Syria should resolve without further delay all outstanding questions about the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme and sign, bring into force and implement the additional protocol.

120. The 55th regular session of the General Conference was not business as usual. Member States were still in the process of responding to and recovering from the nuclear accident at Fukushima, and only time would tell whether the steps collectively taken would be sufficient to effectively address the risks associated with nuclear energy. Even as progress was made on nuclear safety, greater challenges were posed to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, requiring renewed efforts to strengthen nuclear security and safeguards. The Agency had a vital role to play in leading and

coordinating those efforts to ensure that nuclear materials were used for exclusively peaceful purposes to the benefit of all of humanity.

121. Mr KARIMOV (Azerbaijan) expressed his country's positive assessment of the Agency's recent work and offered its support for further consolidation of the Agency's role and authority in assuring non-proliferation and bolstering nuclear security.

122. In partnership with the Agency and the international community, Azerbaijan was taking the necessary steps towards the peaceful use of atomic energy, the prevention of illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive materials, and the combating of nuclear terrorism.

123. The events of the past year had once again demonstrated the complexities of the process of ensuring universal nuclear and radiation safety and security. The incidents at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant after the destructive earthquake and subsequent tsunami had yet again served as a reminder of humanity's vulnerability in the face of the unpredictable forces of nature. Even the most advanced technologies were sometimes powerless in extreme situations.

124. Against that backdrop, the continuing operation of sub-standard and ageing nuclear power plants was all the more worrying. The Armenia nuclear power plant in Metsamor, which was long obsolete and did not conform to European safety standards, belonged to that category of the most dangerous nuclear power plants. Given its location in an earthquake zone, the plant posed a serious threat not only to the South Caucasus, but also to large areas of Europe and Western Asia. The mountainous surroundings and lack of water resources made the plant all the more vulnerable, and yet in spite of insistent demands from the European Union that the plant be closed and decommissioned, it continued to operate, indeed its power level had been raised. Furthermore, the Armenian authorities intended to build a new reactor in coming years, which would lead to a significant increase in the risk to the lives and health of the public as well as to the environment of the entire region.

125. It was regrettable that the delegate of Armenia⁴ had attempted to use the Agency as a platform to promote the separatist regime that Armenia had set up in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. That illegitimate regime was not recognized by a single State, including Armenia itself, and so Armenia's efforts to legitimize it were doomed to failure.

126. Azerbaijan had an interest in fostering good relations between the countries of the South Caucasus and bolstering security in the region. At the same time, it was not possible to ignore the risks posed by Armenia's plans to build a new nuclear reactor without due transparency and without informing neighbouring States of the results of safety review missions.

127. Armenian representatives claimed that each year, their country undertook up to 10 safety and security checks at the Metsamor site, as well as seismic and operational safety checks. Unfortunately, however, the reports from those and earlier Agency review missions were still restricted or classified and therefore unavailable to Member States neighbouring Armenia.

128. Furthermore, though neighbouring countries had an interest in the situation, the Armenian leadership had refused to allow Azerbaijan, Georgia or Turkey to participate in a review under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention). The Armenian representatives should recall that one of the central aims of the Agency's Action Plan on Nuclear Safety was to enhance transparency in the nuclear sphere. Ensuring transparency in all issues of nuclear safety through the timely and consistent exchange and distribution of impartial information was of particular importance in order to raise levels of trust and safety in the South

⁴ See GC(55)/OR.3.

Caucasus region. Armenia's failure to sign up to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and to the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage was a cause for concern for his country in the context of possible transboundary nuclear threats and environmental protection. The most appropriate body to tackle those problems in the South Caucasus region was the Agency. Azerbaijan hoped that Member States would understand its concerns and call on Armenia to sign up to the relevant Agency conventions and implement a more transparent nuclear policy.

129. His country had a high opinion of the Secretariat's activities in implementing its technical cooperation strategy and in its efforts to ensure that the cooperation programme corresponded to national priorities. Further increasing the effectiveness and level of cooperation was one of the central priorities for Azerbaijan's work with the Agency. His Government noted the results of cooperation that had been achieved to date and was intent on further supporting the Agency's efforts in the sphere of non-power nuclear applications.

130. Currently, in accordance with the Director General's proposal that the programme to fight cancer be given priority status, two of the five national technical cooperation projects focused on improving and strengthening the infrastructure for diagnosing and treating cancers. The National Oncology Centre had been equipped with a linear accelerator and a stereotactic radiosurgery system.

131. In April 2011 in Ganja, Azerbaijan's second city, a radiation therapy department had opened at the local oncology centre. With Agency involvement, under a national project, a TERABALT device containing a cobalt source with approximately 9000 Ci of activity had been commissioned. The device's physical protection had been assessed by international experts as conforming to the most stringent requirements and current international safety standards.

132. Another noteworthy technical cooperation project was that to improve his country's radioactive source monitoring capabilities. That project fully conformed to the requirements of the Trilateral Initiative of the United States, Russia and the Agency to improve the monitoring of disused radioactive sources. Work had been started to improve national legislative instruments to ensure the full implementation of international standards and other relevant requirements for nuclear and radiation safety. A strict authorization programme had been set up whereby sources were classified according to the risk they posed. An inventory had been completed of all radionuclide sources in Baku and on the Absheron peninsula, which together accounted for around 85% of all radiation sources in Azerbaijan.

133. Since the previous year's General Conference session, under the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, several steps had been taken to ensure the physical protection of sources of ionizing radiation. A seminar on the physical protection of radioactive sources and the management of their safety had taken place in 2010 with participants from more than 15 State bodies, and in January 2011, in partnership with Azerbaijan's State Agency for the Regulation of Nuclear and Radiation Activities, training courses had been set up on finding abandoned radioactive sources and providing safe storage solutions for them. Another project in partnership with the State Agency had been the seminar on preventing theft and sabotage at facilities posing a radiation risk in May 2011. In May and June of that year, Agency-run regional training courses on response to a nuclear or radiological emergency had been held in Baku under regional project RER/9/100.

134. With Agency collaboration, a great deal of work had been done to train professionals for the regulatory body. That was particularly noteworthy as his country had no radiation safety training centres.

135. The Agency's collaborative projects in the field of nuclear science, technology and applications had been fruitful, and he called on the Secretariat to build on its work to improve the scientific and

technological capabilities of Member States and develop their potential in the peaceful uses of atomic energy. It was particularly important to further expand the Secretariat's partnership with the World Nuclear University's School on Radioisotopes and increase the numbers of School participants from various countries.

136. Preserving and reinforcing nuclear knowledge by training qualified professionals was important both for the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes and in order to ensure sustainable development and safety the world over. For that reason, his country supported the Agency's intention to set up groups within the Secretariat focusing on staff training.

137. In 2011, as in previous years, his Government had developed national technical cooperation projects for the coming biennium (2012–13) with a focus on nuclear medicine as well as nuclear and radiation technologies.

138. To best diagnose cancer, there were plans to install cyclotron and positron emission tomography facilities at the National Oncology Centre and to set up quality control systems for X-ray diagnosis.

139. Work would continue on establishing a laboratory for radiation processing of materials and foodstuffs, improving the management of radioactive sources, and reinforcing nuclear safety infrastructure.

140. Those national projects, along with the 26 regional projects that his country participated in, were of exceptional importance for the country. His Government valued the Agency's assistance under the technical cooperation programme and was resolute in its intention to work in partnership to implement projects in a comprehensive and timely manner, fulfilling all of its financial, technical and institutional obligations. He joined previous speakers in commending the Agency's work in 2011, and assuring the Agency of his country's support in all its endeavours.

141. Mr DAAG (Sweden) expressed his country's deepest sympathy and solidarity with the Japanese people, who had displayed great resilience, courage and dignity following the earthquake, tsunami and subsequent accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The Agency had carried out important work in assisting Japan, informing Member States about the accident and facilitating international support.

142. The stress tests carried out in Europe to ensure the nuclear safety of future and existing reactors had also been adopted by some non-European countries, thus indicating the value of the process. The test results and the experience gained from the process would be valuable for improving Agency safety guides and reviewing Member States' organizations.

143. The successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference had given important impetus to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The agreed action plan demonstrated all parties' common resolve to uphold and strengthen the regime and promote disarmament. The Agency's safeguards system was fundamental to the non-proliferation regime and to implementation of the NPT. Sweden encouraged all States which had not yet done so to conclude and bring into force an additional protocol without delay. The protocol, together with the comprehensive safeguards agreement, constituted a robust and effective safeguards system which should be considered as the current verification standard.

144. His country had worked actively for a number of years to advance cooperation on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. Recent important breakthroughs in that regard included the decision of the Board of Governors in December 2010 to establish a nuclear fuel bank under Agency control and its decision in March 2011 to support a model agreement on nuclear fuel assurances. Sweden welcomed those decisions and looked forward to their full implementation.

145. In his latest report on the implementation of safeguards in Iran⁵, the Director General pointed out a number of areas which added to concerns regarding the country's nuclear programme. Iran had to cooperate fully with the Agency and fulfil its international obligations, including those set by the UN Security Council. It needed to address the legitimate concerns of the international community and make every effort to establish confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

146. Following the Board's reporting of Syria to the Security Council in June 2011 for non-compliance with its safeguards agreement, Sweden urged Syria to cooperate fully with the Agency to resolve outstanding issues and bring into force an additional protocol.

147. It was deeply regrettable that the Agency had not been able to implement safeguards in the DPRK since April 2009 and therefore could not draw any safeguards conclusion regarding that country.

148. He reaffirmed his country's support for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East. A constructive and consensual approach, including confidence-building measures, was necessary to realize that goal. Sweden welcomed the Director General's initiative to convene the Forum on Experience of Possible Relevance to the Creation of a Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone in the Middle East, to be chaired by Ambassador Petersen of Norway, and encouraged all Member States to work towards its successful outcome.

149. The International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the CPPNM, in conjunction with Agency security and verification activities and national implementation of international instruments, were vital to countering nuclear terrorism and the illegal diversion of or trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive material. The self-assessment and benchmarking offered under the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention had proven to be invaluable in raising national awareness and encouraging the creation of national policies and appropriate legal and regulatory systems, and a higher level of safety and radiation protection.

150. As a prerequisite for embarking on nuclear power programmes, countries should be required to set up the necessary technical and regulatory infrastructures for nuclear safety and security. Relevant nuclear safety and security instruments and the Agency's safety standards and security guidance should be vital tools in such a task.

151. Sweden welcomed the Agency's contributions to such areas as human health, food security and water management through its technical cooperation programme, and recognized the added value of the Peaceful Uses Initiative. Sweden contributed to the programme bilaterally and through the financial instruments of the European Union.

152. Following a 20-year process, the Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management Company had selected a site for a spent nuclear fuel repository in 2009 and a licence application for construction of the repository had been submitted in March 2011.

153. Sweden welcomed the Euratom directive on the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste adopted in July 2011, which would help countries of the European Union manage their radioactive waste and avoid imposing unnecessary burdens on future generations.

