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Plenary

Record of the Sixth Meeting

Held at Headquarters, Vienna, on Wednesday, 28 September 2016, at 3 p.m.

President: Dato' Adnan OTHMAN (Malaysia)
Later: Mr NAJAFI (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Later: Mr HASANS (Latvia)
Later: Mr BAILEY (Canada)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(60)/INF/6.

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
ARASIA	Co-operative Agreement for Arab States in Asia 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
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
COP21	Twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CRPs	coordinated research projects
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CSC	Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FORO	Ibero–American Forum of Radiological and Nuclear Regulatory Agencies
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GICNT	Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism
HEU	high enriched uranium
HRD	human resource development

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

ICSANT	International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism
IFNEC	International Framework for Nuclear Energy Cooperation
imPACT	integrated missions of PACT
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
INLEX	International Expert Group on Nuclear Liability
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IPPAS	International Physical Protection Advisory Service
IRMIS	International Radiation Monitoring Information System
IRRS	Integrated Regulatory Review Service
ITDB	Incident and Trafficking Database
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
Joint Division	Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture
LEU	low enriched uranium
MAED	Model for Analysis of Energy Demand
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEA	Nuclear Energy Agency
NPP	nuclear power plant
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NSS	Nuclear Security Summit
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone

Abbreviations used in this record (continued):

OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
PHWR	pressurized heavy water reactor
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
P5+1	China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and United States of America plus Germany
RANET	Response and Assistance Network
ReNuAL	Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories
S&T	science and technology
SALTO	Safety Aspects of Long Term Operation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIT	sterile insect technique
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

7. General debate and Annual Report for 2015 (continued)
(GC(60)/9 and Additional Information)

1. Mr VINHAS (Brazil) said that Brazil, a founding Member State, had supported the Agency actively since its inception and had recognized the potential role of nuclear technology in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agency was uniquely positioned to continue to play a central role in the achievement of the SDGs, as part of its broader agenda to promote peaceful nuclear applications.

2. Brazil greatly valued ARCAL, which, as an exemplary model of South-South cooperation, had been translating nuclear technologies into tangible benefits for the region since its entry into force in 2005. Brazil had cooperated with Argentina in the construction of a 30-megawatt multipurpose research reactor, which would ensure Brazil's self-sufficiency in the production of radioisotopes for human health, industry and agriculture, and would have other important applications, such as research and testing of materials.

3. Preparatory to the Seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the CNS, Brazil stressed, in its national report, that its nuclear installations continued to meet all of the Convention's objectives and its National Nuclear Energy Commission had taken steps to incorporate the Vienna Declaration's key concepts into the country's national regulations.

4. Brazil fully supported the implementation of safeguards as one of the Agency's statutory functions and urged the Agency to continue to ensure that States met their obligations and to operate strictly within the established legal framework, duly taking into account the differing scope and safeguards measures derived from the distinct categories of agreements entered into by Member States.

5. It supported the Secretariat's ongoing activities to update the State-level approaches and reiterated that the process must be rigorously based on the supplementary document, on the assurances given by the Secretariat and on the safeguards resolutions. The discussion on the State-level concept provided the Agency with an opportunity to promote accountability and transparency and the closer involvement of Member States in the development of new policies.

6. As a long-standing advocate of a diplomatic solution to the issue of Iran's nuclear programme and of the normalization of Iran's relations with the Agency, Brazil had welcomed the attainment of implementation day in January 2016 and it stressed that the measures set out in the JCPOA had been designed for its implementation only and did not set precedents for any other State.

7. Recalling its experience in promoting nuclear security at major public events, such as the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, with the invaluable cooperation of other States and the Agency, Brazil reiterated its readiness to continue such cooperation.

8. Firmly convinced that nuclear security could not be separated from the international community's broader efforts to promote nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Brazil looked forward to the forthcoming International Conference on Nuclear Security, and was ready to work on an ambitious, forward-looking ministerial declaration. It regretted that the CTBT had not yet entered into force, twenty years after being opened for signature. While Brazil welcomed voluntary moratoria on nuclear explosive testing by nuclear-armed States, they were not a substitute for the CTBT and Brazil therefore called on all States, in particular the remaining eight

Annex II States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay. Noting the widespread condemnation of the recent nuclear test conducted by the DPRK, Brazil rejected nuclear doctrines that embodied the determination of nuclear-weapon States to maintain and modernize their nuclear arsenals. Such policies clearly contravened the letter and the spirit of the CTBT and undermined its relevance and credibility.

9. While the long-sought goal of a world free of nuclear-weapons remained elusive, Brazil had been heartened by some encouraging developments in 2016, in particular the recommendation to convene a conference to start negotiations on a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. In 2016, Brazil had celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of ABACC, demonstrating what could be achieved through transparency and confidence-building between neighbouring countries. The Brazilian-Argentine experience and the Treaty of Tlatelolco constituted significant references for the establishment of NWFZs in the Middle East, South Asia and elsewhere.

10. Mr MARAFI (Kuwait), considering nuclear energy to be a complementary rather than an alternative source of energy, said that Kuwait had cooperated with the various departments in order to build its national capacities and institutions to implement projects on the use of nuclear energy.

11. As part of Kuwait's support for scientific and development projects and initiatives in developing countries, it would announce shortly the 2015 and 2016 laureates of the award for the best R&D initiatives in the areas of health, nutrition and education in African countries.

12. Kuwait had always accorded special attention to TCP activities and appreciated, in particular, TCP achievements in Asia and the Pacific, which had comprised regional workshops and training. Visiting IAEA experts had led local training courses in Kuwait, which had implemented projects on nuclear S&T applications and had participated in regional projects on nuclear medicine and emergency preparedness and response. Furthermore, its CPF for 2018–2019 provided for projects on the peaceful uses of nuclear power. A cooperation agreement on nuclear medicine had been signed by the IAEA and Jaber Al-Ahmad Centre for Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging in order to build the Centre's capacities and promote cooperation between the parties. It had been gratified that the target of €31 million for ReNuAL had been achieved, which would enhance the provision of state-of-the-art services to Member States in the form of research programmes and the various activities of nuclear applications laboratories.

13. Kuwait had fulfilled its CNS obligations and its national report, to be submitted at the Seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties, reviewed decisions on the safety of radioactive materials, the reform of the Committee on Radiological and Nuclear Emergencies and the formation of a rapid response team. Kuwait reasserted the importance that it ascribed to accession by other States to the amendment to the CPPNM, which would reduce the risk of nuclear terrorism.

14. While affirming the right of all States to produce, develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the NPT, Kuwait called on Iran to increase cooperation and transparency with the IAEA and respond to its enquiries in order to dispel fears and doubts over the nature of its nuclear programme and address all outstanding issues. It also called on Iran to ratify and implement the additional protocol, thereby enabling the Agency to give credible assurances that there were no undeclared nuclear materials and activities in Iran. It hoped that Iran would accede to the CNS and would thus draw on the Agency's expertise for Iranian NPPs on the Arab Gulf, which would reassure the States in the region about the safety of Iran's peaceful facilities.

15. Kuwait regretted that, despite the commitment of all States in the region to the NPT and to implementing CSA measures and systems, Israel continued to decline to sign the NPT and to place its facilities under the Agency's safeguards system, although its research reactors were obsolete and known to be used to produce nuclear weapons that threatened regional security. It considered that

Israel's position constituted a fundamental obstacle to efforts to establish an NWFZ in the Middle East and imperilled regional, and consequently international, security and stability. Accordingly, Kuwait decried the repeated postponement of the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and of WMDs in the Middle East.

16. Kuwait reaffirmed its continuing support for the IAEA's pioneering role and contribution to the promotion of States' sustainable development, by addressing multifarious crises and climate change and assisting Member States in making optimal use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes in the quest for peace, security, safety and prosperity for the peoples of the world.

17. Mr LEAN (Cambodia) recalled that his country had become a Member State of the Agency in 1958, two years after the Agency's establishment and had remained a Member until 2003; it and had become a Member again in 2009. Cooperation with the Agency had helped Cambodia significantly to push forward its many development goals, for which Cambodia was grateful.

18. Of the various Cambodian institutions that worked closely with the Agency, it was the Ministry of Mines and Energy that served as the competent nuclear agency and contact point. Other ministries and agencies worked with the Agency on issues such as law, the safety and security of nuclear materials and the application of nuclear technology in the health, industrial and agricultural sectors.

19. Although nuclear energy was not widely used in the country, Cambodia was fully committed to nuclear safety, security and safeguards nationally, regionally and internationally. It had thus been party to many Agency agreements and had signed the NPT in 1972, and the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in 1997. The Cambodian constitution explicitly prohibited the manufacture, use and storage of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Cambodia was also party to the additional protocol and small quantities protocol, which further strengthened its commitment to safeguards, and it hoped to accede in the near future to other conventions and treaties.

20. In recent years, through the Agency's TCP, Cambodia had implemented nuclear technology projects in the agricultural sector in such areas as soil fertility, crop management and livestock production. Under the TCP the National Cancer Centre had been established, cancer treatment and nuclear medicine had been enhanced, and water resources management had been improved. In particular, the programme had provided instrumental support in the establishment of a future nuclear regulatory authority and a nuclear law would be enacted in the near future.

21. Although Cambodia did not yet have any NPPs, it was firmly committed to the development of soft infrastructure, including the necessary regulatory framework and capacity building, and the establishment of safety and security regulations and standards. It was grateful to the Agency for affording opportunities for staff to train as inspectors and to enrol in postgraduate courses. Those individuals would be a great asset to Cambodia in the future.

22. Commending the Agency for its cooperation to date, Cambodia looked forward to further cooperation in the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, which would be of great benefit to the country's development.

23. Mr KOSTOV (Bulgaria) said that Bulgaria viewed the Agency's safeguards mechanism as crucial to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to the implementation of the NPT and, accordingly, called for the universalization of the NPT and of the additional protocol.

24. Fully supporting the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East, Bulgaria urged all States in that region to renew their efforts to convene a conference on the subject and to involve all stakeholders. Regretting the decision by the League of Arab States to place the issue of Israeli nuclear capabilities on the agenda of the General Conference, Bulgaria asserted that trust and cooperation

were the only means of achieving the desired consensus and progress towards implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

25. Bulgaria regarded the JCPOA as a diplomatic achievement of historic significance. It clearly demonstrated that active diplomacy and political determination always brought positive results, even on long-deadlocked issues, and had opened the door to the normalization of Iran's relations with the world. The full, verifiable and irreversible implementation of the JCPOA by Iran was of paramount importance as it was the only way for Iran to convince the international community that its nuclear programme was designed for peaceful purposes only. While calling on Iran to ratify the additional protocol to its safeguards agreement, Bulgaria urged all States to ratify the additional protocol if they had not yet done so.

26. Voicing serious concern at the DPRK's nuclear weapon and missile programmes, including its continued conduct of nuclear tests, and its decision to cease cooperation with the Agency, Bulgaria called on that country to return to full compliance with all of its NPT and Agency safeguards obligations, provide the Agency with access to individuals, documentation, equipment and facilities, and abandon all nuclear and ballistic missile activities, including its uranium enrichment programme, completely, verifiably and irreversibly.

27. Bulgaria commended the Agency for its sustained support for HRD, training, stakeholder involvement and management in new Member States and States with established nuclear power programmes; it had taken appropriate steps to become a member of regional safety network to be established under the Global Nuclear Safety Network, mentioned in the Annual Report for 2015.

28. Bulgaria appreciated the Agency's continued analysis of the relevant technical aspects of the Fukushima Daiichi accident and its sharing of the lessons learned with the wider nuclear community. Earlier that month, Bulgaria's Nuclear Regulatory Agency, in conjunction with the Agency, had held a seminar, attended by many Bulgarian organizations, at which a report by the Director General on the accident had been delivered.

29. The IRRS follow-up mission to Bulgaria's Nuclear Regulatory Agency in April 2016 had concluded that the Nuclear Regulatory Agency had made significant progress in addressing the findings of the 2013 IRRS mission, it had displayed commitment to the effective implementation of the Agency's safety standards, it was in a strong position to address any major regulatory challenges arising in the future and its staff had been open, transparent and fully supportive during the discussions.

30. In July and August 2016, a pre-SALTO peer-review mission at unit 5 of Kozloduy NPP, the first in a series of peer reviews of the long-term operation of units 5 and 6, had concluded that the management and staff of Kozloduy NPP had carried out considerable work to prepare the unit for long-term operation. A peer-review mission had been scheduled for unit 6 in 2018, and in 2020 a SALTO mission would be held for both units. In January 2016, the Nuclear Regulatory Agency had issued a ten-year licence to Kozloduy NPP for the operation of a spent-fuel dry-storage facility, the storage of spent fuel from WWER-440 reactors on-site and the transport of spent fuel from spent fuel ponds near the reactors to the new storage facility.

31. In 2016, several high-level Agency officials visiting Bulgaria had discussed knowledge management, nuclear applications, safety assessment of NPPs and the participation of Bulgarian specialists in Agency activities in those areas. Meetings with the Minister of Energy, the Parliamentary Committee on Energy and scientists from the Technical University and the visit to Kozloduy NPP had boosted understanding of Bulgaria's nuclear energy issues and had enhanced cooperation with the Agency in that field.

