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Plenary

Record of the Second Meeting

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President: Ms ŽIAKOVÁ (Slovakia)

Later: Mr ISTRATE (Romania)

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Abbreviations used in this record

AAEA	Arab Atomic Energy Agency
AFRA	African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
AP	additional protocol
ARCAL	Co-operation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
Assistance Convention	Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency
CNS	Convention on Nuclear Safety
CPF	Country Programme Framework
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSA	comprehensive safeguards agreement
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
E3/EU+3	France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the European Union plus China, the Russian Federation and the United States of America
EAPCCO	Eastern African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization
EU	European Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HEU	high enriched uranium
ICERR	IAEA-designated International Centre based on Research Reactor
INIR	Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review
IRDP	International Regulatory Development Partnership
INSSP	Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan
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

Abbreviations used in this record (continued)

LDCs	least developed countries
LEU	low enriched uranium
MNSR	miniature neutron source reactor
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NSF	Nuclear Security Fund
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
PACT	Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy
Pelindaba Treaty	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty
PUI	Peaceful Uses Initiative
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
RSA	Revised Supplementary Agreement Concerning the Provision of Technical Assistance by the International Atomic Energy Agency
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SESAME	Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East
SLC	State-level concept
SMR	small and medium sized or modular reactor
TC	technical cooperation
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund
Tlatelolco Treaty	Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WMDs	weapons of mass destruction

4. Arrangements for the Conference

(a) Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items for initial discussion

1. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had recommended that the agenda for the 62nd session consist of all items listed in document GC(62)/1 except item 2, the supplementary item contained in document GC(62)/1/Add.1, and the additional item contained in document GC(62)/1/Add.3 by waiving the time limit prescribed in Rule 15 of the Rules and Regulations. With regard to the allocation of items for initial discussion, it had recommended that all items be taken up for discussion as indicated in GC(62)/1 and Add.1. It had recommended that the additional item contained in GC(62)/1/Add.3 should first be considered in the Committee of the Whole. With regard to the order of items contained in documents GC(62)/1 and Add.1, the General Committee had recommended that the order should be as set out in those documents. With regard to the additional item contained in document GC(62)/1/Add.3, it had recommended that that item follow the item circulated in GC(62)/1/Add.1.

2. It was so decided.

(b) Closing date of the session and opening date of the next session

3. The PRESIDENT said that the General Committee had recommended that the Conference set Friday, 21 September 2018, as the closing date of the 62nd regular session, and Monday, 16 September 2019, as the opening date of the 63rd regular session.

4. It was so decided.

6. General debate and Annual Report for 2017 (resumed) (GC(62)/3 and additional information)

5. Mr JACQ (France) said that his country would continue to support the Agency in all of its important statutory activities. Given the current heightened tensions, the Agency's safeguards system was fundamental in upholding the non-proliferation regime established by the NPT. In ensuring that the Agency remained in a position to fulfil its mandate, the first step was to progress towards the universalization of the safeguards system. The combination of a CSA and an AP remained the current verification standard and the only means for the Agency to draw credible conclusions about the exclusively peaceful nature of a State's nuclear activities.

6. As continuously strengthening the efficiency of safeguards implementation was another important priority, France welcomed the progressive implementation of SLAs. In light of the gains resulting from their application to States under integrated safeguards, as reported to the Board of Governors by the Director General, the application of SLAs to all Member States would allow for the optimal use of the objective data available. His country would continue to contribute its expertise and financial support through the French Safeguards Support Programme, which had just marked its 35th anniversary.

7. With regard to the DPRK nuclear programme, he said that the summits held in Panmunjeom and Singapore were significant events that had helped ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Nevertheless, the DPRK was still pursuing its nuclear and ballistic missile programme, in violation of international

law and the non-proliferation regime, and remained a threat to regional and international security. Specific undertakings aimed at the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the DPRK must start with the provision of a precise inventory of the nuclear and ballistic missile programme and concrete actions towards dismantling it, a process in which the Agency should play a key role. To attain the goal of the denuclearization of the DPRK, Member States must remain united in strictly applying the UN Security Council sanctions.

8. Turning to the application of Agency safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran, he said that the JCPOA was an essential tool for non-proliferation and security, which France was determined to preserve. The regrettable decision of one party to withdraw from the plan could not call into question the Agency's commendable work in monitoring its implementation. Iran should continue to meet all its nuclear obligations in a rigorous, uninterrupted and transparent manner, with no exceptions.

9. France had recently benefited from the Agency's nuclear safety and security services by hosting a large number of peer review missions. His country encouraged all Member States to take advantage of those essential services by submitting their own safety and security arrangements to such external review.