154. The IPPAS review conducted in Sweden in May 2011 had made important recommendations and identified good practices. The country would also host an IRRS mission in February 2012 and would undoubtedly benefit from the regulatory experience and expertise of the review team. Sweden supported the IRRS and would continue to provide experts to its mission teams.

⁵ GOV/2011/54.

155. Sweden welcomed the completion of the reviews of the Euratom safety standards and the Basic Safety Standards. The new standards would enhance, modernize and harmonize measures taken within the international community to protect human health and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation.

156. His country continued to be active in the field of international nuclear safety and security cooperation. In 2010, the annual budget for Sweden's bilateral engagement had amounted to €7 million and the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority had implemented some 50 projects.

157. Mr BOKOLE OMPOKA (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that the current international nuclear context was characterized by tragic events in Japan and the ever-growing interest of Agency Member States in civil nuclear applications and the acquisition of related technologies. The present conference was of great importance as it would mark a revolution in the field.

158. The present session should focus on the imperative to reinforce the non-proliferation regime and guarantees of nuclear safety and security, while promoting the development of peaceful atomic energy and nuclear technologies in Member States. His country had defined a nuclear policy that focused on the peaceful use of its nuclear potential to meet its socio-economic needs.

159. He acknowledged the Agency's valued, efficient and long-term collaboration with his country. A number of technical cooperation projects implemented in partnership with the Agency had touched vital sectors including health care, water management, agronomy and food security.

160. Regarding water management, applying isotopic methods and nuclear techniques to the hydrochemical study of the Mont Amba aquifer had made it possible to identify bodies of water with hydrological potential. As a result, it would be possible to carry out hydrological mapping that could be used in evaluating and sustainably managing water resources at the national level.

161. Regarding health and food security, the use of induced mutation techniques had made it possible to establish and bolster a long-term national strategy for the fight against malaria.

162. Furthermore, expertise gained from the long-term operation of the country's two research reactors had led to welcome improvements in radiation safety and nuclear security. Thanks to the national regulatory infrastructure that had been put in place, his country's reactors were regularly inspected and significant recommendations were being implemented.

163. While his country had committed to move forward in its nuclear programme by modernizing and progressively returning its Triga MK II reactor to service, it had now decided that after 30 years in operation, the time had come to plan its decommissioning. The Agency's input and technical assistance would be required.

164. Global warming, with its many consequences for ecosystems, was now a reality recognized by the international community. In his country, hydroelectric generation was being affected by historically low water levels in the Congo River, disrupting power supply to towns and large urban centres, with a significant negative impact on the national economy. His country was accordingly considering the introduction of nuclear power generation as a reliable alternative energy source in order to combat the energy deficit, prepare for future energy demand, reinforce security of supply and fight global warming. Like most developing countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was glad to be able to rely on the Agency and friendly countries with long experience in the field to provide assistance, support and improved technology transfer.

165. The question of nuclear non-proliferation remained unresolved, alongside that of nuclear disarmament. Though a series of forums and meetings had given rise to hopes of a world free of nuclear weapons, the establishment of NWFZs was becoming an increasingly distant goal.

166. Regarding nuclear security, his country was pleased by the significant human and technological resources that had been mobilized to combat illicit trafficking and the black market for nuclear material at regional and international levels. Its approach was both bilateral and multilateral: it was determined to fight those two threats side-by-side with other States, as well as regional and international structures.

167. Accordingly, a joint action plan had been signed at the end of the previous year between his Government and that of the United States. The central goal of the agreement was to offer a comprehensive, effective response to recurring problems by reinforcing criminal law with respect to nuclear offences, securing nuclear installations, and providing training for personnel. The plan also included provisions to deploy physical detection facilities at borders.

168. The Agency must continue to play a key role in promoting peaceful applications of nuclear energy. The technological advances made in recent years in developed countries undoubtedly reflected the best decisions taken individually and collectively. A global approach was vital in resolving issues in which countries had a shared interest.

169. Mr QUIMBAYA MORALES (Colombia) expressed his country's solidarity with the Government of France following the accident at the nuclear waste processing facility at Marcoule and reiterated its solidarity with the Government and people of Japan in the wake of the devastating consequences of the earthquake and tsunami of 11 March. To strengthen links between the two nations, President Santos of Colombia had visited Japan from 12 to 13 September. Colombia acknowledged the Japanese Government's efforts to take action swiftly and in a transparent manner and underscored the response of the international community and the Agency. Colombia urged the Agency to continue its support and coordination efforts.

170. The lessons learned from the accident in Japan highlighted the need to strengthen regulatory and control mechanisms to ensure the highest safety standards in nuclear power plant operation and all technical and scientific disciplines involving nuclear and radioactive material. In that connection, Colombia was party to the CPPNM, the Early Notification Convention and the Assistance Convention, and had acceded to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and complied with its supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources.

171. Disarmament and non-proliferation were basic principles of Colombia's foreign policy. To that end, it had acceded to all the most important international legal instruments related to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It was a member of the world's most populous NWFZ and was party to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Colombia attached great importance to the universalization of the NPT.

172. The Agency's work as regards the application of safeguards was effective, useful and highly credible. Colombia urged those countries with outstanding issues vis-à-vis the Agency to collaborate fully with it so that the world could be assured of the peaceful nature of their nuclear activities.

173. Colombia, a member of the Agency since 1960, supported its activities aimed at the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, including technical cooperation. The recent visit by the Director General, Mr Yukiya Amano, to Colombia from 5 to 7 July had provided an opportunity to review the various cooperation projects under way in the country, which had a great impact on the well-being of the population. Mr Amano had met the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Mines and Energy, and Social Welfare as well as the Director General of national policy.

174. Colombia was grateful for Agency support in strengthening its capacities to prevent, detect and treat cancer, which continued to be a major cause of death in the country. It hoped that the Agency would continue its assistance in that regard.

175. The first national nuclear security centre, whose purpose was to build and strengthen capacities to prevent, detect and respond to terrorist threats involving nuclear and/or radioactive material, had been inaugurated in Colombia in October 2010 with Agency cooperation. That had led to the seizure of radioactive sources and prosecution of illicit traffickers. Also, the Agency had provided assistance with respect to security in a number of cities in Colombia for the world under-20s football championship.

176. Colombia attached great importance to the safe transport of nuclear and radioactive material and supported the Agency's work to harmonize national standards in that sphere.

177. It also attached great importance to the Agency's verification work and was among those countries which fully met their obligations; its additional protocol had entered into force in 2009.

178. In conclusion, he said that the threat of proliferation affected all humankind. Colombia therefore supported multilateral bodies in the hope that the existing international system could promote trust, peace and security by diplomatic means.

179. Mr KOUBAA (Tunisia) said that, since becoming a member of the Agency in 1957, Tunisia had utilized various peaceful applications of nuclear technology in order to improve its capabilities in such fields as health, agriculture, industry, the environment and research. Through its cooperation with the Agency it had also been able to share its specific areas of competence and consolidate its ties with friendly States.

180. In view of its increasing energy consumption, Tunisia had no choice but to look into new and renewable sources of energy, including the nuclear option. Tunisia took a particular interest in the use of nuclear energy for electricity generation and seawater desalination to meet its future needs.

181. In light of the accident at Fukushima, he underlined the importance of the 2011 General Conference in dispelling fears about nuclear safety. In that context, Tunisia had appreciated the Director General's initiative to convene the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June and supported the various measures to be taken by the Agency to raise the level of nuclear installation safety and to prevent, as far as possible, any future nuclear accidents. Taking note of the enhancement of nuclear installation safety, particularly with regard to legal instruments and technical guidelines, that had taken place as a result of the lessons learned from the Chernobyl accident, Tunisia called for the lessons of the Fukushima accident to be learned and stressed the need to attain the objectives of the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

182. Tunisia had always faithfully honoured its obligations to the Agency whether in the framework of the Regular Budget, its contributions to the TCF or its NPCs for technical cooperation projects.

183. Tunisia was currently implementing 6 national technical cooperation projects and was participating with other African States in the implementation of 34 regional projects. In addition, in the course of the past year it had accepted 10 trainees on fellowships and scientific visits funded by the Agency. Tunisia was eager to develop its cooperation links with the Agency and was submitting its project proposals for the 2012–2013 biennium. It looked forward to receiving financial support from friendly countries in support of the democratic movement in Tunisia.

184. As the host country of the AAEA, Tunisia was satisfied with — and would welcome further — cooperation between that organization and the Agency, on the one hand, and among the various AAEA member States, on the other.

185. He drew attention to work being done to set up the African Commission on Nuclear Energy pursuant to Article 12 of the Pelindaba Treaty, which had entered into force on 15 July 2009. The role of the Commission was, inter alia, to review and follow up the application of Agency safeguards to

peaceful nuclear activities and to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology. The Members of the Commission had met in May 2011 to elect its secretariat. Tunisia anticipated solid cooperation between the Commission and the Agency.

186. Tunisia attached special importance to nuclear safeguards and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. It remained firmly convinced that nuclear energy should be used only for peaceful purposes. In that regard, it had signed an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement with the Agency, which it intended to ratify as soon as it had established an effective legislative and supervisory system for that purpose in accordance with international standards.

187. It was important to make the Middle East a region free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Tunisia called for the adoption of relevant resolutions in that regard so as to attain that much-sought goal.

Mr Grima (Malta), Vice-President, took the Chair.

188. Ms KALA (Estonia) said that her country had been deeply touched by the disaster at Fukushima. The Government and people of Japan could rely on Estonia's continuing sympathy and support.

189. The accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant had been a wake-up call for the global nuclear regime and industry. It had demonstrated that, even in a country with a high level of nuclear technology and safety standards, the risk of a serious accident should not be underestimated.

190. Estonia commended the Director General on his initiative to hold the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June, which had laid the basis for the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety. In that context, Estonia supported all measures leading to higher national and international safety standards. It called on all States to ensure the safety of their nuclear installations, to assess their safety regularly and systematically, and to make the results of stress tests public as soon as possible.

191. Despite the accident in Japan, nuclear energy's share of global energy production continued to grow, particularly in view of its contribution to the attainment of greenhouse gas emission targets.

192. Estonia, which was examining ways of diversifying its energy portfolio, viewed nuclear power as a potential clean source of energy. However, further analysis would be required before Estonia decided whether to participate in regional nuclear projects or to build its own nuclear power plant.

193. Even a country without nuclear power, like Estonia, had learned lessons from the Fukushima accident. It had learned, firstly, that the competencies of national regulatory bodies — not only in countries with existing plants, but also in those with plans to embark on a nuclear programme — must be increased and the independence of such bodies ensured.

194. Secondly, the rapid exchange of information during nuclear incidents was imperative for all, and most particularly for neighbouring States. Estonia believed that the Agency had a central role to play in information sharing. It believed moreover that information exchange was vital under normal circumstances in order to keep neighbouring authorities informed about relevant power plant plans.