32. In July 2016, the Director of the Joint Division had visited Bulgaria and had met representatives of national agencies and institutions that applied nuclear techniques in agriculture and livestock breeding. Bulgaria thanked the Secretariat for its prompt assistance in April and May in mitigating and preventing the spread of lumpy skin disease in cattle, exemplifying the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes in agriculture and the Agency's key role in that field.

33. Commending the Agency for its contribution to global efforts to secure nuclear facilities and to ensure the security of radioactive material in use, storage or transport, Bulgaria recalled the visit, in October 2015, by the Director of the Division of Nuclear Security, on the occasion of the launch, at the University of National and World Economy in Sofia, of the Master's degree course on nuclear security, based on a practical agreement signed by the Director General and the relevant Bulgarian authorities in 2014.

34. In accordance with its CPF, Bulgaria had participated in useful projects in the nuclear medicine and nuclear applications during the most recent TC cycle. The visit of the Country Officer for Bulgaria under the TCP in early 2016 had contributed to the smooth start of the new cycle and his discussions with representatives of interested institutions had helped them organize the beginning of work in a fruitful manner. In its conviction that the TCP helped Member States to identify and meet future energy needs, and to improve nuclear safety and security worldwide, Bulgaria had participated actively in TC projects in Europe, and many Bulgarian specialists and scientists had attended Agency-organized events.

35. Convinced of the importance of promoting the development and application of nuclear science as a tool for technological and economic growth, Bulgaria had participated actively in the work of relevant international scientific organizations, including the Russian Federation's Joint Institute for Nuclear Research and CERN.

36. In conclusion, he expressed his country's confidence in the work of the Director General and his staff, and assured them of Bulgaria's continued support.

37. Mr GROSSI (Argentina), congratulating the Agency on its 60th anniversary, said that Argentina had worked with the Agency from the outset through its forward-looking National Atomic Energy Commission, which had stayed the course despite the difficulties faced by the country.

38. Following the instatement of the new government, a Ministry of Energy and Mining and a Nuclear Energy Sub-Secretariat had been established, construction had begun on the country's fourth and fifth NPPs, technological innovation projects such as the nationally designed CAREM modular reactor and the research reactor RA10 were being promoted and the lifetime of an NPP was being extended. Action had been taken to update Argentina's safety protocols and systems, build capacity, procure equipment, train the safety personnel tasked with protecting nuclear facilities and build nuclear forensic and detection capacities in conjunction with neighbouring States and the international community. Argentina's nuclear policy therefore continued to rest on commitment to the highest standards of nuclear safety and its nuclear regulatory authority continued to take up the challenges arising from further implementation of Argentina's nuclear plan.

39. Earlier in the year, a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation on NPP construction in 2017 and 2019 had been signed with China's National Energy Administration. Argentina's heavy water industrial plant would resume operation shortly in order to supply the three nuclear power reactors and the initial load for the future PHWR.

40. Argentina had become an international market provider of nuclear technology, for it had the capacity to meet the growing local and regional demand for radioisotopes, test fuel and material irradiation, use neutron beams for basic research and develop various applications. It had conducted

the requisite environmental impact studies for the controlled lifetime extension of one of its NPPs and had made great strides in building the CAREM 25 prototype, which had been designed to meet market demand for nuclear power reactors capable of meeting stakeholders' differing energy generation and supply needs. Accordingly, contracts had been signed in August for the construction of the balance of plant and an invitation to tender had been issued for engineering work on the CAREM 25 reactor building.

41. Argentina continued to give priority to building its national human capacity, to applying the highest equipment procurement standards, to modernizing production and health care facilities and to establishing new nuclear medicine centres. It had been working on SIT and pest control nationally and under ARCAL in order to control mosquito-borne diseases. Research into the use of SIT to control Zika-, dengue- and chikungunya-carrying *Aedes aegypti* was under way. Argentina had participated actively in IAEA-led CRPs on food and agriculture and was enacting legislation to broaden the range of food products that might be irradiated for domestic and foreign consumption.

42. It had chaired the NSG for the previous two years and looked forward to the CNS Seventh Review Meeting, to which the Buenos Aires technical meeting of regulators had made invaluable contributions that could ensure its success. It would host the forthcoming meetings of the IFNEC Executive Committee and Steering Group, the Latin American Nuclear Energy Stakeholders Conference and the 53rd meeting of the *Joint NEA/IAEA Group on Uranium.* Such meetings promoted and broadened knowledge of world uranium resource estimates, supply and demand.

43. Argentina was proud to hold the presidency of FORO, which strove to contribute to nuclear and radiological safety and to nuclear security in Member States and throughout the region.

44. Stressing that safeguards implementation activities must be efficient, effective and technically sound, Argentina highlighted its safeguards approach to the verification of spent fuel transferred between its new facilities. It stressed the importance ascribed to ABACC, then celebrating its 25th anniversary, and hoped that greater cooperation between ABACC and the IAEA would contribute tangibly to effectiveness and efficiency gains in safeguards implementation. It also highlighted the Agency's role as the primary nuclear security stakeholder and reasserted its government's commitment to combating all forms of terrorism and to participating actively in nuclear security meetings. It welcomed the entry into force of the amendment to the CPPNM and urged States that had not yet done so to accede thereto.

45. Considering that the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* would trigger action to make economic, human and social development sustainable, Argentina had laid emphasis at all levels on innovation and on cooperation with the international community and would invest in nuclear technological progress, including nuclear power and applications for peaceful purposes, as part of that renewed effort to achieve sustainable development.

46. Mr SNIR (Israel) said that Israel recognized and supported the Agency's central role in enhancing nuclear safety and security and looked forward to the International Conference on Nuclear Security, which would significantly strengthen the global nuclear security architecture and strengthen international dialogue on that issue. Nuclear security was a matter of paramount significance to Israel, owing to the sombre reality in the Middle East, which highlighted the need for greater regional and international collaboration in combating nuclear terrorism.

47. Israel had followed the Agency's guidance on the security of nuclear facilities and the protection of nuclear materials. It had enforced regulations in line with the CPPNM and its amendment and had fulfilled all of its commitments under the Convention, including the submission of a report on its incorporation in national law, and had upheld the highest standard of physical protection measures in its nuclear centres. Advanced security means and procedures had been employed in domestic and

international transport and in import and export processes, in keeping with Israel's international obligations and its national legislation.

48. Instability in the Middle East had recently worsened owing to the violent activity of non-State actors, supported and funded by countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The access of non-State actors to materials that might be used for unconventional weapons, combined with the motivation to conduct large-scale acts of violence, posed a clear and undeniable threat to global nuclear security.

49. In his capacity as head of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission, he called on Member States in the region to join forces in tackling that severe challenge. Israel had repeatedly underlined its willingness to cooperate with any State in the Middle East to strengthen security and safety. He stressed that Syria remained under investigation for its secretive pursuit of nuclear weapons and, in 2011, had been declared by the Board of Governors to be in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations. The Agency's questions on that matter remained unanswered.

50. While Israel had welcomed the Arab Group's decision to refrain from submitting a draft resolution on Israeli nuclear capabilities, it regretted the Group's request to place that issue on the agenda, which had led to politicized and irrelevant discussions. In considering the instability of the region, Israel harboured serious concerns regarding Iran's nuclear programme. Despite the recent agreement, Iran remained a destabilizing force in the Middle East and its support of terrorist groups and its long-range ballistic missile programmes posed a real and growing threat. Steps must be taken to counter Iran's blatant concealment and duplicity, as demonstrated in its well-publicized weaponization activities. Iran's commitment to the JCPOA must be subjected to a careful evaluation that included adherence to its international obligations, and transparency in its actions. Iran had continued to threaten Israel directly and through proxy organizations, such as Hizbullah.

51. International peace and security continued to be jeopardized by those and other actions, including the recent nuclear test by the DPRK. Israel condemned that act and joined the international community in expressing concern about the danger posed by the DPRK to regional and global stability. A strong and clear message must be sent to the DPRK and other States that such actions were unacceptable and would not be tolerated.

52. Israel continued to participate actively in the TCP in various fields, including energy, health and agriculture. In 2015, it had hosted an interregional training workshop on quality assurance in radiotherapy, attended by 39 representatives from 13 countries. The workshop had taken place in a state-of-the-art training centre in Israel, which had performed ground-breaking work in simulation-based medical education. In its belief that all Member States should be able to benefit from such training events, Israel had decided to increase its support for the TCP significantly in the coming year.

53. In demonstration of its commitment to nuclear safety and security, Israel had donated 14 radiation detectors to the Agency's Division of Nuclear Security for use by Member States. Israel continued to participate in various emergency response exercises, understanding the need for international collaboration in nuclear security and safety. Those exercises had allowed Israel to apply in practice its coordinating ability, quick response time and emergency mechanisms, and to display its willingness to assist other States in the region.

54. Since joining the Agency in 1957, Israel had been committed to the Agency and its important mission. Inspired by that commitment, Israel was marking the Agency's 60th anniversary with an Israeli exhibition entitled *Rays of Hope* on display in the rotunda, showcasing state-of-the-art activities undertaken by Israel in collaboration with the Agency.

55. Mr AL-MAADEED (Qatar) said that Qatar National Vision 2030 had been adopted to boost growth and develop the country's economic, technical, social and environmental infrastructure and thus transform Qatar by 2030 into a developed country, capable of achieving sustainable development and securing a high standard of living for future generations. Its aims included developing and expanding the activities of institutions engaged in peaceful applications of nuclear energy relating to energy, food, agriculture, human health and the environment. The IAEA had cooperated with Qatar in implementing many related projects and in joint regional projects involving the GCC, the AAEA and ARASIA.

56. Qatar commended the Agency for its achievements, as outlined in the Annual Report for 2015, for promoting global nuclear safety and security comprehensively and transparently, for disseminating the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and for assisting developing countries in using nuclear technologies for health, food security, energy and the environment. Noting that the 2030 Agenda would increase the Agency's responsibilities because achievement of 14 goals depended on nuclear S&T, Qatar urged the Agency to expand areas of cooperation with developing countries, establish operating partnerships with them and build capacities in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Accordingly, Qatar announced a €300 000 donation for the upgrading of the Agency's laboratories at Seibersdorf.

57. Qatar highlighted three Agency milestones, namely President Eisenhower's *Atoms for Peace* speech which had been the first step in the establishment of the IAEA, the NPT which had been adopted to achieve nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control, and the newly coined *Atoms for peace and development* motto which highlighted the close mutually reinforcing link between peace and development. Stressing the need for a frank review of achievements under those two goals in the previous 60 years, Qatar stressed that despite rising gains in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, full nuclear safety and security remained elusive for, in the current climate of instability and nuclear proliferation, there was a growing risk of nuclear weapons being used. It therefore called for greater efforts to achieve all of the stated goals of the NPT and other nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation agreements and thus herald in a nuclear weapons-free world. It also called for all loopholes concerning nuclear weapons as WMDs to be closed by banning the use of such weapons and eliminating them completely.

58. Qatar stressed that the peoples of the Middle East were more acutely aware than others of the dangers of nuclear weapons and of the need for progress towards nuclear disarmament. Moreover, they believed that the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East and Israel's implementation of the relevant international resolutions, accession to the NPT and placement of its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards were crucial steps towards those goals. Decrying the current stalemate, which had spawned frustration and had undermined the NPT, Qatar called on the IAEA to play a more active role in the endeavour to establish an NWFZ in the Middle East.

Mr Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-President, took the Chair.

59. Mr ILIOSKI (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia fully subscribed to the need for a strong system of international safeguards to promote collective security and called for greater cooperation between all Member States and the Agency in constantly strengthening he application of safety standards and measures under the Nuclear Security Plan, in the face of growing global terrorism.

60. The country had acceded to the key instruments designed to strengthen non-proliferation, nuclear verification and export control and had regularly submitted the required reports. Other Member States that had not yet ratified those instruments should be encouraged to do so as swiftly as possible.

61. In the past decade, as the country had focused on integration into the EU, it had developed a wide range of measures to strengthen its nuclear regulatory framework and infrastructure. It was continuously improving its capabilities to combat trafficking and physically protect nuclear and radioactive material in order to prevent the misuse of such material and of the related knowledge and technologies.

62. The country's independent Radiation Safety Directorate, assisted by the Agency, had built national capacities for effective radiation protection and nuclear safety, by training many young experts, and it had adopted extensive rules aligned with EU legislation, thus further harmonizing national nuclear safety and radiation protection legislation. The Directorate's revised strategic plan for the period 2017–2019 reflected the country's strategic priorities for membership of the EU and NATO and was a realistic medium-term road map for the Directorate's tasks and priorities. Implementation of the plan would strengthen the operability, efficiency and transparency of the Directorate in line with international standards. Employees of the Directorate had participated extensively in training courses held by the Agency in 2016, thereby strengthening the Directorate's administrative and human resources capacities.

63. The country strongly supported the strengthening of the Agency's TCP, which it considered indispensable, in particular for developing countries, and on which the country had previously drawn The Agency's expertise, training, education and equipment procurement had been crucial to meeting objectives in nuclear safeguards, safety and security, regulatory infrastructure, radiation medicine and diagnostics, cultural heritage, agriculture and many other fields.