10. As a low-carbon energy source, nuclear power contributed significantly to combating climate change and to the attainment of the goals of the Paris Agreement. Nuclear power remained a major component of his country's energy mix; France had one of the largest fleets in the world. The national energy programme would be updated before the end of 2018, resulting in a precise implementation schedule for the law on energy transition, bringing the share of nuclear power to 50% of the energy mix. Those efforts would be facilitated by the country's restructured nuclear sector now that the work begun in 2015 was complete.

11. France always stood ready to place its capabilities and infrastructure at the disposal of the Agency's assistance programmes; for example, French personnel had made their technical and industrial skills available to the Agency in the field of decommissioning nuclear facilities.

12. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology: Addressing Current and Emerging Development Challenges to be held in November 2018 would provide a useful opportunity to highlight the various applications of nuclear science and technology in fields such as health, the environment, agriculture and industry. Many Member States had extensive requirements and high expectations of the Agency in that regard. Apart from the identification of areas of application for the latest available technologies and new cooperation opportunities, the Conference would focus on the promotion of closer coordination between the different Agency programmes such as ICERR, the Collaborating Centres and the TC projects.

13. Mr JIBRIL (Nigeria) expressed appreciation to the Director General and the Secretariat for their work to ensure better and more effective service delivery to Member States. He also wished the Director General a speedy recovery and a safe return to Vienna.

14. Nigeria appreciated the support it had continued to receive through its various TC arrangements with the Agency; there had been tremendous achievements in the areas of research reactor safety, radiation protection, radiological emergency preparedness, environmental monitoring, and in the applications of nuclear science and technology in several areas including health, agriculture, water resources and human capacity development. His country looked forward to a more mutually beneficial partnership with the Agency.

15. His country had made ongoing efforts towards the conversion of its research reactor from HEU to LEU fuel as part of its commitment and contribution to global peace and security. It appreciated the support and cooperation of the Agency, China, Norway, the United Kingdom, the USA and other partners in that regard.

16. Having signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in September 2017, Nigeria would continue to support that legally binding international agreement and its early entry into force.

17. Nigeria's CPF for 2018–2023 had been approved and would be signed on the margins of the current session of the General Conference. Its key priorities were food and agriculture, health and nutrition, water resources and environment, energy, and industry.

18. His country noted the recent efforts aimed at the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and called for continued diplomatic engagement to achieve a lasting peace. Nigeria would also continue to support the implementation of the NWFZ in Africa and in other regions by sustaining the achievements under the Pelindaba Treaty.

19. Nigeria appreciated the Agency's ongoing important role in its development of a national nuclear security detection architecture road map and welcomed the International Conference on the Security of Radioactive Material to be held in December 2018. His country appreciated the Agency's efforts aimed at promoting the importance of the Early Notification and Assistance Conventions and the improvements made thereto. He also urged the Agency to continue to improve its procedures and operational tools, sharing them with Member States as appropriate.

20. In June 2018, his country had been approved by the Steering Committee of the Regulatory Cooperation Forum as an active recipient country eligible for support, which would help in building a robust regulatory system. Nigeria also attached great importance to reinforcing all aspects of nuclear safety.

21. His country welcomed the 2018 Scientific Forum on Nuclear Technology for Climate: Mitigation, Monitoring and Adaptation. In that regard, his country's efforts to generate electricity from nuclear resources had come at a most suitable time. Aware that Lake Chad was drying up, his Government had been working with other regional leaders on recharging the lake, and would look forward to the outcomes of the Scientific Forum.

22. He expressed appreciation for the Agency's provision of water isotope analysis through laser spectroscopy and training programmes and workshops to promote his country's capacity to apply isotope hydrology for the study of transboundary aquifer systems and basins. In that connection, Nigeria was one of five pilot countries participating in the project 'Adding the Groundwater Dimension to the Understanding and Management of Shared Water Resources in the Sahel Region'.

23. Nigeria had begun the process towards acquiring a multipurpose research reactor to contribute to several developmental activities. It welcomed the convening of the 2018 Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology, in which it would participate at a high level.

24. Mr DUNCAN (United Kingdom) said that in an increasingly uncertain and dangerous world, faced with the destabilizing consequences of States seeking nuclear weapons, there was a clear need to work together to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear material. The Agency played a vital role both in addressing such threats and in helping States to reap the enormous benefits of civil nuclear technologies.