195. Estonia emphasized that, while every State had a right to nuclear energy, it also bore the responsibility to pursue it safely, to ensure nuclear security and to meet non-proliferation concerns.

196. In recent years, the security of nuclear and other radioactive materials had become a priority issue. Estonia welcomed the work done by the Agency in that regard, particularly through the NSF, and would continue contributing to that Fund despite current financial difficulties.

197. Her country valued the Agency's technical cooperation highly and had always contributed its target share of the TCF in full. Agency assistance to Estonia had focused mainly on public health services; the recent purchase of a linear accelerator to improve cancer treatment at the North Estonia Medical Centre was one example.

198. Estonia paid tribute to the unique role that the Agency had played for more than five decades in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and called for continuing support for its efforts.

199. Mr ALKAABI (United Arab Emirates) expressed sympathy, solidarity and support for Japan following the natural disaster that had befallen it on 11 March and acknowledged the efforts Japan had made to mitigate the consequences of the nuclear accident that had ensued at Fukushima.

200. The Agency played a vital role in helping Member States to benefit from the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In 2008, the United Arab Emirates, in the hope that nuclear power would contribute significantly to its future energy mix, had embarked on a nuclear energy programme to meet the growing domestic demand for electricity. In so doing, it was committed to the highest standards of safety and security. The national policy for development of that programme endorsed the principles of full transparency, non-proliferation and cooperation with the Agency.

201. In December 2009, the United Arab Emirates had awarded a contract to a Korean consortium to design, construct and jointly operate the country's first four nuclear power reactors. The first reactor was scheduled to begin commercial operation in 2017. As safety was a high priority, a great deal of emphasis was being put on evaluating the lessons learnt from the Fukushima accident. The operator, Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation, was cooperating with the Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation and the Agency to implement any standards deemed essential in that regard. The Emirates had recently selected a site for construction of the first nuclear power plant and the corresponding application had been filed with the regulator.

202. To ensure the implementation of a successful and sustainable nuclear energy programme, the United Arab Emirates was working closely with the Agency and international partners. In January, it had received an INIR mission, the outcome of which had been very positive with no major gaps having been identified. In addition, it had accumulated valuable experience in the Agency's integrated guidance approach for the development of new nuclear energy programmes.

203. His country had presented its first national report to the fifth review meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, where its work on developing nuclear safety infrastructure had been praised. It also planned to submit a first national report to the fourth review meeting of the Joint Convention in May 2012.

204. In December 2011, the United Arab Emirates would receive its first IRRS, at an unprecedentedly early stage in a nuclear programme. He was proud that his country was developing into a model of transparency and responsibility for other nuclear newcomers. It had already issued 11 new regulations for the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear applications and had set up licensing and inspection procedures.

205. The United Arab Emirates was committed to ensuring nuclear security and had taken an active part in nuclear security summits. It was involved in the preparations for the next summit, to be held in Seoul in 2012. His country had significant oil, construction and medical industries, and so the security of radioactive sources was a particularly important issue. It planned to hold expert workshops on the topic in the Emirates in two months' time jointly with the WINS.

206. The United Arab Emirates called for an enhanced role for the Agency in the global nuclear safety regime. In that regard, it welcomed the Director General's timely response to the Fukushima accident by convening the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety. Joint efforts under the auspices

of the Agency aimed at strengthening safety measures were vital to the long-term sustainability of the global nuclear industry. His country welcomed the outcomes of that Conference, in particular the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, which was consistent with the approach taken by the Emirates in developing its nuclear programme.

207. He noted that the Convention on Nuclear Safety, as the only legally binding instrument in the field, was a significant international norm for countries with nuclear facilities. He called on all countries with nuclear facilities which had not yet done so to accede to that Convention at an early date.

208. The United Arab Emirates appreciated the important role the Agency played in building the scientific and technological capabilities of Member States, including the development of human resources. In that regard, it strongly supported the Agency's technical cooperation programme, which enabled many countries to benefit from the Agency's technical expertise in the areas, amongst others, of nuclear energy, nuclear security and safety.

209. He noted that the United Arab Emirates consistently met its financial undertakings to the TCF in full and on time. It had benefited from national and regional workshops, training and expert meetings and had contributed to technical cooperation activities by providing experts and sharing its experience in developing a nuclear programme.

210. Agency safeguards were a credible means of providing assurance that nuclear material and facilities were used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The Agency should be capable of providing such assurances for declared as well as undeclared material and activities. To that end, it was essential that all Member States bring into force an additional protocol alongside a comprehensive safeguards agreement, thereby enabling the Agency to meet its safeguards responsibilities and, as a consequence, enhance confidence within the international community. The United Arab Emirates, which had brought an additional protocol into force in December 2010, supported the Director General's efforts to promote greater adherence to that instrument.

211. His delegation welcomed the Director General's efforts to consult with States of the Middle East to facilitate the early application of comprehensive Agency safeguards to all nuclear activities in the region. Further, his country supported all endeavours to facilitate the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East, including the Director General's initiative to convene a forum so that the Middle East States might learn from the experience of other regions regarding the creation of such a zone. All the States of the region must be committed to making a positive contribution in order to achieve that goal. Also, all the States of the region — including Israel — must accede to the NPT and submit their nuclear facilities to comprehensive Agency safeguards.

212. The United Arab Emirates looked forward to continuing its work with the Agency and to supporting it in its pivotal role to promote international cooperation and strengthen global nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation.

213. Mr KUBELKA (Croatia) expressed his country's deepest sympathy to Japan on account of the severe human and environmental consequences of the earthquake, tsunami and accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

214. Croatia welcomed the various activities undertaken by the Agency in that regard, especially the Director General's initiative to convene the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety, which had provided an opportunity to start the process of learning lessons. Croatia welcomed adoption of the ensuing Ministerial Declaration and hoped that Member States would endorse and implement the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety.

215. Strengthening the global nuclear safety framework by improving standards in nuclear safety, emergency preparedness and radiation protection was a common task and it was important that the highest level of safety be achieved. In that regard, Croatia was pleased that an extraordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety had been called for August 2012 to review possibilities for strengthening the Convention. It was essential that the process of reviewing relevant standards be transparent so as to restore the somewhat shaken public confidence in the use of nuclear energy.

216. He emphasized the right of every State to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes; together with non-proliferation and disarmament, it was one of the main pillars of the NPT.

217. The electricity generated at the Krško nuclear power plant in Slovenia played an important role in providing base load power to the Croatian economy and represented about 15% of its total energy mix. It was expected that Croatia would make a decision on whether to construct a nuclear power plant of its own by the end of 2012 at the latest.

218. In the field of safety, Croatia had passed a new Act on Radiological and Nuclear Safety in 2010. Also, the State Office for Radiological and Nuclear Safety had been established as the competent body for activities related to protection from ionizing radiation and nuclear safety, and was now fully functional.

219. At the international level, Croatia was party to, and an active participant in, all the main international nuclear safety related instruments. It encouraged all States which had not done so already to follow suit.

220. Croatia supported initiatives to enhance operational safety and to strengthen international cooperation in the area of emergency preparedness and response. In that context, it welcomed the initiative to revise the Early Notification Convention and to launch the Agency's new Unified System for Information Exchange in Incidents and Emergencies.

221. The comprehensive Agency safeguards agreement and an additional protocol thereto were the current verification standard. Croatia urged all States party to the NPT to bring those two instruments into force. For its part, Croatia had been implementing integrated safeguards and it had been concluded that all its nuclear material was used exclusively for peaceful activities. At the regional level, his country had established institutional capacities for preventing illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive material.

222. Croatia appreciated the assistance it had received under the Agency's technical cooperation programme. The wide range of projects under way and the research agreements it had concluded were having a positive impact on the country. It had submitted eight project proposals for the 2012–2013 biennium, all of which had been evaluated positively. However, owing to financial constraints, several had been delayed until the next programming phase.

223. Mr STRITAR (Slovenia), having expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's work to strengthen the Agency safeguards system, said that urgent challenges still lay ahead. Confidence in the non-proliferation regime needed to be reinforced in view of the unresolved safeguards issues in some countries. The risk of nuclear proliferation remained real and should be combated collectively, preferably through the close cooperation of all Member States with the Agency. Furthermore, issues relating to new reactors, complex facilities and country-specific approaches posed technological and organizational challenges.

224. All Member States needed to work towards a self-sustaining, robust and effective safeguards system that inspired confidence. Such a system provided a solid foundation for nuclear trade and

cooperation, security and progress towards nuclear disarmament. Slovenia's support for the Agency's safeguards activities included its membership of SAGSI.

225. Slovenia welcomed the increasing number of additional protocols that had been ratified by Member States. It urged those that had yet to bring into force a comprehensive safeguards agreement together with an additional protocol, the universal verification standard, to do so without delay.

226. Nuclear security was an important area of Agency activity. It was indispensable in preventing, detecting and responding to nuclear terrorism. Amongst other things, the nuclear security programme supported advisory and evaluation missions and Slovenia had received an IPPAS mission in 2010, which had reviewed all its nuclear installations, yielding valuable recommendations to the national authorities.

227. He noted in that connection that Slovenia had deposited its instrument of ratification for the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and was now party to 14 of the 16 United Nations counterterrorism conventions and protocols, including the Amendment to the CPPNM.

228. Having expressed admiration for the response of the Japanese authorities to the horrific disaster of 11 March, he said that individual countries and the international community needed to do more as regards the provision of updated and reliable information in such cases. In his country, the Slovenian Nuclear Safety Administration (SNSA) emergency team had been activated on 12 March and had provided information to the public and the media. For some time thereafter it had continued to give daily updates on events regarding the Fukushima nuclear accident on its website.

229. In view of the recession in the global economy, the Agency's technical cooperation programme was increasingly important for the less developed countries, particularly in the high priority areas of health, food, water and environmental issues. It was therefore important for the programme to ensure that it gave optimal value for money and every effort should be made to see that each cent was well spent.

230. In 2010, Slovenia had hosted nine Agency regional workshops, training courses, meetings and seminars. Also, Slovenian institutions had trained Agency fellows from various developing countries. Since 2005, Slovenian experts had been assisting Serbia in the Vinča Institute Nuclear Decommissioning project with respect to all aspects of licensing, including review and assessment. Slovenia had supported the transport of spent fuel from the Vinča research reactor to the Russian Federation and in November 2010 spent fuel had passed through Slovenia and been loaded on a vessel in the port of Koper.

231. Slovenia attached great importance to improving worldwide emergency preparedness and response and was active in Agency projects in that area. It was a member of RANET, the Agency network which encouraged cooperation in case of emergency and facilitated assistance to the country concerned. The Agency could play an indispensable role not only in assisting Member States in achieving a high level of emergency preparedness but also in emergency response through its Incident and Emergency Centre (IEC). During the recent Fukushima accident, the demand from the public and from expert institutions for reliable and updated information from the Agency had been enormous, placing great strain on the IEC and other parts of the Agency.