64. The priority nuclear sectors had been structured so that the country's development priorities could benefit from the Agency's TC activities. National development priorities relevant to the Agency's TCP had been revised in line with the requirements for EU membership and international development assistance, including that provided under the MDGs. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had already stated that integration into the EU was the basic driving force behind the reforms in the State institutions and behind the promotion of a modern, democratic and market-oriented society, built on the principles of basic human freedoms and ethnic diversity.

65. Noting that the current projects under the 2016–2017 project cycle were consistent with its 2013–2017 CPF, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia welcomed the Agency's assistance in the implementation of its national TCP. It was participating extensively in regional and interregional TC projects, thereby complementing national efforts to develop nuclear institutions, human resources, human health, radiation protection and nuclear applications. It had contributed to the TCP by hosting workshops, scientific visits and fellowships and by providing expertise in nuclear security, human health, food safety and veterinary medicine to other Member States.

66. It had begun to collect the information required to make a decision on entering into a new nuclear power programme. It had formulated a national energy strategy, in which one of the options for meeting electrical energy demand in 2030 and beyond was to use nuclear power in addition to other energy sources. The Agency's financial and technical assistance was required to ensure full implementation of the strategy, to assess the work plan and results and to ensure that the programme complied with international and Agency guidelines and requirements in all necessary areas. The first part of the initial phase of the national project in preparation for a decision on a new nuclear energy programme had been successfully implemented during the 2014–2015 cycle, and the second part was under way under the 2016–2017 cycle.

67. The country continued to invest in the conduct of important nuclear power-related pre-feasibility studies in areas such as seismic assessments, hydrological assessments, human resource assessments and, in particular, energy planning using Agency methodologies. The former Yugoslav

Republic of Macedonia welcomed the assistance provided by the Agency in the past few years and hoped that it would continue, as it was essential to the assessment of the country's nuclear infrastructure and to regional cooperation in preparing to decide on the introduction of nuclear power both nationally and regionally.

68. Another national project under the 2016–2017 cycle, on the introduction of SPECT/CT hybrid imaging at the Institute of Pathophysiology and Nuclear Medicine in Skopje, provided a good opportunity to develop nuclear medicine in university clinical settings, to enhance its sustainability and improve diagnostic imaging in the public health-care system. The third national project on strengthening brachytherapy and advanced external beam therapy techniques was being carried out at the University Clinic of Radiotherapy and Oncology in Skopje.

69. Four national project outlines for the 2018–2019 cycle had been positively assessed by the Secretariat, which had recommended further development. Two of those proposed projects were in the field of medicine, one in the field of environmental radioactivity monitoring and one concerned the application of ionizing irradiation in nanotechnology for environmental, energy and health purposes.

70. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia welcomed the Annual Report for 2015 and the budget planned for 2017 and pledged its continued involvement in, and support for, the Agency's activities in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the benefit of all nations.

71. Ms KJÆRSGAARD PLESNER (Denmark) said that the Agency exemplified the principle that multilateral organizations were the stronghold of rules-based international cooperation, providing security and a better world for all. Denmark welcomed the assistance that it had received from the Agency in its preparations for uranium extraction. Greenland had ratified the CNS and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, which underlined Denmark's determination to ensure that uranium would be extracted in Greenland wholly in accordance with the highest international standards.

72. Denmark set great store by the Agency's highly professional expert advice and training on safeguards, safety and security issues, and had recently benefited from the Agency's participation in a seminar on developing an appropriate system of accountancy and control for Greenlandic uranium. The Agency had contributed significantly to common security, notably, in 2016, through JCPOA implementation day, in order to ensure the peaceful nature of the Iran's nuclear programme. If the JCPOA was to succeed as a model of diplomacy and rules-based cooperation, it must be rigorously implemented and Member States must be provided with sufficient and regular information on its implementation. The Agency had Denmark's full support in that matter and, more broadly, in its efforts to prevent the global spread of nuclear weapons.

73. Denmark strongly condemned the most recent nuclear test by the DPRK and underlined the essential role that the Agency must play in verifying that country's nuclear programme. It maintained that the DPRK must abandon its nuclear programme and live up to all of its international obligations. Syria, too, must comply with its obligations in that area.

74. In laying the groundwork for safe and secure peaceful uses of nuclear S&T, it was crucial to ensure that no nuclear material was diverted to military purposes. Denmark believed that nuclear technology could make a significant contribution to the implementation of the SDGs and it looked to the Agency to provide standards and guidance on nuclear safety and security. As any accident or incident could have cross-border effects, nuclear security and nuclear safety must be promoted worldwide.

75. Denmark was pleased to contribute to international cooperation in that field and, to that end, had registered its capabilities with RANET. It offered to the Agency a variety of resources, including field teams with radiation survey and source search capabilities, and radiological assessments and advice. Denmark had trained staff and had exercised those capabilities intensively and was confident that it could make a difference in the event of a nuclear or radiological emergency.

76. As evidenced by the NSS discussions, the Agency offered a global platform for cooperation and assistance and had the necessary technical expertise to contribute to greater world security. Denmark was a significant contributor to the NSF. It looked forward to the high-level International Conference on Nuclear Security in December 2016 and hoped that it would give further impetus to the promotion of nuclear security and to the provision of adequate resources to the Agency for its work in that field.

77. It welcomed the entry into force of the amendment to the CPPNM. In focusing on the implementation on that instrument, it was vital to explore further steps to close the gaps in the international nuclear security legal framework.

78. Denmark had decided that nuclear power would not be included in its energy mix, as its national long-term energy production plans were based on the development and expansion of more sustainable forms of energy. It respected, however, the choice of other Member States and the Agency's statutory obligations and highly valued the Agency's contribution to ensuring that other States introduced nuclear power under optimal safety, security and non-proliferation conditions.

79. Denmark fully supported the Agency's TC efforts in such crucial areas as human health, food security, water and the environment, and had been pleased to pledge its full share of the TCF target for 2017. In a world of rapid technological development, Denmark wished to contribute to the Agency's capacity to make the peaceful uses of nuclear technology available to foster development and growth.

80. In such turbulent times, the Agency was needed as part of the international system of rules-based cooperation. Denmark welcomed the Director General's willingness to serve a further term of office and looked forward to a smooth appointment process.

81. Ms BUENROSTRO MASSIEU (Mexico) acknowledged the Agency's major achievements and international importance and congratulated it on its 60th anniversary, which coincided with the 60th anniversary of the commencement of activities at nuclear facilities in Mexico, which had acknowledged the Agency's central role in achieving NPT goals, had resolutely promoted the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and had considered nuclear energy to be crucial to States' economic, scientific and technological development. Mexico pledged unwavering support for the Agency's efforts and action in safeguards, TC and nuclear safety and security.

82. Mexico's energy reforms since 2013 had led to a new competitive, efficient and sustainable electricity market and had heightened the importance of nuclear power in meeting the people's needs and in promoting economic development.

83. Commending the action taken by the Agency to draw on its specialized knowledge and skills in human health, agriculture, food, energy, water resources and environmental protection in order to achieve the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, Mexico noted that the spirit of collaboration and commitment between the Agency and Mexican nuclear institutions had been revived during the Director General's visit earlier in the year.

84. Mexico, whose TC with the Agency covered nuclear power and non-power applications and nuclear safety and security, was implementing national and regional projects and was using SIT to control malaria-, dengue- and Zika-bearing mosquitoes, while local and international experts were drawing on Mexico's technical MOSCAMED capacities. Its civil servants and experts had

collaborated continuously with the Agency in order to improve national and international safety practices in the nuclear field, radiology, transport and nuclear waste. It had participated actively in CNS review mechanisms and joint exercises and in cooperation and advisory programmes under the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. Its experts sat on various technical committees on safety standards that had been enshrined in Mexico's legislation. It hoped that the experience gained and lessons learnt from the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety and the Fukushima Daiichi accident report would be integrated into the Agency's strategy and work programme.

85. Mexico commended FORO for its endeavour to contribute to nuclear and radiological safety and security and for its synergy with the IAEA in contributing to world security.

86. It called on the Agency to take the lead in action required to address the growing importance of nuclear security and the emerging cross-border challenges arising from the potential use of new technology against nuclear facilities and material. It accordingly welcomed the entry into force of the amendment to the CPPNM and the forthcoming International Conference on Nuclear Security, hoping that the latter would convey a clear political message on the international community's commitments to taking up those challenges and to achieving the highest levels of nuclear security. It would contribute by drawing on the Agency's services and by sharing its experience with the Agency and the Member States. It called for a holistic approach to international nuclear security, through which the highest security standards would be applied both to civilian and to military nuclear material and facilities, and it commended the initiative taken by some States to enhance the information transparency of the security of their nuclear stockpiles.

87. Mexico cooperated seamlessly with the Agency in applying safeguards to its nuclear facilities and firmly supported it internationally in boosting the effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards implementation through new technologies and more integrated and comprehensive approaches. It considered the JCPOA and its schedule of activities to be crucial to the settlement of issues arising from Iran's nuclear programme and a historic contribution to regional stability and international security. It highlighted the importance of the Agency's professional and impartial verification activities to the overall settlement.

88. It gave pride of place in its foreign policy to non-proliferation, disarmament and international cooperation. Reaffirming its commitment to the Agency and to the provisions of the NPT, it undertook to fulfil its obligations and to work constructively and continuously to prevent and deter the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and it acknowledged the Agency's key contribution and its capacity to continue to strengthen the three NPT pillars.

89. Ms GALLARDO HERNÁNDEZ (El Salvador) said that the admission to membership of the Islamic Republic of Gambia, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was a significant step towards the universality of the Agency's agreements.

90. Congratulating the Agency on its 60th anniversary, El Salvador acknowledged the Agency's primordial role in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in supporting Member States and in TC with developing countries in furtherance of their scientific and economic development. Such support and cooperation had been crucial to El Salvador's progress in using nuclear applications and in enhancing its people's well-being.

91. El Salvador considered that the Agency's support would be instrumental in the achievement, under its national strategy, of the 2030 Agenda and of poverty and inequality reduction goals, and would improve its people's quality of life by enabling it to use nuclear S&T for food production, agriculture, power, environmental protection, water management and human health, in particular cancer control.

92. It had hosted earlier in the year a strategic national imPACT follow-up workshop, at which a work plan on cancer control, patient care planning, early screening, efficient education, monitoring, efficacious treatment and international cooperation had been discussed and adopted. The outcomes of the workshop would constitute the frame of reference for cooperation with the Agency on cancer prevention and control.

93. It commended the Agency for its immediate response and support during the 2016 Zika virus emergency in Central America.

94. Convinced that nuclear energy should be used for peaceful purposes only, El Salvador firmly supported all instruments and initiatives leading to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, general disarmament and the total elimination of WMDs, and thus condemned the threat posed to humanity by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the conduct of experimental nuclear tests. It belonged to an NWFZ, it did not possess, produce, import or stockpile WMDs and it reaffirmed its commitment and right to strive for nuclear disarmament as the only means of ensuring peace, security and observance of human rights. It supported action taken by States from various world regions to convene in 2017, pursuant to UNGA resolution 70/33, a conference, inclusive of international organizations and civil society, in order to negotiate a legally binding instrument banning nuclear weapons with a view to their elimination. Accordingly, it called on Member States to accede to the NPT and on those that possessed WMDs to take significant steps to eliminate their nuclear stockpile.

95. El Salvador had been gratified by the Director General's visit in January 2016, during which political views had been exchanged on crucial national development matters to which the Agency could contribute, primarily in the health and environment sectors. It looked favourably on the Director General's candidacy for another term in the 2017–2021 period and wished him success in the elections.

96. Mr AL HINAI (Oman), highlighting the Agency's achievements in the previous sixty years, said that *Atoms for Peace and Development* symbolized the power of nuclear energy both to boost a State's development and to wreak devastation if the State did not observe the highest safety and security standards or if it used nuclear energy for non-peaceful purposes.

97. The Scientific Forum had shed light on the way in which peaceful nuclear technology would assist Member States in achieving the SDGs as the most effective means of surmounting impediments to socioeconomic development, ensuring food safety and security, treating and preventing communicable and non-communicable diseases, managing water resources, protecting the environment and ensuring energy security.

98. Oman had used the SDGs as a framework for reviewing its 2016–2020 sustainable development plan and for drawing up its recently signed 2018–2023 CPF. It had, with the Secretariat's assistance, commissioned two PET–CT centres and an isotope cyclotron in order to provide optimum health care for its people.

99. Against the backdrop of the fifth and thirtieth anniversaries of the Fukushima Daiichi and Chernobyl accidents, Oman called for action to ensure that all NPPs complied throughout their lifetime with international safety standards and for the principle of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety to be observed in order to prevent accidents with spillover radiation effects and to mitigate any such effects. Oman called on the Contracting Parties to the CNS to stress the application of that principle at their forthcoming Seventh Review Meeting.

100. It supported the values of a comprehensive conventions-based nuclear liability regime established by States at risk of damage from a nuclear accident and accordingly welcomed the entry

into force of the CSC, to which it might accede since the CSC would afford a remedy in the event of an accident at sea during the transport of nuclear material along its 3 000 km-long coastline.

101. It had participated in the Eighth Meeting of the Representatives of Competent Authorities identified under the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, at which the importance of establishing measures to facilitate the exchange of information among neighbouring States on nuclear and radiological accident response measures had been stressed. Coordinated measures had been put in place through the GCC's Emergency Management Centre in Kuwait and the technical cooperation provided by the Agency to build nuclear and radiological accident response capacity among GCC States had been much appreciated.

102. Oman would report radiation monitoring data to IRMIS, following the expansion of the radiation monitoring network and early notification system and in accordance with General Conference resolution GC(59)/RES/9, and hoped that all other States would follow suit.

103. Consideration was being given to Oman's accession to the amendment to the CPPNM. Oman supported the emphasis laid at the fourth Nuclear Security Summit on the Agency's crucial role in ensuring that nuclear security measures did not impede States' peaceful use of nuclear energy and on the need for Member States to abide by their nuclear security obligations. It hoped that the ministerial and technical segments of the International Conference on Nuclear Security would contribute to a clear vision of the commitments expected of States and international organizations and of measures required internationally, regionally and nationally to establish a robust nuclear safety regime worldwide.

104. Oman called on all States in the Middle East to accede to the NPT and to place all of their nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards. It also called on the General Conference to adopt the necessary measures to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East in furtherance of regional and international security and stability.

105. Oman commended the Agency for its achievements in harnessing nuclear energy safely in furtherance of the sustainable development goals and voiced its firm belief that the peaceful use of nuclear energy could contribute to a brighter future for all of the peoples of the world.

106. Mr BARNOR (Ghana) said that Ghana was working to develop a strong infrastructure for its nuclear power programme by establishing an independent regulatory body and a generalized programme management system, ratifying a number of relevant international agreements, conducting gap analyses on its legislation, reviewing previous assessments of its electrical energy demand, formulating a human resources and stakeholder engagement strategies and conducting stakeholder consultations and public awareness campaigns.

107. In line with Ghana's capacity-building agenda, two national workshops had been held in 2016 on stakeholder involvement, nuclear power communications and management system development. After requesting an INIR mission, Ghana had submitted a self-evaluation report in March 2016, a pre-INIR mission had been carried out in August 2016 and the main INIR mission had been scheduled for January 2017. A nuclear energy policy document had been drawn up under the national energy policy.

108. In addition to the Agency's instruments and conventions to which Ghana was already party, it would accede to the Convention on Assistance in the Case of Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage.

109. Ghana's nuclear agenda was governed by the Atomic Energy Commission Act and the 2015 Nuclear Regulatory Authority Act. The Nuclear Regulatory Authority, established by the latter instrument, was a fully independent regulatory body, as required by the constitution of Ghana and by various international legal instruments, which regulated all institutions and individuals whose activities could entail radiation exposure. Regulations on the siting of nuclear facilities, on safeguards and on radioactive waste management were being drafted with support from the Agency, the United States Department of Energy and the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

110. Under its long-term management strategy for disused sealed radioactive sources, Ghana had chosen the Agency-developed borehole disposal system as an end-point management option. The system was being implemented by the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission with TC support from the Agency and donor support from the Canadian Government. An initial site investigation and safety assessment for the borehole disposal system had been performed.

111. The Agency had supported Ghana in the establishment of a 1.7 MV Pelletron accelerator, commissioned in March 2016, which had been equipped with ion beam analysis capabilities for the non-destructive multi-element analyses of samples.

112. Aware of the direct importance of nuclear S&T to attainment of the SDGs, Ghana was unrelenting in its efforts to promote sustainable nuclear education and training as part of its broader programme of capacity building and knowledge management for the nuclear industry. Accordingly, it had expanded the physical infrastructure at the School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences, which had celebrated its tenth anniversary in March 2016. Ghana had been honoured by the Director General's presence at the ceremony; it had implemented the Agency's HRD initiatives and nuclear knowledge management programme at the school and had welcomed the Agency's support for the programme.

113. In view of the great pest management potential of SIT, the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission was using SIT to control tsetse fly and mosquito populations and was adapting it to control the oriental fruit fly. With the Agency's support, insectaries for rearing mosquitoes, tsetse flies and fruit flies had been established at the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission for the purposes SIT R&D.

114. Ghana had installed its first gamma irradiation facility in 1995 with the Agency's support and had upgraded the facility in 2010 to enhance its commercial use in the post-harvest management of food and the sterilization of medical and pharmaceutical products. It was being used to sterilize items from the country's leading hospitals and plans were in place to apply the technique throughout the country to reduce post-harvest food losses.

115. The Ghana Atomic Energy Commission was working on mutation breeding to produce mutant varieties of crop plants with desired traits and was using gamma irradiation to develop new varieties of yam, cassava and oil palm. Different mutant lines of those crops had been planted and would be evaluated for high yield, improved nutritional quality, resistance to diseases and drought tolerance. In the floriculture sector, mutation induction was being used to develop flower varieties with different petals for their aesthetic value.

116. In support of the Agency's activities in the subregion, Ghana had hosted many regional training events, including the first coordination meeting on the TC project on building regional capacity in Africa to diagnose emerging or re-emerging zoonotic diseases, including Ebola virus disease, and establishing early warning systems. The project had been approved by the Board as an off-cycle project in response to a request by Member States during the Ebola crisis in West Africa. During the meeting, the organizational arrangements and diagnostic capabilities of participating countries had been reviewed, and work plans had been developed in line with identified needs and gaps. Ghana had hosted the coordination meeting to finalize phase 1 and initiate phase 2 of the regional project to establish a food safety network through the application of nuclear and related technologies.

117. Ghana had hosted in the second quarter of 2016 an OIOS team which had evaluated the country's TC projects, covering all programmes implemented with the Agency's support since 2005. The report on that mission would help Ghana to streamline its programmes and activities in order to improve the implementation of future projects.

118. In line with its quest to achieve the highest sustainable growth and to enhance its visibility and relevance to the general population, the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission was launching several programmes to ensure the sustainability of nuclear science technologies as a major tool for economic development. Among those were the establishment of a technical support organization and a partnership with both local and international private institutions to promote nuclear technologies that had been developed over the years. Ghana was taking part in the TC project on the sustainability of national nuclear institutions.

119. Ghana fully supported the candidacy of the Director General, considering him to be well placed to provide the necessary leadership for the Agency's future work.

120. Ms GEELS (New Zealand) congratulated the Agency on its six decades of commitment and contribution to international peace, security and development and reaffirmed her country's belief that the Agency had an important role to play in helping Member States to achieve the SDGs by using nuclear S&T to improve food security, human and animal health and water management. New Zealand welcomed the necessary work under way to promote gender equality in the Agency, including efforts to increase the representation of women in the Professional categories and management positions.

121. New Zealand was deeply disappointed at the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference and the continued inability to convene a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of WMDs. It hoped that, despite the difficulties encountered to date, further efforts would be made to fulfil the objectives of the resolution on the Middle East.

122. It firmly believed that the achievement of nuclear disarmament was relevant to the Agency's work and it looked forward to working with other States to achieve nuclear disarmament in line with long-standing NPT commitments. It recognized the Agency's central role in advancing the other two pillars of the NPT and would continue to focus its engagement in that forum on making progress on those issues.

123. New Zealand recognized the Agency's commendable efforts in non-power applications. The Director General's recent visit to New Zealand had provided an excellent opportunity to highlight the Agency's ground-breaking and innovative work in that area.

124. The Agency and New Zealand cooperated in a range of peaceful use activities, including with the country's Institute for Plant and Food Research on using SIT against various types of moths and with universities on food traceability and authenticity, and on the prevention of chronic diseases. It had provided support for the Agency's Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre in Monaco and, in 2016, had contributed €50 000 for the ReNuAL project.

125. Although New Zealand had chosen not to use nuclear energy to generate electricity, it was still vulnerable to damage caused by a nuclear accident elsewhere, notably, during the maritime transport of nuclear material near its waters. It therefore firmly maintained that all States developing and using nuclear energy must apply the highest standards of safeguards, safety and security at all stages of the fuel cycle, including waste management and transport. It valued the dialogue between coastal and shipping States, the voluntary guidelines on government-to-government communications developed by participating coastal and shipping States, and initiatives such as table-top exercises to test such guidelines.

126. New Zealand remained committed to ensuring that shipments were conducted in accordance with the highest possible safety and security conditions, within a well-defined framework, including effective emergency preparedness and response systems. It was engaged in efforts to improve the international nuclear liability regime, including through INLEX.

127. It was committed to achieving an ambitious and forward-looking outcome at the December 2016 International Conference on Nuclear Security and underscored the importance of the Agency's leadership and central role in strengthening the nuclear security framework globally and in coordinating international nuclear security activities.

128. New Zealand had contributed regularly to the NSF, donating NZ $286 000 since 2014, and would continue to support the Agency's nuclear security work. It had also contributed to voluntary nuclear security initiatives and had been a major sponsor of the Kangaroo Harbour exercise, held in Sydney in May 2016 under GICNT and would continue to collaborate in that regard with the United States Department of Energy and the World Institute of Nuclear Security.

129. In November 2015, New Zealand had hosted a voluntary IPPAS mission to review its nuclear security practices. While it only had very small holdings of nuclear material, its request for such a mission demonstrated the importance that it attached to nuclear security. The IPPAS team had identified successful nuclear security practices both at the national level and within visited facilities, and had given useful advice. New Zealand was implementing the recommendations and planned to invite a follow-up mission; it encouraged other States to consider hosting such missions in order to strengthen national nuclear security regimes.

130. In November 2015, New Zealand had hosted Exercise Maru 2015, a Proliferation Security Initiative exercise for the Asia and the Pacific region, which had been attended by more than 130 participants from 21 countries. The exercise had focused on steps that countries in the region, including those with limited resources and capacity, could take to intercept WMDs and their components.

131. In March 2016, New Zealand had enacted the Radiation Safety Act, by which it had completely updated the country's legislative framework for the safety and security of nuclear and radioactive material. Also in 2016, it had ratified the amendment to the CPPNM and ICSANT. It welcomed the entry into force of the amendment to the CPPNM and would work with other States Parties to implement those important conventions.

132. New Zealand's commended the efforts made by all parties to implement the JCPOA scrupulously and thus strengthen the international non-proliferation regime in furtherance of regional peace and security. It was grateful to the Agency for its continued work on that challenging task and encouraged Iran to maintain the good progress achieved to date in order to build trust within the international community.

133. It had condemned unequivocally the DPRK's underground nuclear test on 9 September 2016, and regarded the DPRK's repeated nuclear tests as affronts to the commitment entered into by the international community, through the CTBT, to end the era of nuclear tests, and as blatant violations of CTBTO resolutions and of the DPRK's commitments under the Charter of the United Nations. The CTBT had created a strong international norm against testing, observed by all States except the DPRK, which had continued to undermine the international non-proliferation regime and constituted a dangerous affront both to regional security and to the international community. New Zealand was committed to working with other UNSC members and its regional partners to ensure that the DPRK understood that those actions were unacceptable to the international community. She called on the DPRK to abandon its nuclear and missile programmes completely, verifiably and irreversibly.

134. New Zealand called on Syria to comply urgently with its safeguards agreement and provide the Agency with the access and information required to provide credible assurances that its nuclear programme was exclusively peaceful in nature.

135. New Zealand was committed to achieving a constructive outcome on the broad range of complex and important issues on the current Conference agenda and would work with all Member States to achieve shared objectives relating to nuclear safety, security, safeguards and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

136. Ms MILAČIĆ (Montenegro), commended the Agency for its successful performance in the previous six decades in such core areas as the non-proliferation regime, nuclear energy, nuclear safety and technical cooperation, and for its assistance to Member States in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear S&T in order to meet their development needs, and in strengthening nuclear safety and security. Montenegro appreciated the leadership and efforts of the Director General and the work carried out by the Secretariat.

137. Montenegro would continue to rely on the Agency to deliver on its mandate for a safer and more prosperous world, and looked forward to the Agency's contribution to the achievement of the SDGs, given the relevance of nuclear S&T. Montenegro would steadfastly contribute to the Agency's mission of atoms for peace and development. Cooperation with the Agency had been all the more fruitful because it had helped Montenegro to meet requirements for accession to the EU.

138. Montenegro had participated in many national, regional and interregional TC projects, through which it had enhanced capacities and preparedness in nuclear sciences and applications, sustainable development and the environment, health, radiation protection, nuclear safety and security and HRD, as identified in its CPF.

139. In 2016, Montenegro had hosted a fact-finding expert mission from the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications and an expert mission from the Nuclear Security Department.

140. As a State Party to all major Agency conventions and to other international instruments on nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear safety and security, Montenegro fully abided by its international commitments and was determined to meet the highest international standards of nuclear safety and security and to harmonize its national regulatory and legislative framework with the Agency's safety standards. It had therefore sought to develop a comprehensive national framework for ensuring the safety of its citizens and the protection of public health and of the environment from potential nuclear safety and security risks.

141. It had adopted a national strategy for the non-proliferation of WMDs and, in May 2016, a national response plan in the event of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident which, together with the action plan for the implementation of UNSC resolution 1540 (2004), constituted an effective foundation for the country's non-proliferation and accident-response measures.