232. In Slovenia, the SNSA's web-based communication system had been extended nationwide to incorporate national and local emergency response organizations. The SNSA coordinated radiation monitoring and acted as the hub for all radiation monitoring data and, in addition, made recommendations for decisions by the Civil Protection Commander.

233. In 2011, Slovenia's parliament had passed a new act to amend the existing Act on Protection against Ionizing Radiation and Nuclear Safety. More than 110 of the Act's 145 articles had been amended. A new Act on Third Party Liability and Insurance had been issued at the end of 2010, bringing Slovenia fully into line with the latest Paris and Brussels Convention protocols. In addition, Slovenia had completed the nuclear safety requirement harmonization process started by WENRA more than a decade previously. The last five WENRA reference levels in the area of personnel qualification and training had been incorporated into Slovenian legislation, putting Slovenia among the first European Union countries to have fulfilled the WENRA action plan.

234. The continued safe operation of existing nuclear capacities was a priority for his country. In March 2011 the Krško nuclear power plant had experienced its first reactor trip since 2005 due to loss of external load caused by a malfunction of power line protection in the switchyard. Following a strategic decision to prolong operation of that plant, the documentation for design lifetime extension to 60 years had been prepared, and the independent safety evaluation made by an international team had been submitted in April 2011.

235. The Krško nuclear power plant had undergone a mandatory stress test in accordance with the specifications laid down by the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group and the European Commission following the Fukushima accident. Even before the stress test, the plant had already started preparing an upgrading programme which included the procurement of a fire-fighting vehicle, additional mobile diesel generators, mobile pumps and air compressors.

236. Slovenia welcomed the Japanese Government's announcement that it would hold an international conference on nuclear safety in cooperation with the Agency in 2012. Similarly, his country supported the decision to hold an extraordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety in 2012 in order to strengthen the provisions of that important document. Nuclear safety and security issues were also about to be addressed at the UN Secretary-General's high-level meeting on the margins of the General Assembly. It was essential to ensure coherence of those activities and the Agency's central role in international cooperation on nuclear safety should be supported by all Member States.

237. In May 2011, Slovenia had passed an important milestone by acceding to the OECD/NEA, thus becoming its 30th member. Full membership would entitle Slovenian experts to take part in new activities and would mean enhanced cooperation with the NEA. His country had been an observer in the seven NEA standing technical committees since 2002 and had joined the OECD in 2010.

238. In conclusion, he thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for their impartial, professional, competent and devoted work in fulfilment of the Agency's statutory obligations.

239. Mr WIN (Myanmar) expressed his country's appreciation to the Director General and his staff for the professionalism, impartiality and objectivity with which they carried out their tasks.

240. He expressed his country's deepest condolences to the Government and people of Japan for the disaster that had occurred in March. The accident at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant had been a focus of attention for the international nuclear community and the Agency, and he was confident that the Japanese Government, in cooperation with the international community, would be able to stabilize the situation in the affected areas and begin reconstruction work shortly.

241. The non-power applications of nuclear science and technology played an important role in helping Member States to address global threats such as climate change, food insecurity, scarcity of potable water and the deteriorating environment. Myanmar was particularly supportive of the Agency's efforts in the area of water resources assessment and management, including the Water Availability Enhancement Project, holding training courses to strengthen Member States' capabilities,

expanding global isotope monitoring networks and preparing isotope hydrology atlases. It also welcomed the subject of the 2011 Scientific Forum: “Water matters: making a difference with nuclear techniques”.

242. Agency technical cooperation projects had played an important role in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear techniques in Myanmar in areas of particular significance to the national development programme. Priority areas were agricultural productivity, livestock production and health, human health and nutrition, strengthening of national capacity in nuclear science and technology, radiation safety, water resources management, environmental monitoring and industrial applications of radioisotopes.

243. Myanmar had ten active projects in the 2009–2011 technical cooperation programme, five of which were in the field of food and agriculture, two in human health, and three in nuclear science and technology. Myanmar had also participated in many regional and interregional projects and had taken part in activities under the RCA. His country was grateful for the significant assistance it had received from the Agency over the previous year concerning crop improvement through radiation-induced mutation, nuclear and radiation safety, nuclear security, the use of radiation in medicine and nuclear science and technology applications.

244. Myanmar was a developing country with limited infrastructure, expertise and human resources in nuclear science and technology applications. Efforts were being made to strengthen the national infrastructure for the promotion of such applications for peaceful development purposes, and Myanmar would appreciate Agency assistance in capacity-building, developing skilled and well-trained human resources and establishing the required infrastructure.

245. His Government acknowledged the support given by the Agency to Member States in enhancing worldwide nuclear, radiological, transport and waste safety, including through the development of international safety instruments, strengthening national, regional and international emergency preparedness and response capabilities, preparing safety standards and guides and improving national nuclear safety infrastructures. The prompt assistance provided by the Agency following the Fukushima nuclear accident attested to its professionalism in providing emergency response services.

246. He reiterated Myanmar’s support for the Agency’s efforts to prevent and combat nuclear terrorism, strengthen measures for the detection of illicit nuclear trafficking, respond to nuclear security incidents, upgrade the physical protection of nuclear facilities, provide quality control of nuclear security equipment, promote education in the area of nuclear security, and facilitate and implement international nuclear security instruments in Member States.

247. Myanmar firmly supported global nuclear non-proliferation and a nuclear-weapon-free world. It had been party to the NPT since December 1992, had signed a safeguards agreement and SQP pursuant to the NPT in 1995 and the CTBT in 1996 and, as a member of ASEAN, had also acceded to the SEANWFZ Treaty, which had entered into force in 1997.

248. In order to ensure that it did not lag behind other countries and to improve the application of nuclear technology in the education and health sectors, Myanmar had previously made arrangements to carry out nuclear research with the assistance of the Russian Federation. It supported the legitimate right of every State to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It was in no position to consider the production and use of nuclear weapons, and had halted its previous nuclear research arrangement in order to avoid any misunderstanding among the international community.

249. In conclusion, he thanked the Agency on behalf of his Government for its dedicated efforts in promoting the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear energy and expressed the hope that the Agency would continue to play a central role in strengthening international collaboration for the

continued expansion of nuclear energy and related technologies. He reiterated Myanmar's firm support for the activities carried out by the Agency in fulfilment of its mandate.

250. Ms PHETCHARATANA (Thailand) said that the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant had presented one of the greatest challenges in nuclear history. As the UN Secretary-General had pointed out, the accident had served as a serious wake-up call to the international community on the importance of nuclear safety for both accident prevention and impact mitigation.

251. At the June Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety, Thailand had emphasized three essential elements for strengthening the global nuclear safety regime: first, the need to strengthen the role of the Agency in enhancing the global nuclear safety framework, safety standards and emergency preparedness and response; second, transparent information sharing at the national, regional and international levels in order to promote transparency and confidence building; and third, effective capacity building, in particular for countries planning to embark on a nuclear power programme. Thailand was pleased to note that those elements had been incorporated into the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, which it hoped would serve as a basis for the global nuclear safety regime and be implemented at all levels. Her country also looked forward to the international conference on nuclear safety to be organized jointly by the Government of Japan and the Agency in 2012.

252. Following the Fukushima accident, Thailand had postponed for three years a decision on its nuclear power programme. Further studies and research would be undertaken to ensure the highest safety standards.

253. With the use of nuclear power increasing, it was important to build confidence and transparency in the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy. To that end, Thailand had recently hosted an international conference on safety, security and safeguards in nuclear energy aimed at enhancing cooperation among nuclear regulatory bodies within the South East Asia region. Thailand had proposed the establishment of an informal network for the sharing of information and best practices to ensure the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the region. Preliminary views from ASEAN Member States appeared positive, and discussions on the initiative would continue.

254. Thailand had a number of technical cooperation projects with the Agency in areas vital for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, such as public health, food and nutrition, agriculture and industry. She was pleased to announce that Thailand had again pledged 100% of its share of the TCF target for 2012.

255. It was important to raise awareness of the benefits of nuclear technology for development among all sectors in Thailand. Her country was grateful to the Deputy Director General for Technical Cooperation for his valuable contribution to the Seminar on Nuclear Science and Technology for Development held in July in Bangkok.

256. Thailand supported the Director General's initiative to make water the subject of the 2011 Scientific Forum. Her country had considerable experience in water resources management and enjoyed close cooperation with the Agency in that regard through a project on the use of isotope hydrology for groundwater resources management. In order to share its experiences with Member States, it had organized an exhibition on the use of nuclear techniques for water in Thailand as part of the Scientific Forum.

257. Thailand was also considering the use of nuclear techniques for monitoring and predicting coastal and soil erosion in an assessment of natural risks and looked forward to working closely with the Agency in that area.

258. The Agency's important role in safeguards, verification and security was essential to reduce nuclear threats and create an environment conducive to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Thailand supported the strengthening of Agency safeguards and security frameworks through relevant international legal instruments. The universal application of comprehensive safeguards agreements and the additional protocol would help to build confidence in the international verification system and in the peaceful uses of nuclear and dual-use equipment.

259. International cooperative frameworks could also contribute to improving global nuclear security and to addressing the threat of nuclear terrorism. Thailand looked forward to joining the international efforts to further strengthen cooperation on the issue of nuclear security at the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul and welcomed the UN High-Level Meeting on Safety and Security to be held at Headquarters in New York.

260. Thailand also supported the Director General's initiative to convene a forum on experience of possible relevance to the creation of an NWFZ in the Middle East, which it hoped would be conducive to the convening of a conference on the Middle East in 2012.

261. The Agency's role had become increasingly important, and cooperation between the Agency and other international organizations and with and among Member States remained essential for the effective implementation of measures to strengthen global nuclear safety, security and safeguards. She reiterated Thailand's full support for and confidence in the work of the Agency under the able leadership of its Director General.

262. Mr MPAY (Cameroon) expressed his condolences to the Government and people of Japan following the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant. Cameroon had welcomed the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held recently in Vienna to draw lessons from that terrible accident. While the responsibility for nuclear safety lay primarily with Member States, Cameroon supported the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety which would help to strengthen the international nuclear safety regime, and hoped that Member States and the Agency would work together to implement the actions identified.

263. Cameroon welcomed the detailed reports on the activities undertaken by the Agency in 2010, in particular the Annual Report, the Technical Cooperation Report and the Nuclear Safety Review for the Year 2010. His country was pleased that the Agency's technical cooperation programme for 2010 had placed particular emphasis on the fight against cancer, human resources development and capacity building, and nuclear and radiation safety. It also appreciated the importance attached to traditional areas of activity, namely human health, agricultural productivity and food security, water resources management, protection of the environment, industrial radiation applications and sustainable energy development.

264. With regard to cancer treatment, he said that the modernization of existing radiotherapy facilities was a major challenge, including for African countries where initial infrastructures had been established with Agency technical assistance. Cameroon called upon the Agency to strengthen its support for national projects on cancer treatment and noted that searching for new sources of funding for such projects was essential to ensure that activities were properly budgeted for and implemented.

265. Competent and well-trained staff were necessary if nuclear technologies were to be used effectively for socio-economic development. That was a challenging area, particularly for developing countries, where training infrastructures were poorly equipped or just did not exist. Cameroon commended the Agency's efforts to assist Member States in developing suitable human resources. The project concerning support for human capacity building in Member States (INT/0/083), which provided for specialized training to be given to participants from developing countries, should be strengthened. The AFRA project on sustaining the regional capability for the utilization of information

and communications technologies for human resource development (RAF/0/026) aimed to provide ongoing training to ensure that professionals in the nuclear area maintained a high level of expertise. The Agency should continue to support that project, giving particular attention to educational materials and to the training of trainers.

266. The University of Ghana and Alexandria University had been chosen by AFRA as regional designated centres to promote the academic education of high-level specialists in the nuclear area in Africa. Several fellowship students had received higher professional training under the AFRA fellowship programme for 2010 and 2011. Cameroon called upon donor countries to support that fellowship programme, which already appeared to be one of the best ways of producing a sufficient number of suitable regional experts.

267. Cameroon noted with satisfaction the impressive number of activities carried out by the Agency in the area of nuclear and radiation safety, many of which were aimed at raising awareness of the international legal framework in the area of nuclear energy. The Agency helped Member States to strengthen their national regulatory infrastructures, and Cameroon was grateful for the assistance it had received with the revision of its national legislation on nuclear security, safety and safeguards.

268. The Fukushima accident had revealed shortcomings in the global nuclear safety regime and the debates begun at the Ministerial Conference in June had attested to the importance the international community attached to the issue. The scale of the accident had demonstrated the need for an international and regional approach to nuclear safety and highlighted the importance of taking into account the possibility of external events, such as severe natural disasters, when designing nuclear facilities. Cameroon supported the Agency's efforts to research innovative nuclear technologies and to adopt a multilateral approach to the introduction of nuclear energy.

269. Cameroon was also in favour of a regional approach to nuclear safety and security. It remained committed to the Pelindaba Treaty and hoped that the international community would support the actual implementation of that Treaty.

270. His country welcomed the establishment of the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa. The self-assessment exercises undertaken by the Forum under Agency supervision helped to strengthen regional cooperation and harmonize national regulations.

271. Cameroon had contributed to organizing regional events concerning nuclear safety in collaboration with the Agency. The African Regional Workshop on the Radiation Safety Information Monitoring System had been held in Yaoundé in March and Cameroon was intending to host the fourth meeting of the Forum of Nuclear Regulatory Bodies in Africa in 2011.

272. The growing number of Member States and increasing demands for socio-economic development were undoubtedly adding to the financial pressure on the Agency. The technical cooperation budget should be increased so that nuclear applications could help to further the progress made by Member States, particularly developing countries. Given the challenges associated with the financing of the technical cooperation programme, Cameroon recommended increasing the extrabudgetary contributions of countries and donor organizations and welcomed the steps already taken in that regard, including through the Peaceful Uses Initiative. The increase in extrabudgetary contributions with respect to the 2009 level, in particular from governments to support project implementation in their own countries, was an indication of the importance Member States attached to the technical cooperation programme as an engine for socio-economic development.

273. Cameroon had received equipment that enabled the National Radiation Protection Agency to begin the dosimetric monitoring of occupationally exposed workers. It was grateful to the Agency for

agreeing to share the cost of a dosimeter reader, of 1500 individual dosimeters and of staff training to facilitate the establishment of a professional dosimetry service.

274. International technical cooperation under the auspices of the Agency was the best mechanism for promoting the safe use of nuclear energy in the world. The international community must work together with the Agency to face the new nuclear safety challenges illustrated by the Fukushima accident. His country remained confident that the Agency would make every effort to strengthen the international nuclear safety regime and promote the right of all States, without discrimination, to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

275. Mr ROBELO GONZÁLEZ (Nicaragua) expressed his country's condolences to the Government and people of Japan following the earthquake, tsunami and consequent accident at Fukushima and congratulated them for their magnificent management of the situation. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in June 2011 had produced a Ministerial Declaration which aimed to improve nuclear safety, emergency preparedness and response mechanisms and the protection of people and the environment against nuclear radiation. Nicaragua fully supported the action plan contained therein.

276. He expressed his Government's gratitude for the work carried out in the country under the Agency's technical cooperation programme, in particular through PACT. As one of the PACT pilot countries, Nicaragua had made great progress in the fields of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine, including cancer diagnosis, early detection and treatment, thus reducing the inequality between rich and poor countries in that regard. Many Nicaraguans had benefited as a result, and he extended his country's thanks to the PACT donor countries.

277. Nicaragua had demonstrated its full commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons by signing and ratifying the CTBT and accepting the additional protocol. The early entry into force of the CTBT was vital to advancing non-proliferation efforts. Any application of nuclear technology had to be strictly for peaceful purposes if it were to contribute to the progress and welfare of mankind and to the UN Millennium Development Goals.

278. His Government expressed its solidarity with Iran. Some of the Agency's messages in that regard lacked neutrality and independence, especially considering there was a country in the same region that had not joined the NPT and whose nuclear facilities were therefore not subject to Agency safeguards. Nicaragua was party to the NPT and supported the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It called on all countries that had not done so to join the NPT without delay in order to achieve a safe and peaceful world.

279. There was an urgent need for Israel — an Agency founder State with a considerable nuclear weapons arsenal — to join the NPT and submit its nuclear arsenal to systematic Agency inspections with a view to maintaining a peaceful international environment, particularly in the Middle East.

280. Nicaragua looked forward to the forum on experience of possible relevance to the creation of an NWFZ in the Middle East to be held in November 2011 and thanked the Director General for his efforts to ensure it contributed constructively to the establishment of such a zone. Nicaragua supported all international efforts to that end.

281. In response to unconfirmed reports that the National Transitional Council of Libya was trying to submit its credentials for the 55th session of the General Conference, he said that his country did not recognize the Council as the legitimate Government of Libya as it had not been elected democratically. Rather, it was the result of aggressions led by certain western States trying to get hold of the country's oil and gas.

282. Mr RIVERA MORA (El Salvador) said that the recent accidents at Fukushima in Japan and Marcoule in France had highlighted the vulnerability of nuclear facilities. In addition, the Director General had delivered alarming figures in his opening statement⁶ about activities related to the unauthorized possession of nuclear or radioactive material and/or attempts to sell or smuggle such material. The world was facing a real security threat.

283. Nuclear security must therefore remain high on the agenda of the entire international community, whether countries possessed nuclear facilities or not. El Salvador would support any initiative to improve and strengthen nuclear power plant safety and emergency response to any nuclear crisis or accident, particularly when the risk posed was one of regional or global proportions.

284. Although El Salvador had no nuclear plants, it recognized the right of the developing States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. At the same time, however, those States had an obligation to provide safety guarantees to others in view of the unpredictable consequences of nuclear accidents.

285. In that context, El Salvador welcomed the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, particularly as regards the strengthening of emergency preparedness and response, review and strengthening of the IAEA safety standards, and assessment of nuclear power plant safety deficiencies.

286. Similarly, his Government staunchly supported all instruments and initiatives to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction.

287. The NPT should, without delay, become a universal cornerstone in the nuclear disarmament process. El Salvador urged those Member States which had not yet done so to accede to the NPT, especially States in the Middle East, and called on all the nuclear-weapon States and States possessing weapons of mass destruction to take meaningful steps towards the elimination of their arsenals.

288. El Salvador also urged countries whose nuclear programmes were under question to demonstrate good faith and collaborate fully with the Agency. Countries which had withdrawn from the NPT should rejoin it as a demonstration of political will and in order to bolster confidence in the peaceful nature of their nuclear programmes.

289. His country believed that having an Agency safeguards agreement and an additional protocol thereto in force, enabling verification of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, increased confidence and helped to promote, amongst other things, nuclear-weapon-free zones. El Salvador, which had ratified both instruments, called on Member States which had not yet signed or brought into force a comprehensive Agency safeguards agreement to do so as proof of their commitment to regional and world peace and security.

290. As part of the world's first NWFZ, his country supported all efforts to create such zones in other regions. Thus, it welcomed the Director General's initiative to convene a forum in November to discuss experience of possible relevance to the creation of an NWFZ in the Middle East. That forum would constitute an important step on the way to the 2012 conference on the same topic.

291. El Salvador, aware of the importance of nuclear applications in the areas of human health, nuclear medicine, food and nutrition security, radiation protection, pest control and soil and water management, underscored the vital role played by the Agency in providing technical cooperation to developing Member States. In particular, El Salvador commended the Agency, FAO and OIE on their successful efforts to eradicate rinderpest. His Government hoped that it would continue to receive the Agency's valuable technical assistance in the future.

⁶ See GC(55)/OR.1, paras 36–67.

292. Mr QUIÑONES (Dominican Republic) said that his country, a member of the Agency since 1957, had benefited from the technical cooperation it had received over the years to develop its national nuclear technology capacities in such vital areas as health, agriculture, water resources and the environment. The Agency had become an important ally on the Dominican Republic's path to sustainable development and his country fully endorsed the Agency's mandate "to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world". The Agency's task was highly relevant to its Member States now and would remain so in the future.

293. The Fukushima accident demonstrated the crucial role played by the Agency in the field of nuclear safety, specifically as concerned the prevention of such events, coordination of the international response to radiological emergencies, assistance to countries affected and the minimization of damage to the population and the environment. His country welcomed the steps taken by the Agency to strengthen its nuclear safety activities, especially through the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety convened in June and the establishment of the resulting Action Plan on Nuclear Safety.

294. In recent years, the Dominican Republic had speeded up its accession to the relevant legal instruments in the nuclear sphere. It was grateful for the advisory assistance it had been given by the Agency in implementing those instruments and in upgrading its national legislative framework.

295. The Dominican Republic recognized the importance of safeguards and the strengthened Agency verification system in providing effective guarantees of the peaceful use of nuclear material.

296. In the field of security, his country was working closely with the Agency to strengthen its regulatory structure through its National Energy Commission. In that regard, it was grateful for the assistance the Agency had provided in training personnel in the handling of radioactive sources, the disposal of disused sources, the response to radiological incidents and emergencies, and the control of illicit trafficking in nuclear material.

297. In that context, he underlined the excellent results achieved by the Second Coordination Meeting under project RLA/9/061 (Strengthening National Systems for Preparedness and Response to Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies), held in the Dominican Republic in May 2011 and attended by the representatives of 15 Latin American countries.

298. In recent years, his Government had continued to strengthen its programme of technical cooperation with the Agency, with special focus on areas in which nuclear technology could most effectively contribute to national development priorities. The CPF which had been signed in 2009 would be modified in 2012 to bring it into line with the national development strategy that was being drawn up by the national authorities. That strategy would set forth a vision for the nation's long-term socio-economic development.