142. Montenegro had ratified the amendment to the CPPNM in March 2016. As it did not have any nuclear facilities on its territory, its accession to the amendment to the CPPNM had reaffirmed its full commitment to supporting global efforts to combat all forms of international terrorism, including nuclear terrorism, and to reducing the likelihood of nuclear accidents, the theft of nuclear material and other comparable eventualities.

143. Its priorities included protection against the harmful effects of ionizing radiation and radioactive waste management. In January 2016, it had declared its readiness voluntarily to implement the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources. As a State Party to the CNS, Montenegro was constantly upgrading its nuclear safety capacities and was committed to preventing any illegal use or

mismanagement of radioactive materials and related knowledge and technologies. It had already submitted its first national report on the implementation of the CNS.

144. In accordance with the obligation to establish an early notification system for radiation accidents, Montenegro had, with EU support established a network of six 24-hour stations that measured the ambient dose of gamma radiation in the air, which had strengthened radiation protection and nuclear safety considerably. It was reviewing its action plan on ionizing radiation protection, radiation safety and radioactive waste management for the period 2017–2021.

145. It planned to revise its INSSP and the accompanying action plan, and had accordingly received valuable advice from the Secretariat's experts. It had given priority to the incorporation of the nuclear security information management system into the revised INSSP.

146. Preparatory action had been taken for Montenegro's membership of Euratom and the European Community Urgent Radiological Information Exchange system. Montenegro would elaborate on its legislative framework under the new national nuclear and radiation safety capacity-building project, supported by the Agency and the EU.

147. Montenegro, a State Party to the CSC, and was strongly committed to strengthening the global nuclear liability regime in order to promote greater nuclear safety in accordance with the principles of international partnership and solidarity. Such commitment was in the best interests of all States because the risk of cross-border damage from a nuclear accident had long been recognized. It was considering ratifying the Joint Protocol Relating to the Application of the Vienna Convention and the Paris Convention, pending the accession of a significant number of States to the CSC. Montenegro had thus demonstrably made significant progress in nuclear safety and security and was committed to complying with international standards and the EU *acquis*.

148. Montenegro strongly supported the Agency's work in the peaceful applications of nuclear technology, which gave impetus to sustainable development and served as a valuable tool to enhance human health. A national TC project was under way to upgrade quality assurance systems in diagnostic radiology for the country's national breast cancer-screening programme. The Agency's support was of crucial importance to radiology and oncology in Montenegro and to the improvement of its nuclear medicine capacities.

149. Mr ZHANTIKIN (Kazakhstan) said that the Director General's report reflected the Agency's balanced and effective policy on the safety, security and prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons and that his country fully supported its main provisions. Kazakhstan commended the Director General for his leadership and effective management of the Secretariat.

150. As an NPT State Party, Kazakhstan was taking concerted steps to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and had held an international conference on building a nuclear-weapon-free world in Astana to mark the 25th anniversary of the closing of the Semipalatinsk test site. From the first day of its independence, Kazakhstan had demonstrated the effectiveness of its development model without nuclear weapons and had renounced the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal.

151. Kazakhstan voiced concern at the escalation of the DPRK's nuclear military programme and called on that country to fulfil its obligations in full accordance with the relevant UNSC resolutions and to resume the six-party negotiations. It supported the Agency's efforts to rein in the DPRK's nuclear programme.

152. Kazakhstan had been widely recognized for its contribution to nuclear disarmament and to the maintenance of the non-proliferation regime. At the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, its President had proposed to rid the world of nuclear weapons by 2045, and Kazakhstan would strive

during its 2017–2018 term on the UNSC to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and nuclear security.

153. Kazakhstan undertook to put the final NSS documents into practice and, accordingly, welcomed the initiation of work by the Nuclear Security Contact Group. Kazakhstan was working on HEU-free radioisotope production technologies and, as such technologies were less efficient those currently used, it had taken the initiative of developing economic mechanisms to encourage the transfer to the non-HEU technologies that had been supported by NSS participants. Without effective economic incentives, States were unlikely to stop using HEU in industry.

154. Kazakhstan had invited the Agency to attend the opening ceremony of the LEU bank in Astana in September 2017, in conjunction with the Agency's side-event at Expo 2017. The theme of Expo 2017, *Future Energy*, was wholly consistent with the Agency's activities, including the use of nuclear energy and nuclear applications for sustainable development.

155. Kazakhstan called on States that were not covered by comprehensive safeguards voluntarily to apply the Agency's safeguards to their nuclear activities as widely as possible and, given the sensitivity of safeguards application procedures, it called on the Secretariat to comply strictly with the provisions of the documents adopted in that field by Member States.

156. Kazakhstan believed that implementation of the JCPOA would strengthen regional and global security. Full transparency of Iran's nuclear programme, application of the Agency's safeguards and strict fulfilment of the current agreements would strengthen the non-proliferation regime and would enable NPT States Parties to exercise their legitimate right to peaceful nuclear activities. Kazakhstan had always supported the international negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme and had hosted two rounds of talks on Iran's nuclear programme in 2013, which had contributed to the resumption of negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran. Kazakhstan was proud that the outcome of those two rounds of talks in Almaty had laid the foundation for the JCPOA. Furthermore, the Kazakh concern Kazatomprom had supplied Iran with 60 metric tons of natural uranium on commercial terms as compensation for the removal of LEU from that country, for the purposes of JCPOA implementation.

157. Kazakhstan was fully committed to the provisions of UNSC resolution 1540 (2004) and was taking stronger measures to combat trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive material. As a member of the NSG and of the Zangger Committee, it had taken all possible steps to control nuclear exports, including those relating to facilities and equipment used for uranium enrichment and for the processing of spent nuclear fuel.

158. Kazakhstan had made concerted efforts to establish an NWFZ in Central Asia and it hoped that its experience would be useful to other regions of the world. It therefore supported the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East and urged the Agency to make the planet a common area of peace and security.

159. It was cause of regret to Kazakhstan that, despite being an active and responsible Member of the Agency, it was excluded from participating in its policy-making bodies. It understood that its unfair exclusion was attributable to the existing rules and procedures and was confident that, through the efforts of the Secretariat and Member States, the issue could be resolved and that Kazakhstan would one day participate fully in the Agency's work.

Mr Hasans (Latvia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

160. Mr ISTRATE (Romania) said that Romania had been steadfast in its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. As a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the NPT, it firmly believed that the NPT was the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and it looked forward to the further strengthening of the Treaty in the 2015–2020 review cycle and to progress in all three NPT pillars.

161. Romania fully supported the Agency's efforts to implement safeguards most effectively and efficiently and believed that the application of the State-level concept would be conducive to such enhanced efficiency. In order to carry out its verification function under the NPT effectively, the Agency needed legal authority, strong verification tools, cooperation with States and sufficient resources. As credible assurances of the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities could only be provided in States with CSAs and APs, Romania believed that the verification standard for non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT should be a CSA and an AP.

162. It welcomed the Agency's new report on Iran's implementation of the JCPOA and its annexes. Much progress had been achieved since 16 January 2016, but the work was far from done. As the Agency moved towards full implementation of the JCPOA, which was based on the principles of verification, monitoring and enforcement, it must remain vigilant and perform its vital function of ensuring that all of the JCPOA provisions were observed.

163. The nuclear test announced by the DPRK on 9 September 2016 had constituted yet another blatant violation of the relevant UNSC resolutions and a major threat to international peace and security. As Chair of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, Romania condemned in the strongest possible terms that irresponsible act and urged the DPRK to comply fully, unconditionally and without delay with all of its international obligations and to resume the six-party negotiating process.

164. Drawing on more than 60 years of experience and expertise in the nuclear field, Romania stood ready to share its theoretical and practical knowledge of nuclear safety and security with other Member States. Its national institutions offered training and assistance bilaterally or under the TCP, which helped other Member States to build and improve their systems and human resources.

165. The PUI was a valuable mechanism for the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources to meet the development needs of Member States. Romania therefore supported the PUI, and set high store by its role in ensuring food security, advancing human health and protecting the environment. Romania strongly supported the Agency's TCP and the statutory right of all Member States to be eligible for TC projects. It had been a TC beneficiary under nuclear security and safety projects and had in turn made regular in-kind contributions to the Agency's TCP.

166. The significant results of the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit, as reflected in the final communiqué and the five plans of action, had brought the Agency much closer to its goal of securing nuclear material and thus preventing nuclear terrorism. Although the 2016 summit had been the last to be held in that format, representatives would continue to meet in other formats and to keep the nuclear security issue high on the international agenda. Romania had thus taken part in the first meeting of the Nuclear Security Contact Group, held in Vienna on 23 September 2016. It fully supported the transition of the NSS process to a more inclusive format under the Agency's auspices. Accordingly, it encouraged all Member States to participate at the highest level possible in the December 2016 International Conference on Nuclear Security.

167. In cooperation with INTERPOL, Romania would conduct the Olympus regional exercise under the auspices of GICNT in Bucharest from 19 to 21 October 2016, in order to identify best inter-agency coordination and communication practices in support of technical reachback during a terrorist attempt to acquire or use radioactive materials. The outcomes of the Olympus exercise would be shared with all GICNT partners, and would be submitted at the International Conference on Nuclear Security.

168. Romania stressed the need to focus on the full implementation and universalization of the amended CPPNM. As a national contact point for the physical protection of nuclear materials and for preventing and combating trafficking in nuclear and radioactive material, the National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control had contributed to the ITDB and had been mandated to report all such events occurring on Romanian soil.

169. Under the Agency's extrabudgetary programme, Romania had implemented the regional excellence project on regulatory capacity building in nuclear and radiological safety and emergency preparedness and response in the country between 2014 and 2016.

170. It had paid particular attention to spent fuel and radioactive waste management in meeting its specific obligation for the implementation of Council Directive 2011/70/Euratom. Accordingly, its Nuclear and Radioactive Waste Agency planned to establish a final repository for low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste at a near-surface disposal site with a sustainable multi-barrier system.

171. Romania thanked the Director General for his hard work, professionalism and thorough impartiality during his two terms at the helm of the Secretariat and hoped that the Board would, at its June 2017 meeting, reach consensus and, by acclamation, reappoint him for another term of office.

172. Ms FRANCESCHI NAVARRO (Panama) congratulated the Agency on staying the course during the previous 60 years despite events such as the Cold War, the fall of the Iron Curtain, civil wars, terrorist attacks, nuclear accidents and climate change, on exceeding initial expectations by achieving the goals of promoting and ensuring the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, on transforming the threats and risks behind the use of nuclear technology into opportunities for a more sustainable form of development and on other achievements such as the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize, the JCPOA, PACT, the CPPNM and the amendment thereto, the admission of new Members, the Agency's adaptation to change and its approach to development and to the 2030 Agenda. Panama urged the Agency to continue the laudable tasks that it had performed to date under the leadership of the Director General.

173. Panama, a Member for 50 years, had been increasingly involved in the Agency's activities. It was implementing national tracer research projects on the transport of sediment in the Panama Canal basin, the use of nuclear and isotope techniques to raise rice harvest yields, the building of analytical capacities to detect chemical contaminants in food, the expansion and strengthening of the fruit fly phytosanitary surveillance system and national capacity building to combat the Zika virus, which had had multiplier effects and in which SIT had been used. Moreover, it had made great strides in molecular biology and in controlling transmissible diseases, and was collaborating with regional initiatives on the molecular diagnosis of insect-borne diseases. Its professionals who had been trained at the Seibersdorf laboratories had returned home to apply the knowledge thus acquired.

174. Following the radiological accident in 2001, Panama had undertaken at the highest political level to improve its health regulatory status by meeting the highest standards set by the Agency. Accordingly, three projects were being designed for the 2018–2019 cycle in order to build national capacities to use nuclear technologies safely and ensure radiation protection, safe diagnosis and radiation safety in medical services. Furthermore, it had defrayed its national participation costs and had made its TCF contribution.

175. Panama's foreign policy priorities included the promotion and achievement of the SDGs, to which the Agency's TCP could contribute through S&T in key development areas such as human health, food production, water management, environmental protection and use of sustainable energy, all enshrined in the 2030 Agenda. Panama considered the TCP to be crucial to the transfer of the nuclear and isotopic knowledge and skills that contributed directly to SDG achievement. It therefore reasserted its commitment to supporting the TCP and to reaping the benefits to be gained from fellowships and workshops.

176. Recalling President's Eisenhower's *Atoms for Peace* speech on which the Agency had been founded, Panama highlighted the broadening of the Agency's focus from the dangers of atom bombs

to nuclear applications that redounded to the benefit of humanity, as encapsulated in *Atoms for Peace and Development*, a motto that aptly reflected the Agency's current pursuits.

177. Mr CASTELLANOS (Guatemala) said that nuclear disarmament was the only effective means of achieving a safer world, for only the total elimination of nuclear weapons could eliminate the risk of the proliferation and use of such weapons. Guatemala therefore welcomed the call to hold in 2017 a conference, open to all States, international organizations and civil society, in order to negotiate a legally binding instrument to ban nuclear weapons with a view to their elimination.