299. The current technical cooperation programme with the Agency was helping in, amongst other things, the creation of a Centre for Nuclear Applications and Research, strengthening of the radiotherapy service in the new national oncology hospital, the evaluation of sedimentation in reservoirs, various aspects of human health and the development of human resources in general.

300. In the next cycle, emphasis would continue to be placed on areas of vital interest. He drew attention, in particular, to the project relating to the cyclotron centres enabling the use of advanced diagnostics in oncology, neurology and cardiology. In that connection, the Dominican Republic hoped to receive Agency support in training the necessary operating personnel.

301. He commended the Director General's 2010 initiative to attach priority to the fight against cancer. That had enabled the Agency to enhance the significant contribution made by nuclear technology to cancer diagnosis and treatment. Of special note was the support the Agency had

provided under PACT. He expressed the hope that activities under that programme would help in overcoming the cancer epidemic in countries of the Caribbean region.

302. His delegation also commended the topic selected for the 2011 Scientific Forum, namely water and the contribution that nuclear techniques could make in that area to the sustainable management of aquifers, the secure supply of potable water to rural communities and the development of optimal soil conservation strategies.

303. The Dominican Republic had been honoured to assume the chairmanship of ARCAL in 2011. It was grateful for Agency support in helping to finance the joint efforts under ARCAL, which had brought numerous benefits to Latin America and the Caribbean and had set an example of successful regional cooperation.

304. At its 12th regular meeting, the Board of ARCAL Representatives had approved the projects to be implemented in the 2012–2013 cycle. It was particularly gratifying that those projects included one with the Dominican Republic's neighbour, Haiti, the objective of which was to rebuild and maintain the human resources needed to apply nuclear science and technology for the country's sustainable development and well-being. The Dominican Government would provide support in promoting human development in the areas of food production and security, the integrated management of pests, human health and the environment.

305. The Dominican Republic hoped that its chairmanship had contributed to political, institutional and technical strengthening of ARCAL and wished Panama well now that it had taken over the chair.

306. In conclusion, he underlined the immense value of the Agency's activities to the international community.

307. Mr BARROS OREIRO (Uruguay) said that the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant showed man's vulnerability against nature. The Agency had reacted efficiently in sending technical equipment to Japan and providing information to the international community. The Director General had responded quickly and effectively in calling the Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety. The Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining of Uruguay had stated at the Conference that countries had managed their nuclear plants responsibly and reliably for the preceding 50 years, but it was important to review technology, standards and emergency procedures for unforeseen events. There was a need for total transparency of information to ensure confidence in the use of nuclear power.

308. His country played a very active role in the work of the United Nations, basing its international activities on the UN Charter with a view to achieving a fairer world. As a result, Uruguay had developed closer links with the Agency and was particularly committed to the processes of safeguards, nuclear verification and non-proliferation, to synergies between nuclear safety and security, and to systems for international cooperation.

309. Despite the international financial crisis of recent years, Uruguay's GDP had increased, poverty in the country had decreased and social inclusion had improved. Uruguay had designed an energy policy looking ahead to 2030 which focused on greater use of renewable energy and promotion of energy efficiency. A commission made up of representatives from the country's four political parties was examining the nuclear option, basing its work on Agency recommendations. Uruguay also chaired and participated in the Agency's Technical Working Group on Nuclear Power Infrastructure, which advised the Agency on how to support countries weighing up the nuclear power option.

310. Uruguay attached great importance to the technical cooperation project "Strengthening National Regulatory Infrastructures for the Control of Radiation Sources", through which the Agency gave

training to staff of regulatory authorities and provided expert services and high-technology equipment for conducting regulatory inspections.

311. He noted the Agency's contribution to protecting the health and safety of workers occupationally exposed to radiation, ensuring the protection of patients undergoing medical procedures involving radiation, safely managing radioactive waste, strengthening national nuclear preparedness and response systems and supporting the radiation protection infrastructure through training.

312. He made special mention of the Ibero-American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies, which had been working hard in key new areas of radiation and nuclear safety and enabling the exchange of information between regulators through the Ibero-American network. He expressed his country's support for and commitment to that initiative and its hope that the Agency would intensify its regional cooperation efforts.

313. For Uruguay, technical cooperation related to social aspects was fundamental, with over 80% of nuclear applications in the country used for medical purposes. Uruguay was interested in developing its mining sector and the National Directorate for Mining and Geology had been working to that end. The country was hoping to implement a technical cooperation project with the Agency in that field.

314. Uruguay welcomed the Director General's recent visit to Latin America, which showed his commitment to promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy, technical cooperation and nuclear safety in the region.

315. He congratulated the Agency on its initiative to hold the Scientific Forum on water matters alongside the present session of the General Conference. Since water was an essential natural resource, it was important to know the relationship between water, health and development. Access to safe water was a human right, but surface water and groundwater were sometimes contaminated by agricultural, stockbreeding and mining activities. The use of nuclear technology had been very beneficial to Uruguay in studying its water resources.

316. The Agency continued to face significant challenges related to evolving political situations, international security and nuclear accidents. It needed to continue to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, non-proliferation, the prohibition of nuclear tests and nuclear disarmament.

317. Finally, he announced that GRULAC would be endorsing Uruguay's candidature to serve on the Board for the period 2012–2014.

318. Mr BA HOUSSEYNOU HAMADY (Mauritania) paid tribute to the courage of the Japanese people in the aftermath of the Fukushima accident and expressed his country's full solidarity with their situation. The tragedy had served as a reminder of the importance of the Agency's role in mastering and monitoring the use of the atom.

319. Civilian nuclear programmes had an important place in development, particularly in electricity production, as well as industrial, medical, hydrological and agricultural applications. However, the risk to health and the environment remained ever-present.

320. Though the international community had harnessed civilian nuclear technologies, nuclear disasters were nevertheless increasingly challenging against a backdrop of climate change and nuclear proliferation. All States had a broadly similar level of exposure in the face of nuclear disasters that transcended national borders.

321. Because of their low level of technical expertise and inadequate human resources, the countries of the South were more exposed to the risks presented by the illegal transportation and storage of nuclear waste and other sources of ionizing radiation.

322. For those reasons, the Agency's mandate remained relevant in promoting the safe and secure use of civil nuclear technologies for development and preventing new risks associated with natural catastrophes, materials trafficking and terrorism.

323. He praised the Agency's efforts to strengthen nuclear safety and urged it to continue to follow the process of negotiation that had been begun in relation to climate change, and particularly the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, in South Africa.

324. The issues arising from the civilian use of nuclear technologies were a reminder of the importance of the Agency's technical cooperation activities, from which developing countries in particular benefited, and of the pressing need for all countries to sign up to the NPT to ensure a better world for future generations.

325. His country believed in the power of international cooperation to monitor and harness the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies and welcomed the decision to organize a forum on denuclearization of the Middle East region in November. It also emphasized the need to treat every State equally so that the Agency's resolutions and decisions would apply to all.

326. Since becoming a Member State in 2004, Mauritania had benefited from Agency assistance in training, expert missions, technical and financial support for energy planning, hydrogeological cartography, the control of animal diseases, and health care, with the acquisition and installation of a radiotherapy unit which had been operational since the end of 2010. That unit ensured that patients with certain cancers, who would until recently have had to receive treatment abroad at significant financial and social cost, could now be treated in their own country. He also thanked the Agency for its assistance in setting up a National Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety and Security Authority.

327. He called on the Agency to continue to support Member States in establishing and maintaining national authorities responsible for nuclear safety and security to better protect the general public from the effects of ionizing radiation, whether intentionally or accidentally produced. The Agency should also promote cooperation between developed and developing countries in civilian nuclear applications. That cooperation should not only encompass training and research, but also encourage technology and knowledge transfer so that the most disadvantaged countries could change their ways of generating and managing waste, producing food, travelling, using water, exploiting natural resources, building their homes and meeting their energy needs; in short, the cooperation should facilitate sustainable development.

328. In conclusion, he noted that Mauritania had recently ratified the Early Notification Convention, the Assistance Convention and the Joint Convention.

Ms Dengo Benavides (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

329. Ms MUTANDIRO (Zimbabwe) said that the Agency's technical cooperation activities remained critical to the efforts of developing countries to achieve socio-economic growth and the Millennium Development Goals. Her country valued its strong collaboration with the Agency in areas such as crop production, animal health, energy planning, radiation safety, human resources development, nuclear medicine and cancer therapy. Through a cost sharing arrangement, the Agency was currently assisting with the procurement of much needed radiotherapy equipment, and an imPACT mission had visited Zimbabwe earlier in the year to assist the Government with the establishment of a comprehensive national cancer control programme.

330. Her country was grateful to the Agency for the support provided to the National Radiation Protection Authority, which had been certified compliant with respect to Thematic Safety Areas 1 (legislative framework and regulatory structure) and 2 (occupational exposure control). The Radiation Protection Authority had recently unveiled a strategic plan for 2012–2016 and would appreciate continued support from the Agency in order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of service provision.

331. The early application of rapid and sensitive diagnostic methods in the control of transboundary animal diseases had drastically reduced the prevalence of some animal diseases, such as foot-and-mouth disease, in Zimbabwe and other countries in Africa. The historical milestone achieved with the eradication of rinderpest in Africa in 2010 would help to boost the continent's economic development. The use of other nuclear techniques and the integrated application of pest control programmes, such as AU-PATTEC, had also been beneficial for developing countries.

332. Zimbabwe welcomed the subject of the 2011 Scientific Forum since the availability of clean and safe water presented a challenge for many developing countries, as did efficient water resources management. Her country was encouraged by the Agency's activities aimed at promoting the efficient use of limited water resources.

333. Zimbabwe joined other Member States in calling for the provision of sufficient, assured and predictable financial resources for the technical cooperation programme, and trusted that the encouraging increase in funding between 2009 and 2010 was a trend that would continue. She hoped that the working group on the budget would serve as a platform for forging understanding and agreement on that important issue.

334. Her country looked forward to continued cooperation with the Agency through the implementation of new projects and programmes under its CPF, signed in 2010. In August 2011, Zimbabwe had signed the amendment to its SQP.

335. Turning to nuclear safety, she said that the tragic events at Fukushima had shown how a single incident could have ramifications that went beyond national boundaries. The accident had highlighted the need to strengthen international, regional and national emergency preparedness and response capabilities. The Agency should play a central role in promoting the highest and most robust nuclear safety standards and assist Member States in building the capacities and infrastructure to ensure the safe and secure use of nuclear energy and technologies.

336. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June had provided a useful platform for launching the preliminary assessment of the nuclear incident at Fukushima and an exchange of views on lessons learned. She hoped that the General Conference would endorse the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety.

337. Her Government supported the Agency's activities in the area of nuclear security and welcomed its efforts to support Member States, upon request, through the NSF. Although the highest safety standards must be met for all nuclear facilities, safety considerations should not prevent Member States from utilizing nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes. The Agency had a critical role to play in promoting enhanced international cooperation to strengthen safety standards and all applicable international regulatory frameworks on nuclear safety and security should come under Agency auspices. However, Member States should bear the primary responsibility for safeguarding their nuclear facilities.

338. Zimbabwe was fully supportive of disarmament initiatives aimed at ridding the world of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. She welcomed the Director General's decision to convene a forum on experience of possible relevance to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in

the Middle East in November, which would help to build confidence among States in the region and contribute to the convening of the United Nations conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East planned for 2012.

339. She welcomed the efforts of the Director General to address the gender imbalance within the Agency and boost the number of staff from developing countries. Those remained challenging areas, particularly at senior levels, and she urged the Director General to further intensify outreach activities to highlight the career opportunities open to women. Zimbabwe called on Member States to support those activities.

340. Mr LYSSIOTIS (Cyprus) expressed his country's deep-felt sympathy to the people of Japan following the tragic events at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant and paid tribute to the courage and fortitude of the workers at Fukushima, as well as the Japanese authorities, in handling the crisis.

341. His country acknowledged the immediate response of international organizations and the broader international community to the Fukushima accident, which had demonstrated that such cooperation could bring only positive effects, as it enhanced nuclear safety, emergency preparedness and response, and transparency worldwide. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety had begun the process of ensuring that the international community drew lessons from the accident and worked actively and collectively to ensure the implementation of the highest standards of nuclear safety globally. His country welcomed the Declaration which had emerged from the June meeting and the Action Plan which was awaiting endorsement at the present session.

342. The accident in Japan, like a number of similar events in the past, had demonstrated the transboundary implications of nuclear incidents. The risks associated with the use of nuclear energy needed to be addressed further by the international community. His country did not use atomic energy and did not plan to introduce nuclear power to its energy mix in the foreseeable future. However, neighbouring countries' decisions to operate nuclear power plants gave rise to serious concerns. Radiation did not stop at borders and the vulnerability of his country's region to seismic activity increased the risks from nuclear power plants in its immediate vicinity. While each country had a sovereign right to decide whether to include nuclear power in its energy mix, the international community should thoroughly study as a global issue the long-term implications of nuclear energy and its sustainability.

343. His country therefore attached the utmost importance to improving safety standards for nuclear power plants worldwide. Accordingly, it had ratified, signed or participated in several international conventions, treaties, agreements and other instruments relevant to nuclear safety. As a member of the European Union and the Agency, it had established a comprehensive system for radiation protection, nuclear safety and nuclear security in line with European and international standards.

344. Recently, a decision had been taken by the European Union and a number of other countries to perform stress tests at nuclear power plants. Such stress tests should be introduced worldwide for all existing and planned nuclear plants. They should cover all relevant factors and all risks, whether natural or manmade, such as human error, possible terrorist threats and geophysical factors.

345. It was vital to further improve cooperation, information-sharing and transparency between neighbouring countries and globally in order to establish an effective system for emergency preparedness and response to nuclear accidents or radiological events with transboundary consequences. His country was committed to all initiatives aimed at strengthening the international nuclear safety and security regime.

346. Mr ILLO (Niger) commended the courage and determination of the Japanese people and welcomed the Agency's professional, rapid and effective response to the Fukushima nuclear accident. Niger supported the twelve-point Action Plan on Nuclear Safety aimed at strengthening the Agency's efforts to raise standards of nuclear safety in the world.

347. Niger was more committed than ever to the Agency's objectives of preventing the use of nuclear energy for non-peaceful purposes and ensuring that it was utilized in accordance with Agency safeguards and safety and security standards. Niger, a major uranium producer, would work transparently with the Agency and the international community to ensure that nuclear energy remained an engine for development in a world free from nuclear threat.

348. Throughout its long history of cooperation with the Agency, Niger had acquired practical experience that had enabled it to achieve significant progress towards national and international goals in relation to non-proliferation, the regulatory framework for safety and security, and radiation protection. His Government had ratified the main legal instruments concerning non-proliferation, nuclear safety and security and radiation protection.

349. Niger welcomed the signature, in January 2011, of its CPF for 2010–2015. Activities would be focused on the priority areas of nuclear safety and security, human health, animal resources and agriculture, sustainable energy development, improved water resources management and human resources development in the area of nuclear science and technology. The projects to be undertaken were consistent with the accelerated development and poverty reduction strategy adopted by the Government of Niger to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

350. His Government was working with PACT and other development partners to implement its national cancer control programme. It had set up a cancer treatment centre and a radiology department was being built with Agency assistance. The department would be operational in the near future and would provide a reference centre for the comprehensive treatment of cancer patients in the subregion.

351. Niger would become the second largest uranium producer by 2013. His Government was mindful of its responsibilities towards the international community and would take all measures to ensure that uranium was mined in accordance with national and international standards.

352. For Niger, like many African countries, electricity production remained an ongoing concern and its shortage an obstacle to development. He called for the Agency's assistance in the development of an integrated nuclear power programme to meet the demand for electricity in the subregion. Countries that already used the technology should encourage training and technology transfer to enable more African countries to add nuclear power to their energy mix.

353. More than 80% of the working population in Niger worked in the farming sector, and his country therefore attached great importance to the technical cooperation programmes aimed at increasing animal and crop production. The use of nuclear techniques to improve crop varieties and nutrition would help to meet challenges associated with food security and the fight against poverty.

354. Niger was also using isotopic techniques to study the silting-up of the Niger river.

355. Lastly, he commended the Agency for its assistance under regional and subregional programmes and AFRA, to which Niger remained fully committed.

356. Mr CURIA (Argentina) said that, following the unfortunate events at Fukushima, his country had not changed its decision to continue the resurgence of its nuclear activities. However, the accident had drawn attention to the importance of nuclear power plant safety in the face of natural catastrophes.

357. Despite delays, construction of the Atucha-2 unit was nearing completion and connection to the national grid was anticipated in 2012. The project had yielded valuable experience and specialized training that would facilitate further development of the national nuclear power programme. Hydrodynamic testing of the fuel elements fabricated for Atucha-2 had been conducted successfully using engineering developed by the Argentine National Atomic Energy Commission and the first shipments of fuel had been sent to the plant. At the same time, the supply of heavy water from the Arroyito production plant was continuing in order to provide the 600 tonnes needed for the initial inventory of Atucha-2.

358. The tasks related to life extension and increasing the generating capacity of the Embalse nuclear power plant were progressing. All the preparatory work had been completed, including recent finalization of the associated contractual aspects. As with the work relating to the Atucha-2 project, high priority would be given to the participation of domestic industry.

359. There had been significant progress in construction of the CAREM (Argentine-designed modular plant) prototype. The milestones reached included finalization of the support infrastructure, the implementation of preparatory work at the site selected, and preparation of the technical specifications of the reactor building and the pressure vessel. In addition, preliminary site studies had been performed for the future construction of a 150 MW commercial CAREM reactor in Argentina's north-western Formosa province.

360. Argentina, which planned to incorporate some 6000 MW(e) of nuclear power over the next 20 years, had continued to evaluate the various technologies available for its new nuclear plants. The fourth Argentine nuclear power plant, Atucha-3, had already received parliamentary approval.

361. Work was continuing on the resumption of gaseous diffusion uranium enrichment at the Pilcaniyeu Technological Complex and also on preliminary studies of centrifuge and laser isotope separation technologies. Argentina's enrichment-related activities were intended to meet future domestic demand for LEU fuel for use: in its heavy water moderated natural uranium power reactors (an Argentine technology used successfully since 2001 with much improvement in burnup and savings in fuel costs); in the country's six research reactors; potentially in experimental reactors exported to other countries; in indigenous CAREM reactors in the medium term; and in reactors that might be added to the Argentine grid in the future.

362. In the field of uranium mining, exploration of the country's geological potential was ongoing. Approvals had been granted for the environmental remediation of former uranium mine sites prior to the restart of operations. Funding assistance was being provided in that regard by the World Bank in the form of a loan. In addition, an investment project for the remediation of production operations at the San Rafael Mining Industrial Complex had been approved.

363. With regard to nuclear technology applications, particularly for human health, the Government had been increasing its support for public nuclear medicine centres by providing them with the latest equipment. The centres undertook treatment and research and provided training for staff from Argentina and other Latin American countries.

364. Argentina had continued to satisfy the demand for molybdenum-99, both at home and in other Latin American countries. The radiopharmaceutical lutetium-177 with a specific activity of 23.7 Ci/mg had been obtained for the first time in Latin America, enabling labelled monoclonal antibodies and peptides to be obtained for the treatment of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and cerebral gliomas. Furthermore, Argentina's production cyclotron was already capable of producing gallium-67 with a national radiochemical module for injection quality.

365. An important milestone concerning radioisotope production in particular, but also nuclear technology research and development, had been the decision to construct a new experimental reactor, the RA-10, co-designed with Brazil, with the necessary power and capacity to meet future requirements in that area.

366. Activities had been stepped up in connection with nuclear power and research reactors, the fuel cycle, spent fuel and radioactive waste management, and industrial applications of nuclear technology, as well as basic scientific research related to nuclear activities. Specialized training was being provided with particular emphasis on nuclear reactors, the fuel cycle, radiochemistry and medical physics.

367. Argentina took an active part in international efforts to develop reactors and innovative fuel cycles that enhanced operational safety, reduced the generation of radioactive waste and minimized nuclear proliferation risks. Of particular note in that regard was INPRO, to which his country regularly contributed experts and extrabudgetary funds.

368. Argentina remained open to establishing and strengthening cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. At the multilateral level, it was an active participant in ARCAL and the Agency's technical cooperation programme, to which it made extrabudgetary contributions. Through its collaboration in INPRO, Argentina contributed to activities on seismic risks for nuclear facilities. At the bilateral level, it implemented specific cooperation agreements with 32 countries relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

369. He reiterated Argentina's condolences to Japan with respect to the Fukushima accident, as a result of which the difficult, lengthy, but essential, process of reviewing the pertinent nuclear safety standards and mechanisms had begun.

370. Argentina assigned special importance to nuclear, radiological, transport and waste safety, and to international cooperation in that area. It was vital that joint efforts be made to ensure a more solid, effective and sustainable infrastructure in that regard.

371. The Agency's nuclear safety standards should be quantitative, objective, measurable and comparable and should be adopted by consensus. In that regard, the co-participation of relevant organizations in the UN system was desirable where possible.

372. International safeguards, like nuclear and radiation safety, were especially important for facilitating nuclear expansion. They should be developed in an atmosphere of cooperation and dialogue between the Agency and Member States and be guided by the principles of non-discrimination, quality, technical excellence and objectivity.

373. He drew attention to the fact that 2011 was the 20-year anniversary of the founding of ABACC. An event marking the occasion had been held in his country in July, attended by the foreign ministers of Argentina and Brazil and the Agency's Director General, at which the region's commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, non-proliferation and the development of regional safeguards had been underscored. His Government attached great importance to the cooperation between ABACC and the Agency and urged both sides to redouble their efforts in that connection.

374. Ms BOYLE (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization) said that the Agency and the Commission were key components in the web of multilateral institutions working towards cooperative security in the realm of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The interaction between the two in 2011 had been unprecedented.