178. It reaffirmed the continued validity of the rules enshrined in the NPT and the commitments into which it had entered. It promoted the universality of the NPT and full observance of all of its provisions, for it considered that all States Parties were under a legal obligation to comply with and to be faithful to the letter and the spirit of the NPT.

179. Guatemala highlighted the Agency's contribution to its Member States' development and its role in achieving, through the TCP, the goals set in the 2030 Agenda. The Agency's TCP had made a great impact in Guatemala, in particular in health, energy, mining and agriculture, as exemplified by cooperation on fruit fly sterilization under MOSCAMED. As the laboratory in question had excess capacity, it could be equipped to sterilize the mosquitoes that were the primary vectors of Zika virus disease, dengue, chikungunya and malaria. Guatemala commended the Agency for the regional emergency project launched to combat the Zika virus disease outbreak in Central America, under which specialized virus screening equipment, training and technical knowledge had been provided. It also commended ARCAL for its regional TC role.

180. Looking forward to the forthcoming International Conference on Nuclear Security, Guatemala considered that nuclear security should be managed efficiently and effectively and called for international standards to be adopted to regulate related activities. It pointed out, however, that neither the regular budget nor the TCF should be used to fund any nuclear security activity because nuclear security was not one of the Agency's statutory activities.

181. Guatemala had condemned all nuclear tests conducted by the DPRK as flagrant violations of UNSC resolutions and of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It supported the CTBT and called for the moratorium on nuclear tests to be maintained until the CTBT had entered into force. It voiced concern at the UNSC resolution on the CTBT and questioned the legality of treaty-based obligations on which the signatories themselves had not had a say. It called on nuclear-weapon States to display genuine political will to eliminate those weapons, while calling for ways and means of strengthening action conducive to nuclear disarmament and urging non-nuclear-weapon States to reaffirm their commitment to remaining non-nuclear-weapon States and to exercise their inalienable right to nuclear technology for exclusively peaceful purposes.

182. Mr ALBESBAS (Libya) highlighted the importance to developing countries of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in health, agriculture, disease control and sustainable development, and of assistance in harnessing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without restrictions through international cooperation.

183. Commending the Agency's work in enabling Libya and other developing countries to reap the benefits of peaceful programmes in health, agriculture, food, water resources, radioactive imaging and radiological technology, Libya called on the Agency to provide greater assistance in building national capacities to use nuclear technology in important areas. Libya, for its part, would strive to meet all demands despite being faced with security, economic and political troubles that had affected and severely constrained economic development programmes and national projects.

184. It was anxious to build capacities for nuclear safety and security and to provide all necessary safeguards for nuclear plants and materials during use, storage and transport, both domestically and across international borders. It was also anxious to protect nuclear plants and material from radiological and nuclear accidents, trafficking and sabotage and to protect workers, the public, property and the environment. The final draft of the nuclear security support plan for Libya had been completed, as had the action plan for the protection and security of radioactive sources in medical centres and the provision of nuclear technology urgently required for the treatment of cancer, while radiotherapy equipment had been supplied to the Tripoli Medical Centre. In view of the exceptionally difficult conditions in the country, Libya hoped that the Agency would respond to all of its current and future needs in areas such as health, electric power, agriculture, water and infrastructure for improved national control.

185. Libya had availed itself of the TCP for the peaceful use of nuclear energy in furtherance of its national development programmes. In addition to the capacity-building assistance provided by the Agency, it had received support for several projects, including five new national projects under the 2016–2017 TCP, covering human health, agriculture, the introduction of nuclear energy and the improvement of the radiation control infrastructure. Libya had participated in several AFRA-led regional projects on national capacity building for peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Together with other African States, it had approved the fifth five-year extension of AFRA from April 2015 to 2020. Libya called for a focused and targeted action programme to be devised to meet the sustainable development needs of developing countries and considered that account should be taken of fears triggered by the decline in contributions to the TCF, which was used to assist States with pressing nuclear energy needs in vital economic and medical fields.

186. Libya stressed the importance of the Agency's endeavour to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and of WMDs, noting that security and stability could be achieved only through cooperation, consultation, good faith, progress, development and relations based on respect. It accordingly called on the Agency to intensify its efforts to oblige States not signatory to the NPT to accede to the treaty and abandon nuclear programmes that threatened world peace and security.

187. Ms WIJESEKERA (Sri Lanka), congratulating the three newly admitted Members, said that the steady increase in membership was an indication of the importance of the Agency and its work. She thanked the Director General for his comprehensive report on the Agency's work in 2015 and for his endeavours in furtherance of international peace and development, in particular sustainable development through the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

188. Sri Lanka commended the Agency for its continued contribution to global efforts to secure nuclear facilities and radioactive material and to assist Member States in building capabilities while strengthening the nuclear safety and security framework worldwide. The Asia and the Pacific region had continued to give priority to nuclear safety and security and it regarded HRD as essential to the sustainability of nuclear security regimes. The Scientific Forum would be instrumental in elucidating the role of nuclear technology in achieving SDGs in the fields of health, food security, energy and the environment.

189. Sri Lanka supported global and regional initiatives and Agency-led action to enhance nuclear security. It hoped that policymakers and legal, regulatory and technical experts attending the International Conference on Nuclear Security would engage in meaningful discussion on the scientific and technical programme and that the ministerial declaration would include significant outcomes and commitment to progress on global nuclear issues.

190. The IAEA's assistance in training officers of Sri Lanka's security forces, customs, seaport, airport, Atomic Energy Board and Atomic Energy Regulatory Council had been most welcome, and

Sri Lanka looked forward to further training and to the inclusion of its experts in the Agency's nuclear security work and missions. As it had ascribed prime importance to the establishment of the legal framework required to meet international radiation safety, security and safeguards standards, its Atomic Energy Act No. 40, in force since 1 January 2015, had incorporated principles enshrined in IAEA conventions and guidelines and had established the Atomic Energy Board to promote technical cooperation and coordinate technical assistance and the Atomic Energy Regulatory Council to ensure that Sri Lanka's nuclear applications and nuclear technology were used for absolutely peaceful purposes and to facilitate Sri Lanka's accession to substantive treaties.

191. In order to harness the benefits of nuclear S&T for national development, Sri Lanka had opted for an energy mix that met its energy needs and it rated highly the expert assistance provided in enabling use of the Agency's energy planning tools and MAED. It had discussed, with IAEA experts, nuclear power as an option in order to meet its growing energy demands.

192. It commended the assistance provided under the TCP in a variety of areas such as mosquito-suppressing SIT, nuclear medicine, diagnostic imaging, vector-borne disease control, cardiovascular disease screening and prevention, poverty alleviation through improved dairy farming, establishment of national bodies, fellowship training, energy assessment services and non-destructive testing.

193. It had contributed in-kind to the Agency by receiving fellowship holders and hosting several IAEA international events. It looked forward to hosting seminars, workshops or training programmes in future and to receiving technical assistance during the forthcoming biennium in nationally important projects on matters such as the combined use of isotopic and chemical techniques in hydro-geological systems, the containment of fast-spreading chronic kidney disease and nuclear S&T.

194. It was conducting many development activities designed to accelerate economic growth and social development and underpinned by principles such as good governance, accountability and the rule of law. It was aware of the need to strengthen technology and research institutes in order to reap the benefits of nuclear S&T in furtherance of national development.

195. Lastly, it called for attention to be paid to the decline in the number of professional posts held by Sri Lankan scientists and administrative and management professionals.

196. Ms ALIFERI (Greece) said that respect for international law and the United Nations system as a whole had always been a cornerstone of Greece's policy. She therefore congratulated the Agency, the very first international organization to be headquartered in Vienna, on the 60th anniversary of its mission to promote peaceful and responsible uses of nuclear technology.

197. Greece, which had not included nuclear power in its energy mix, acknowledged the legitimate right of all States to the peaceful and cautious use of nuclear energy, provided that they complied fully with the international non-proliferation regime, safeguards agreements and the Agency's safety and security standards. Recalling the Agency's *Atoms for Peace* motto, Greece stressed that, in the use of the atom, responsibility lay with individuals as well as States.

198. It called on the Agency to urge all States that had not yet done so to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States and stressed the need for the long overdue entry into force of the CTBT. It regretted that no progress had been made in convening a conference on an NWFZ in the Middle East.

199. Greece, which had associated itself with the international community's condemnation of the proliferation activities of the DPRK and that country's continued defiance of its international obligations, welcomed the continuing implementation of the historic agreement reached in Vienna in 2015 between Iran and the E3+3, and commended the Agency for its successful role in bringing about the JCPOA. It welcomed the entry into force of the 2005 amendment to the CPPNM.

200. Greece abided by all relevant Agency agreements, duly transposed, where necessary, into its national legislation, and attached particular importance to nuclear safety and security worldwide. It maintained that environmental safety should always be taken into account, in particular in regions with dynamic seismic and earthquake activity, which had been the most valuable lesson learned from the Fukushima Daiichi accident.

201. The implementation of the Agency's nuclear security guidelines, measures and procedures was of paramount importance globally and regionally. The application of comprehensive Agency safeguards to all nuclear material and activities in the Middle East and other regions would boost confidence among all States and promote peace, security and prosperity for all.

202. The Greek Atomic Energy Commission had hosted an education and training appraisal follow-up mission in Athens in October 2015 to promote educational and training activities in radiation safety. An international meeting on nuclear security information exchange and coordination, attended by 21 participants from 12 countries, had been held in Athens in June 2016.

203. Greece, a maritime nation, currently chaired the Mediterranean Network for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Materials, which conducted research and published results. Its IRRS follow-up mission had been scheduled for the last quarter of 2017. It would participate in the Seventh Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the CNS and had already submitted its national report. It would also participate in the International Conference on Nuclear Security in December 2016.

204. Greece highly appreciated the Agency's efforts to build Member States' capacities to develop and use nuclear S&T and applauded the TCP's role in supporting Member States' efforts to strengthen safety and security in all aspects of the peaceful use of nuclear technology. It continued to provide the Agency with scientists, who shared and gained experience by participating in regional projects, international missions and technical meetings. It had hosted 10 international fellowship holders in its national laboratories for in-service training or for scientific visits in the fields of radiation safety and security.

205. Greece reiterated its strong support for the Agency's important mission and relevant projects, and reaffirmed its commitment to cooperating actively with the Agency.

206. Mr SHOOGUFAN (Afghanistan) commended the Agency for contributing to the achievement of the SDGs by supporting developing countries' efforts to gain further access to nuclear S&T. Owing to the links between the Agency's activities and the SDGs in human health, water management, food security, nutrition, energy and environmental protection, the Agency's role would be crucial. Furthermore, Afghanistan welcomed the support provided through the Agency's TCP for the peaceful, safe and secure application of nuclear S&T to sustainable social and economic development; it also welcomed the Agency's efforts to align the CPFs with Member States' specific needs and priorities.

207. As a founding Member, Afghanistan had cooperated with the Agency since the 1950s and, after decades of war and instability, had become a TCP beneficiary. Under the 2012–2016 CPF, its implementing agencies were actively cooperating with the Agency in human health, water resource management, HRD in nuclear physics, the establishment of a national regulatory framework, energy planning and training and capacity-building opportunities arising under national, regional and international projects such as the establishment of a radiation oncology centre, a radiology diagnostic centre and radiotherapy and radiology services in Kabul.

208. The Nuclear Act, drafted by the Afghan Atomic Energy High Commission with support from the Agency, had been passed by Parliament in 2015, and radiation safety regulations for waste management and transport of radioactive materials were being drafted with the Agency's technical support. Such efforts would further improve the legal and regulatory framework, including a

regulatory system for radiation safety and protection required for the application of nuclear S&T in Afghanistan.

209. The National Peace and Development Framework, a five-year strategic outline for achieving self-reliance and sustainable development and identifying areas most in need of international support, would be submitted at the following week's International Conference on Afghanistan in Brussels. Nuclear technology applications to human health, food, agriculture, water resource management and industrial applications would be crucial to the implementation of the country's national priority programmes.

210. Afghanistan was in favour of the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East, welcomed the continuing implementation of the JCPOA and commended the Agency for its endeavours to ensure full JCPOA implementation.

211. Consultations between the Agency and Afghanistan were under way in order to draft Afghanistan's 2017–2021 CPF and to identify its priorities. Afghanistan commended the Agency for the support provided to date and reaffirmed its commitment to developing its regulatory framework, including for radiation safety and protection. It hoped that it would receive greater support, including through the TCF, for the new CFP.

212. Ms KHECHANE-NTOANE (Lesotho) acknowledged the Agency's achievements in implementing the programme in 2015 and in advising, guiding and assisting Member States. Lesotho had highly appreciated the Director General's visit, during which fruitful consultations had given impetus politically and administratively to the implementation of IAEA-supported projects.

213. It regarded the SDGs and the Paris Agreement adopted at COP21 as major achievements by States acting in concert, thus betokening the significance of diplomacy and negotiations to the attainment of world peace and prosperity. It considered that the Agency would play a crucial role in attaining the SDGs and climate targets by promoting peace, improving health, eradicating hunger and protecting the environment.