375. The tragic consequences of the March 2011 earthquake in Japan had been a stark reminder that unexpected events could arise which tested capacities to react quickly and efficiently, requiring work

to be reprioritized at short notice. The earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant had triggered all elements of the verification system designed to ensure compliance with the CTBT and had served as an unprecedented, high-intensity stress test for the Commission to react and share data with CTBT States signatories. It had also proved that the Commission's International Monitoring System (IMS) and the transboundary data and data products produced by its International Data Centre had wide-ranging civil and scientific applications of direct relevance to disaster mitigation. The earthquake and several thousand aftershocks had been conclusively detected by dozens of IMS seismic stations worldwide. Data generated by those stations had contributed to rapid alerts issued by tsunami warning centres in the Pacific region. Furthermore, infrasound detection had provided evidence of explosions at the nuclear power plant. Radionuclide and noble gas monitoring stations had provided independent, reliable, real-time, accurate and verified data on the global impact of releases from the plant. Following the first detection of enhanced radioactivity levels at the Takasaki station 200 km south-west of the power plant, 40 other monitoring stations had detected radionuclides released from the plant. In addition, 19 noble gas monitoring systems had detected radioactive emissions related to the event. The emissions had been detected by all the CTBT radionuclide measurement systems in the northern hemisphere and a few in the southern hemisphere. The Commission's atmospheric monitoring tool had predicted with a high degree of accuracy which stations and countries were going to be affected by the release. That tool was central to CTBT verification and provided information on where the release might have originated and on the dispersion of materials, allowing accurate predictions as to when and where detection might be expected.

376. Data related to the nuclear accident had immediately been made available to CTBT States signatories, who had recognized that the sharing of information could contribute to national, regional and global response efforts, including the mitigation of damage to human health and the environment. The information gathered from the IMS radionuclide network had helped assess the global radiation situation and the possible conditions of the reactor. Initial estimates of the radioactivity released had also been made on the basis of IMS data. The information provided by the Commission had served as an independent source for other organizations to assess the situation.

377. The Commission had subsequently held six technical briefings in which States and international organizations had been invited to participate. Together with other international organizations, the Commission had been able to provide a more accurate picture of the situation for national governments and the general public. The exchange of data and cooperation between the Agency and the Commission had therefore been important. The Commission's role in the Inter-Agency Committee on Radiological and Nuclear Emergencies was also significant and should be formalized.

378. The IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety was an important step in strengthening the global nuclear safety framework and the mechanisms of relevant international organizations to ensure that necessary assistance was made available promptly after a disaster. Also important was the recently published UN system-wide study on the implications of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, which recognized the importance of the Commission's global monitoring network of radionuclide stations in nuclear emergencies. The Commission would be represented by its Executive Secretary at the High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security to be held in New York the following day.

379. The Commission stood ready to continue its cooperation with the Agency and other relevant organizations by providing expertise and data for disaster mitigation. Synergies between organizations and existing monitoring systems needed to be enhanced, with due emphasis on the need for cost-effectiveness and the utilization of existing expertise. Institutional cooperation and specialized knowledge-sharing between regional and international organizations also needed to be fostered and maximized.

380. Over the preceding year, the Commission had further advanced the objectives of the CTBT and enhanced its verification regime. 182 States had now signed the Treaty. Guinea was currently in the process of depositing its instrument of ratification with the UN Secretary-General, thus bringing the number of ratifications to 155. More ratifications and signatures would be forthcoming shortly. That testified to the commitment by the vast majority of the international community to giving the Treaty full legal standing. Nine of the 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty had not yet ratified it, thus delaying its entry into force. Collective efforts had to be made to secure the remaining ratifications while promoting universal adherence. The 7th Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT would be held in New York on 23 September, coinciding with the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty.

381. The IMS was over 80% complete. All signatory States had equal access to all verification-related information, with 120 States making use of that opportunity. Scientists and experts in over 1200 academic and scientific institutions worldwide had free and transparent access to the data. The value of the system, its data and data products had been highlighted during the “CTBT: Science and Technology 2011” conference held in June. The conference had brought together more than 750 participants — the vast majority of whom were scientists — for an in-depth intellectual debate on scientific issues related to the CTBT’s verification system.

382. Safeguarding the Treaty, its entry into force and its verification regime remained of utmost importance for global and regional peace and security and for safety, human welfare and development. The necessary capacities and knowledge base had to be maintained and developed to ensure that the next generation was equipped to achieve those objectives, namely through training in disarmament, monitoring and verification. The objective of the Commission’s Capacity Development Initiative was to enable all States to participate equally in the implementation of the Treaty and benefit from its verification regime. The restructuring, consolidation and integration of training activities under that Initiative would help States build and maintain the necessary capacity to overcome the technical, scientific, political and legal challenges facing non-proliferation and disarmament. More than 220 people from nearly 80 countries had participated — either in person or online — in the course entitled “Strengthening Verification, Enhancing Security: The Science and Political Significance of the CTBT”. Participants had included staff of CTBT national data centres, station operators, diplomats, university students and academics. An advanced course on CTBT verification technologies was being planned for later that year. It was hoped that the Capacity Development Initiative would inspire a new generation of policy and technical experts to pursue careers in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament. Investment in the education of future generations and continued interaction among the international community and intergovernmental institutions would serve to attain a safer and more secure world.

383. The CTBT provided a platform upon which to measure progress towards multilateralism in arms control and international relations. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation depended on increased transparency between States regarding security issues, enhanced cooperation on verification activities, and the implementation of security and confidence-building measures, particularly in regions prone to conflict. The CTBT and its verification regime embodied those principles both in letter and in spirit.

384. Mr MAHJOUR (Arab Atomic Energy Agency) said that, with the accession of Morocco and Mauritania, the AAEA now had 15 Member States from the continents of Asia and Africa.

385. The AAEA was committed to a cooperation agreement with the Agency (INFCIRC/25/Add.6) under which several joint programmes had been implemented. It hoped that such cooperation would continue as Arab States took advantage of the peaceful uses of atomic energy for their socio-economic development.

386. In addition, the AAEA looked forward to assistance to the Arab countries from the advanced States with regard to teaching, training and capacity building of human resources. In that connection, he expressed gratitude to the Republic of Korea for its efforts to help the AAEA in conducting training programmes on nuclear safety and security, radiation protection and nuclear legislation.

387. The Israeli nuclear capabilities posed a threat to the States of the Middle East and the AAEA called for pressure to be exerted on Israel to submit all its installations to Agency control and to accede to all the relevant nuclear non-proliferation instruments. That would contribute not only to peace and security but also to aspirations to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone, following in the steps of those created in Africa, Asia and South America.

388. He emphasized that the peoples of the Middle East had the right to enjoy life without the threat of atomic weapons. Everyone had a responsibility to work towards achieving security in the region and a world free of nuclear weapons.

389. Mr MARCUZZO DO CANTO (Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials) said that 2011 had been a very special year for ABACC as it had celebrated its 20th anniversary. During those years, its principal mandate had been to safeguard all nuclear facilities and material in Argentina and Brazil. One of the events held to celebrate the occasion had been an important meeting in July in Buenos Aires, attended by the foreign ministers of both countries, the Agency's Director General and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of ABACC. In their speeches, both foreign ministers had noted the unique support provided by ABACC to the international non-proliferation regime and its important role in promoting cooperation activities in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They had also reaffirmed the wish of their governments to continue strengthening ABACC. Director General Amano had stated at the meeting that ABACC had been a great success and that the Agency was proud to be its partner. On 18 July, the UN Secretary-General had congratulated the governments of Argentina and Brazil, saying that ABACC had made a very substantial contribution to regional nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by providing a sound regional framework for the application of Agency safeguards, and had facilitated the entry into force of the Tlatelolco Treaty. ABACC's 20th anniversary would also be celebrated with an international seminar in Rio de Janeiro in November and a commemorative stand in the VIC rotunda.

390. The success of ABACC and the independence of its conclusions could be attributed in part to the ongoing technical training of its human resources and its use of the latest equipment. In addition, its relationship with the Agency, which had been honed over time, allowed both institutions to work alongside one another with great objectivity. The mechanisms developed for their joint activities, such as the joint use of equipment, also allowed them to optimize their efforts.

391. The ABACC safeguards system was unique in the world and respected by the international community, as proven by the Nuclear Suppliers Group's acceptance of the system as an alternative to the additional protocol. There had also been various articles published around the world highlighting the success of the system and suggesting that it could be used as a model for other areas. It was therefore with satisfaction and anticipation that ABACC had received the news that the Director General intended to hold a special forum on the possible contribution of agencies such as Euratom and ABACC in setting up similar arrangements in other parts of the world. Such arrangements clearly demonstrated the political will of the countries involved to give total transparency to their nuclear programmes. The mutual trust built facilitated good understanding between the parties and created the necessary conditions for overcoming technological challenges, aiding constructive collaboration on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation policies and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, the ABACC model obviously could not be transposed directly to other regions — the geopolitical characteristics and cultural differences needed

to be taken into account in each case. The idea of forming regional agencies, making use of the ‘neighbours watching neighbours’ concept, was definitely worth considering.

392. Despite the incident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, many countries were still considering nuclear expansion. The latest Agency projections predicted there would be approximately 90 new reactors worldwide by 2030. Such growth would pose great challenges in the field of safeguards and non-proliferation. One way of facing future challenges would be to promote the creation of independent and reliable regional systems that could operate in coordination with the Agency, thus optimizing the resources available. ABACC’s success could serve as a guide in that regard.

393. As a result of the 99 inspections performed by ABACC inspectors at nuclear facilities in Brazil and Argentina in 2010, it could be confirmed that all nuclear material and other items under safeguards in those two countries had been used exclusively for peaceful purposes and had been adequately accounted for. ABACC had found no indication of non-compliance with the commitments undertaken by both countries.

394. The effectiveness of safeguards could be improved with scientific and technological developments. The use of three-dimensional laser images, environmental samples and satellite images could strengthen safeguards activities and make them less intrusive. ABACC had developed policies to train its staff and constantly update their knowledge so as to keep abreast of such advances.

395. The exchange of experience and knowledge between ABACC and other bodies involved in safeguards — for example the Agency, Euratom, the United States Department of Energy, the European Safeguards Research and Development Association and the Institute of Nuclear Materials Management — was extremely beneficial to all. ABACC thanked them all for 20 years of cooperation and joint growth.

396. A determining factor in the success enjoyed by ABACC was the ongoing support of the governments of Brazil and Argentina, demonstrated through many joint declarations, their financial support, the preservation of ABACC’s institutional independence, the support of both countries’ resident representatives to the Agency and ABACC’s technical cooperation with the laboratories of various organizations and institutions in both countries.

397. ABACC was committed to applying safeguards in Brazil and Argentina in a transparent manner, maintaining the necessary information confidentiality in accordance with the framework defined by the Quadripartite Agreement.

The meeting rose at 9.25 p.m.