214. Lesotho commended the TCP for its role in achieving national development goals and the global development agenda, while enabling States to resolve country-specific challenges and raise people's living standards. It hoped, through the TCP, to use nuclear technology safely and securely to enhance agricultural productivity and food security, establish the first radiotherapy facility for cancer diagnostic and therapeutic management, increase ground water resources management and strengthen the national energy strategy.

215. In view of the need for a regulatory framework, a bill on the nuclear safety institutional arrangements and regulatory framework would be submitted shortly to Parliament.

216. The Agency had continued to support capacity building through training courses, workshops, seminars and attachments to Lesotho's ministries and agencies; two doctors would begin specialized training in oncology early in 2017, while four would train as medical physicists.

217. Lesotho welcomed the support provided by the Agency to AFRA, which had played an important role in building capacity in Africa and in promoting the exchange of ideas and best practices.

218. Lesotho had been paying its fair share of contributions to the Agency, it had made voluntary pledges to the TCP and was committed to doing so in future.

219. It was gratified by the strong cooperation between the Agency and the African Union in the campaign to eradicate the tsetse fly, trypanosomosis and mosquito-borne diseases and by the Agency's

cooperation with FAO to promote the use of nuclear techniques in agriculture. It was also gratified by the financial and in-kind contributions made for ReNuAL by twenty-five Member States and AFRA to permit the commencement of construction work. It praised, in particular, the Friends of ReNuAL for striving tirelessly to make the project a success.

220. Lesotho welcomed the entry into force of the 2005 amendment to the CPPNM, Iran's commitment to and compliance with the JCPOA and the nuclear-security support that it had received in the form of IAEA nuclear security workshops and training courses, in particular the national training course on the security of radioactive sources. It would participate at the appropriate level in the International Conference on Nuclear Security.

221. Mr HALIMOVIĆ (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that his country had adopted the most important international agreements relating to the Agency's work and that, as a Member of the Agency since 1995, it remained committed to achieving universalization and the effective implementation of the NPT and recognized the safeguards system as the only mechanism for verifying the non-diversion of nuclear materials to military purposes and for ensuring compliance with non-proliferation obligations undertaken by NPT States Parties. Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomed the entry into force of the amendment to the CPPNM, which had demonstrated international determination to strengthen nuclear security globally and had reduced the risk of smuggling of nuclear material and of sabotage to nuclear facilities.

222. Bosnia and Herzegovina highly valued the Agency's TC and, with the Agency's assistance, had upgraded its radiation protection and nuclear safety capacities and had harmonized regulations with Agency standards and Euratom directives.

223. Bosnia and Herzegovina voiced concern at activities relating to the construction by Croatia of a storage and disposal facility for low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste near the border between the two countries. Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina had participated in three public consultations held in Croatia on the proposed strategy for the disposal of radioactive waste, disused sources and spent nuclear fuel, at which they had voiced concerns over the environmental impact on the country. The Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people living near the border with Croatia and the river Una had objected strongly to the construction of a radioactive waste storage and disposal facility in Trgovska Gora. . Bosnia and Herzegovina had still not received a reply to questions submitted to Croatia on the proposed strategy and its environmental impact study. Bosnia and Herzegovina invoked Article 27 of the Joint Convention, which provided that transboundary transport of spent fuel or radioactive waste could be approved only where the destination country had the necessary administrative and technical capacity and the regulatory structure to manage it a manner consistent with the Convention; it called on Slovenia, as a potential State of origin for the transboundary movement of radioactive waste from the Krško NPP, to comply fully and rigorously with the measures and obligations set out in the Joint Convention.

224. Mr SAN LWIN (Myanmar) congratulated the Agency on its 60 years of work to promote and strengthen global nuclear safety and security and to contribute to non-proliferation by preventing the use of nuclear material and facilities for non-peaceful purposes. The Agency played a major role in helping the international community to achieve the SDGs and had made valuable contributions to global social and economic development by helping its Member States to use nuclear S&T productively in a range of power and non-power applications.

225. The contribution of PACT, in particular, to developing countries had been invaluable, as radiotherapy contributed to cancer control all over the world. Opportunities to strengthen the health-care component of Myanmar's radiation safety infrastructure and to improve the management of radioactive sources had been identified during an imPACT review in 2015.

226. Myanmar believed that the TCP was an important feature in the transfer of nuclear technology to Member States and in the development of peaceful applications of atomic energy for their sustainable social and economic development. It was implementing 15 national projects under the TCP, taking part in regional TC projects and coordinating research projects in the areas of health, food, agriculture, industry, livestock, environment, water resource management, nuclear S&T and nuclear safety and security.

227. Myanmar was grateful to the Agency for the assistance that it had provided in training, expertise and procurement under TC projects, which had been instrumental in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology in Myanmar, which hoped that TC with the Agency would be sustainable and strengthened to the maximum degree.

228. To support global nuclear security and to fulfil its international obligations, Myanmar had been participating, since 2013 in the INSSP, under which it had conducted national and regional workshops and meetings to strengthen national nuclear security regimes and nuclear security infrastructure and to exchange nuclear security information with other countries in the region. Myanmar was at the final stage of ratifying the CNS and the CPPNM.

229. Myanmar believed that NWFZs and treaties were effective measures for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. It was a State Party to the NPT and to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone; it had signed the safeguards agreement, the small quantities protocol and the additional protocol, and it had ratified the CTBT. It supported the total elimination of nuclear weapons and had tabled a resolution on nuclear disarmament every year in the UNGA First Committee. It supported the Agency in its dedicated service and contribution to the promotion of safe, secure and peaceful applications of atomic energy.

230. Mr MERO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the health, hunger and energy goals highlighted by the Scientific Forum were pertinent to his country's social and economic development. Its CPF, which had capitalized on Agency-provided technology that could contribute significantly to the overall development agenda, had focused on the contribution of nuclear technology to the SDGs, the people's well-being, protection of the planet and wealth creation.

231. As doubts had been raised about the exclusively peaceful applications of nuclear technologies in some countries' nuclear programmes, Tanzania urged all States to cooperate fully with the Agency in fulfilling their international safeguards obligations and to implement transparency measures. It called on the international community to act boldly to counter the threat to international peace and security posed by international terrorists and the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery. It also called on all States not Parties to the NPT and related treaties to accede to them without delay, stressing that action to increase the peaceful use of nuclear energy must be taken in a manner consistent with nuclear non-proliferation commitments and standards.

232. Tanzania commended the IRRS mission under which its radiation and nuclear safety regulatory framework and activities had been reviewed in 2015. Its Atomic Energy Commission and domestic stakeholders were implementing IAEA-assisted programmes on radioactive waste management, environmental radiation monitoring, radiological emergency response preparedness and compliance with international conventions on atomic energy matters.

233. In a comprehensive and coordinated response to the steady rise in cancer morbidity and mortality in Tanzania, a national cancer control strategy had been formulated on staff training and screening for breast, cervical and prostate cancers in regional hospitals. Tanzania welcomed the assistance provided under PACT, through which lives had been saved in Tanzania, which would require more machines, centres, doctors, nurses and technicians in order to meet future needs.

234. Dairy farming was a major source of income for the people of Zanzibar, where action had been taken to eliminate the tsetse fly in collaboration with the Agency in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The forthcoming CPF would include a project designed to improve indigenous cattle breeds through enhanced artificial insemination and to promote smallholder dairy producers in Tango and Zanzibar, thus improving the livelihood of small-scale milk producers and enhancing youth employment, reducing poverty and raising the society's nutrition status.

235. Tanzania reaffirmed its commitment to meeting its obligations and to supporting the Agency's efforts to achieve its mandated objectives. It had honoured its IAEA obligations by contributing its share of the budget in a timely manner and it undertook to pay its TCF share in full.

236. Ms SINJELA (Zambia) commended the Director General for his able and wise leadership and said that Zambia would support his candidacy for another term at the helm of the Secretariat.

237. Welcoming the new Members and the States admitted to membership, Zambia considered that the continued growth in membership betokened States' confidence in the Agency.

238. Zambia had embarked on initiatives such as local HRD programmes in various fields of nuclear S&T, for which it would require IAEA technical expertise. It would continue to build on TCP achievements and noted that its implementation rate had risen significantly in the past year in areas such as radiation protection, the strengthening of oncological services and the counterpart funding mechanism for IAEA-supported projects.

239. It had established a radiation protection authority to protect workers, the public and the environment from the harmful effects of ionizing radiation; it would continue to support the authority by increasing funding and by recruiting technical staff. Its legal framework was being reviewed in order to cover regulatory matters for which the current legislation did not provide. It hoped to receive IAEA support for the establishment of a centre of excellence for radiation detection equipment calibration and instrumentation.

240. Training in various regulatory features had been provided to technical staff, and Zambia had hosted two IAEA expert missions, had participated in three scientific visits and had acquired core equipment, thus enhancing regulatory functions for current and future radiotherapy facilities, research centres, manufacturing and mining industries and other applications.

241. Zambia planned to conduct a national radiation survey during the 2018–2019 TC cycle in order to develop a national radiation dose baseline for future environmental monitoring and to enhance the monitoring of activities.

242. Owing to the establishment of its first radiotherapy centre, patient care and access to radiotherapy had been improved. Another two radiotherapy centres would be built to improve access to radiation therapy and chemotherapy in the northern and southern parts of the country, and a dedicated theatre would be established at the Cancer Diseases Hospital to enhance cancer management by providing surgical oncology. It was committed to expanding cancer prevention and control programmes countrywide and to providing financially stable, sustainable and quality public health care for all. It was strengthening the application of nuclear sciences by establishing a nuclear medicine department at the Cancer Diseases Hospital, thus building diagnostic and therapeutic capacities. It was considering the establishment of a training centre to support local training courses for nurses, clinical and radiation oncologists and medical physicists, thus reducing the overseas training bill and providing a critical mass of trained personnel to support the decentralization of oncology services. It hoped that the Agency would continue to support it as it broadened its provision of cancer treatment services.

243. Zambia had opened a funding window to provide local counterpart funding for IAEA-supported projects. It would enhance cooperation with the Agency and demonstrate Zambia's commitment to

using nuclear energy safely and sustainably for peace and development. It congratulated the IAEA on its 60-year endeavour to promote the safe and peaceful use of nuclear S&T in furtherance of human well-being and prosperity and considered that the Agency had made a real difference to the lives of millions of people in Zambia and worldwide.

244. Zambia undertook to make its full assessed voluntary contribution to the TCF and AFRA and looked forward to improved collaboration with AFRA and to continued support from the IAEA and AFRA for the establishment of a nuclear science institute, complementing and enhancing the activities of the College of Radiation Therapy and Radiation Oncology and dedicated to training young Zambian scientists and technologists in the various fields and applications of nuclear S&T.

245. Zambia reiterated its resolve on nuclear non-proliferation and hoped that the Agency would be supported in ensuring that safeguards were applied most fairly and comprehensively to achieve a just solution for all.

246. Mr DOWLING (Ireland) said that Ireland was fully committed to working with its partners in the international community to achieve progress in each of the three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT. Ireland had therefore welcomed the 2015 nuclear security resolution, which had drawn attention to the link between nuclear security and multilateral nuclear disarmament, while stressing the urgency of the latter, since only 17% of fissionable material worldwide was used for civilian purposes.

247. Ireland called for an end to the current situation, marked by significant progress in non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies but little progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament. Given the pivotal role of the NPT both in the pursuit of multilateral nuclear disarmament and in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes, Ireland unequivocally called on those States that had not yet done so to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States.

248. It looked forward to the December 2016 International Conference on Nuclear Security at which it would be represented at the ministerial level and it hoped that the ministerial declaration would be ambitious and comprehensive, and would address nuclear security in its totality. Ireland would draw attention to the clear and irrefutable link between nuclear security and disarmament.

249. It welcomed the historic agreement reached on 14 July 2015 between the E3/EU+3 and Iran, and the continued progress in that domain. The JCPOA was entirely consistent with the principles of the NPT and underlined what could be achieved within the framework of the NPT.

250. Ireland regretted that the DPRK had continued nuclear test explosions and ballistic missile tests, in flagrant violation of UNSC resolutions, thus posing a significant and growing threat to regional peace and stability. It fully shared the Director General's concern at the DPRK's nuclear programme and urged the DPRK to comply fully with all of its international obligations, to cease all nuclear testing and to resume the talks on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula immediately and without preconditions.

251. It was questionable, however, whether calls on the DPRK to cease nuclear testing rang true given the lack of progress in the CTBT's entry into force. Ireland called on the eight Annex II States to sign and or ratify the CTBT so that the Agency's message to the DPRK would be coherent and unambiguous. The importance that Ireland attached to the CTBT had been demonstrated by the week-long national data centre workshop that it had hosted in Dublin in May 2016 to mark the 20th anniversary of the CTBT.

252. Ireland regretted in particular that the 2015 NPT Review Conference had made no meaningful progress towards the long overdue implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

International peace and security would be significantly strengthened, and the NPT bolstered, by progress in the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs in the Middle East, with due regard for the legitimate security concerns of all States in the region.

253. The dialogue between coastal and shipping States on the improvement of communication on the maritime transport of radioactive materials was of particular interest to Ireland as an island State, and it commended the Agency for supporting the dialogue, which remained open to all Member States.

254. Ireland had had the honour of serving on the Board of Governors in the previous two years, during which it had underlined the importance of PACT and had funded PACT missions in some States. It had participated in a PACT side event during the General Conference in 2015.

255. Ireland underlined the importance that it attached to the promotion within the United Nations system of gender equality, which was an organization-wide issue and not merely a women's issue. Gender diversity ensured better decision-making, it was of particular importance in the context of disarmament discussions.

Mr Bailey (Canada), Vice-President, took the Chair.

256. Mr CHIKONDO (Zimbabwe), congratulating the Agency on its 60th anniversary, stressed the importance to Zimbabwe of the Agency's mandate, work, multifaceted assistance and support, with emphasis on health, animal disease control, tsetse fly eradication, radiation and nuclear safety, crop breeding, energy planning and capacity building, through which the Agency had contributed to improvements in the livelihoods and general well-being of the citizens of Zimbabwe after it became a Member in 1986.

257. Zimbabwe's CPF for 2016–2020 would focus on aligning its TC activities with the SDGs and its Agenda for Sustainable Socioeconomic Transformation, under which nuclear techniques would be harnessed in order to attain SDGs relating to agricultural productivity, human health, access to clean water and energy.

258. Zimbabwe commended the Agency for the assistance provided during the 2015–2016 programming cycle through a variety of projects covering multi-location evaluation trials of elite mutant lines, the optimization of water use and soil productivity for increased food security in drylands and the use of SIT to eradicate the tsetse fly from a national park and its environs. It welcomed the approval of funding for a major national project on molecular epidemiology, research, diagnostic methods, tissue culture and production of biological reagents and antigens for the surveillance of diseases of economic and zoonotic importance.

259. The Agency's contribution to cancer control through technical advice, fellowships for medical radiation users and the procurement of equipment had been most commendable and had led to the establishment of an MSc degree course in Medical Physics, from which the first batch of students would graduate in 2017. Zimbabwe acknowledged the provision of Agency-funded training for doctors specializing in nuclear medicine, the Agency's technical expertise in strengthening the training of radiation oncologists and radiotherapists and fellowship training through which Zimbabwe's human resource capacity for equipment maintenance and operation had been built.

260. Great strides had been made in radiotherapy provision in the past year, following the commissioning of a state-of-the-art linear accelerator at a hospital at which another modern linear accelerator would be commissioned. The country was ready to host IAEA fellowship holders from the entire African region for training as radiation oncologists and radiotherapists in partnership with the Agency.

261. The Agency's ongoing cooperation in strengthening Zimbabwe's nuclear security infrastructure under the country's INSSP had been most welcome, and great progress had been made in finalizing the nuclear security detection architecture for the deployment of detection equipment at entry and exit points and at internal strategic locations, which would crucially improve Zimbabwe's capability to deal with nuclear and other radioactive material outside radiation control. Zimbabwe welcomed the Agency's support in strengthening capabilities to respond to nuclear security events and the Agency-facilitated national workshop held to draw up a national capability development plan. It fully acknowledged its responsibility for security and accordingly undertook to strengthen its nuclear security infrastructure further. It considered that the International Conference on Nuclear Security would be a platform for strengthening world nuclear security.

262. Mr ALSHAHMAN (Iraq) said that his country regarded the Director-General's expertise and competence as assets to the Agency's work and therefore supported his candidacy for a third term at the helm of the Secretariat.

263. Iraq was engaged in a war on behalf of the entire world against the most ferocious terrorist group in modern history, a terrorist group that targeted citizens' security and livelihoods and devastated the infrastructure, using all available means to rend and destroy the fabric of Iraqi society. The government had gone to great lengths to overrun terrorist strongholds and continued to regain its territory. It had begun to assess the status of facilities in recaptured areas in order to check for hazardous materials, in particular radiological material and sources. Iraq still needed international support urgently in order to restore life to those areas.

264. Iraq had already ratified the CPPNM and ICSANT and had taken steps to implement both conventions by forming special convention-monitoring committees.

265. Its CPF for 2018–2023 would be signed shortly and was crucial to regulating cooperation between Iraq and the IAEA. Its INSSP institutional capacity-building activities covered radiological facilities, material protection, information security and investigation of nuclear crime.

266. It was urgently seeking means for the safe disposal of radiological waste from decommissioned destroyed nuclear sites and of material produced by medical, industrial and oil facilities. It had adopted basic principles for a national nuclear waste management policy and had formed a national committee to draft the policy and formulate a radiological waste management, processing and disposal strategy, which should be completed in the first quarter of 2017, after review by the IAEA. With EU support, the site selection study and the necessary design and planning for the construction of permanent underground storage facilities for radiological sources and waste in Iraq had been awarded to a European corporation.

267. Iraq had availed itself of the Agency's TCP to build capacities to use nuclear applications for national development. It commended the Agency for its excellent work in supporting Member States in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and for strengthening the related monitoring mechanisms.

268. Iraq believed that the elimination of nuclear weapons and other WMDs from the Middle East was crucial to the achievement of regional security and stability and that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of WMDs in the Middle East would have a positive political and security impact. It also believed that the application of Agency safeguards throughout the Middle East, without exception, would be another crucial step and that the establishment of an NWFZ would lead to a settlement in the Middle East. Iraq regretted that the Secretariat could not make further progress in fulfilling its mandate under resolution GC(59)/RES/15.

269. Iraq considered that all States had an inalienable right to develop nuclear programmes for peaceful purposes in furtherance of their development, without let or hindrance by a particular group or imposition of mandatory, international conditions prejudicial to a State's interests.

270. It hoped that the State-level concept would yield positive results in strengthening safeguards without creating any additional rights or obligations for States or the Agency and without changing in any way the interpretation of rights and obligations under the safeguards agreement.

271. Mr RIZZO ALVARADO (Honduras) commended the Agency for its involvement in SDG adoption, monitoring and implementation and in strategic planning, and encouraged it to continue to contribute to Member States' development through the TCP. It acknowledged the support that it had received to date in the areas of cancer treatment, early screening of Zika virus and other mosquito-borne diseases, isotope techniques for the identification of water sources and the measurement of water pollutants, radiation safety and protection, training and the transfer of knowledge for the proper use of nuclear technology.

272. Honduras had forged ahead in its commitment to meet requirements for the installation of brachytherapy equipment and for drawing up the national radiation protection programme, while strengthening the regulatory authority, expanding the dosimetry service and following PACT recommendations on action to improve cancer treatment in the country. It was revising and complementing regulations and protocols on radioactive waste management and transport and on radiation safety. Its 2016–2021 CPF, designed to improve cooperation and optimize assistance, would be signed in late 2016.

273. It commended the visit by the Deputy Director General for Technical Cooperation, during which the results of efforts in radiological protection, health, the environment and food security had been highlighted and views had been exchanged with the main officials. It restated its interest in continued collaboration with ARCAL in order to promote the exchange of methods and knowledge with a view to the use of nuclear technology in the region.

274. Honduras had been faithful to the letter and the spirit of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and therefore remained committed to nuclear disarmament and to non-proliferation. It was gratified that more and more States were acknowledging the peaceful uses and applications of nuclear technology and, praising the Director General's efforts to those ends, voiced support for his re-election for another term at the helm of the Secretariat.

275. Mr ABDEL SHAFI (Palestine) commended the Agency for the action taken to build Palestine's human and infrastructural capacities and for approving projects for the 2018–2019 cycle in strategic areas such as the development of infrastructure for nuclear energy to be used safely and securely and the construction of the nuclear medicine facility at Khaled al-Hassan Hospital for the performance of cancer treatment and bone marrow transplants locally rather than abroad.

276. Palestine commended the Secretariat for the national projects implemented under the TCP in areas such as radiation protection, agriculture, medicine, infrastructure and legislation in collaboration with Palestinian ministries, universities and laboratories, which had all yielded very positive outcomes. Projects had been designed specifically to reinforce the radiation protection and monitoring infrastructure, strengthen Palestinian law on the safe use of nuclear energy, manage ground water by means of nuclear technology, improve wheat seeds and fodder, and prevent soil erosion by using nuclear technologies. Palestine hoped to implement research-based projects to improve strategic crops, conduct the radiation mapping of Palestine and improve child nutrition.

277. Palestine was keenly interested in promoting the universalization of the NPT, to which it had acceded, thus affirming its responsibility to advance all international causes that contributed to

international and regional peace and security and to the elimination of nuclear weapons and other WMDs. It undertook to work closely with the Agency in order to conclude a CSA. While agreeing that the IAEA must eschew political alignment, Palestine, which lay at the heart of the Middle East, stressed that it could not agree to be ignored.

278. It was occupied by a State that reportedly possessed a huge nuclear arsenal as well as nuclear facilities that had not been covered by a CSA, which clearly and unequivocally threatened the peace and security of the people of Palestine, the region and the world.

279. While Member States were strengthening the nuclear security system, Israel had been allowed to keep the people of Palestine exposed to the potentially catastrophic consequences of an accident at one of its nuclear facilities. Palestine did not have the national capabilities to withstand the devastating impact on its people and environment of such an accident, and its fears should not be ignored, given the reports of structural deterioration to many Israeli nuclear facilities.

280. It voiced deep concern at Israel's growing military nuclear capability and at its continued rejection of all calls to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear programmes and facilities under comprehensive safeguards. The nuclear powers' belief that Israel was a responsible State that posed no threat was wholly unacceptable and contradicted by the reality of its hostile behaviour in Palestine and elsewhere. Its indiscriminate military aggression against the people of Palestine and repeated use of excessive force in the region had raised questions about its responsibility in nuclear matters.

281. Palestine regretted that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and WMDs in the Middle East had not been convened in 2012, despite the Arab Group's efforts and flexibility. It decried the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference and the determination of certain States to protect Israel. Palestine, which considered that the five nuclear powers and the States organizing the conference were in duty bound to make every effort to universalize the NPT and to expedite the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and WMDs in the Middle East, had consistently supported efforts to those ends and had responded positively to the Jaako Laajava initiative. It favoured a comprehensive review by the Arab States of their nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament policies to ensure that the international community faced up to its legal and moral responsibilities and to put an end to the policy of double standards, and it stressed that the item on Israeli nuclear capabilities had been kept on the agenda of the General Conference in order to prevent Israel from flouting the nuclear non-proliferation system and from disregarding the relevant UNGA and UNSC resolutions.

282. Mr ROZHKOV (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization) said that the 20th anniversary of the CTBT was an occasion to reflect on the Treaty's achievements. By adopting the Treaty, all ratifying States had declared their absolute commitment to a nuclear-test-free world. He acknowledged the determined efforts of Myanmar and Swaziland, both of which had deposited their instruments of ratification during the previous week.

283. In the past 20 years, great strides had been made in establishing the CTBT verification regime. The International Monitoring System, comprising 337 facilities worldwide, was more than 90% complete. It delivered information in a timely and verifiable manner and had proven its effectiveness and operational readiness on many occasions. Its inestimable value had been demonstrated on 9 September 2016, when it had detected unusual seismic activity in the DPRK. Data and data products had been provided to Member States by the International Data Centre shortly after the event and a technical briefing had been held within hours. The CTBTO had demonstrated the readiness of the verification regime through the Integrated Field Exercise held in Jordan in November 2014, which had not only strengthened the Organization's capacity to carry out on-site inspections when requested and approved by Member States, but had also served as an important confidence-building measure.

284. In addition to the on-site inspection equipment, monitoring stations, data centres and communication infrastructure, it was cutting-edge S&T that gave the Treaty's verification regime its exceptional value. To that end, the biennial S&T conferences had been designed to enhance the CTBTO's strong relations with the broader S&T community. The 2015 conference, attended by nearly 1110 registered participants, had been the largest to date.

285. The 20th anniversary had afforded an opportunity to advance the Treaty's entry into force. Although the CTBT was closer than ever to universality, with 183 signatory and 166 ratifying States, it would not enter into force until it had been ratified by the remaining eight Annex II States.

286. In June 2016, leaders and policymakers had gathered at the 20 Years CTBT Ministerial Meeting to discuss and review its entry into force and to reinvigorate that process. , Foreign ministers from 34 States had joined the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the biennial Friends of the CTBT Ministerial Meeting in New York during the previous week to call forcefully for the Treaty's long delayed entry into force, and the UNSC had adopted its first ever CTBT-specific resolution, which had constituted significant political support for the entry into force of the Treaty, reinforced the global stance against nuclear testing and further strengthened the international community's resolve to complete the build-up of the Treaty's verification regime. Such achievements notwithstanding, the entry into force of the Treaty remained the only definitive means of putting an end to nuclear testing.

287. There were many parallels between the CTBTO and the Agency: both worked to create a safe and secure world, free from the threat of nuclear weapons, and both contributed to the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The principles and methods underpinning their work also brought them together. Multilateralism, verification and cooperation had formed the basis for many of the Agency's non-proliferation accomplishments. Both organizations had a large membership and relied on S&T to serve and support their Member States. Both the Agency's safeguards and the International Monitoring System required political will and technical tools to succeed. Those shared needs highlighted the need for enhanced cooperation between the CTBTO and the Agency. Stronger cooperation ties between them would bring States closer to the world that they wished to leave to the next generation — a world that was safe, secure and free from the threats of nuclear weapons.

The meeting rose at 9.05 p.m.