25. The JCPOA had been a significant recent diplomatic success that stood to achieve lasting advances for international security, and the Agency played a crucial role through its monitoring and verification work. The United Kingdom remained committed to the JCPOA and welcomed reports confirming Iran's compliance with its nuclear commitments. In order for the JCPOA to survive, it was important that all remaining parties continued to implement it in full and that Iran continued to cooperate fully with the Agency.

26. The United Kingdom welcomed the progress made at the US–DPRK summit in Singapore in June 2018, but existing sanctions should remain until the DPRK took concrete steps towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the removal of its ballistic missile capability.

27. Noting that the Syrian Arab Republic had failed to meet its safeguards obligations since 2011, the United Kingdom called upon both Syria and the DPRK to resume full compliance and cooperation with the Agency.

28. His country supported the Agency's efforts to strengthen and develop its safeguards work by providing expertise and resources and called upon all Member States to ratify an AP as the gold standard of verification.

29. The United Kingdom thanked the Secretariat and the Board of Governors for supporting its preparations for leaving the EU and Euratom. In June 2018, his country had signed an agreement with the Agency that provided for a cooperative framework for meeting its obligations as a responsible nuclear-weapon State when no longer a member of the EU. His country wished to build on the Agency's valuable work supporting the civil nuclear sector, for example, launching a nuclear sector deal in June 2018 to simplify and reduce the cost of constructing and decommissioning nuclear power plants.

30. Hinkley Point C in England, which was currently under construction, would be the first Next Generation Nuclear Plant in the United Kingdom and efforts to find sponsors for other new projects were ongoing.

31. Given that access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology could not responsibly be promoted without ensuring safety, security and non-proliferation, the United Kingdom was proud to remain one of the biggest contributors of financial and technical support to the Agency across all of its programmes. Having pledged a contribution of €3.7 million to the TCF for 2019, the United Kingdom would continue to pay on time and in full, and called upon all Member States to do the same.

32. The United Kingdom had already contributed £4.1 million in 2018 to the NSF and urged all Member States to support the Agency's work to help Member States implement robust nuclear security regimes. His country would also continue to provide financial and technical support to nuclear safety and safeguards activities.

33. Given Member States' duty to protect their populations and those of their neighbours, effective emergency response should remain a global priority. All Member States were urged to use the appropriate channels for sharing information with the Secretariat, both on a regular basis and in the event of an incident.

34. The Agency must be effectively and efficiently managed within existing resources to ensure that it continued to meet its growing challenges and the demands on its resources, and to reflect the world it served. The United Kingdom stood ready to assist in that regard.

35. Ms MINDAOUDOU SOULEY (Niger) said that her country appreciated the Agency's work, which continued to meet Member States' needs, especially through capacity building and the facilitation of partnerships. The tools and opportunities thus made available to LDCs helped them to meet their challenges. The Niger aimed to maintain and strengthen its active collaboration with the Agency.

36. Her country wished the Director General a speedy recovery.

37. Her country was implementing a sustainable, balanced, participatory and inclusive socio-economic development process. The promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the

introduction of nuclear energy in the national and regional energy mixes was an important element of national policies and strategies.

38. To ensure that its nuclear activities complied with international safety and security standards, the Niger had ratified all relevant conventions and treaties, created an independent and autonomous Nuclear Regulatory Authority, and passed a law on safety, security and peaceful uses of atomic energy, with support and assistance from the Agency.

39. Farmers in the Niger were ill-equipped to deal with the challenges of climate change, which also affected water resources and their associated ecosystems, and provoked accelerated desertification, reduced agricultural production and population displacement, with disastrous effects on food security and nutrition. Significant improvements in that regard had been attained thanks to the implementation of a number of TC projects, however.

40. Nuclear medicine was well established in the Niger and contributed to the treatment of several diseases. The use of radiological examinations by a growing number of health care professionals benefited patients and the country. That contribution would be strengthened through collaboration with the national cancer centre, where work had recently begun on a compliance upgrade required by the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority.

41. While the Niger's uranium deposits held enormous energy potential, falling prices had led to major reorganization of the exploitation companies.

42. Given the vital role of energy in structural economic transformation, her Government was deploying enormous efforts to meet all the challenges facing the Niger and other countries in the region. Having undertaken to implement a nuclear power programme, it had adopted new strategic guidelines. The results of the INIR mission conducted by the Agency in 2018 in 19 areas had been very encouraging. The recommendations and suggestions in the report would be implemented with Agency support.

43. Having joined several regional initiatives, the Niger welcomed the recent creation of the regional energy market of the Economic Community of West African States and its prospects for the development of a regional nuclear power programme.

44. The security environment in the Sahel, and the Niger in particular, required the Government and the international community to implement an effective and sustainable national security regime. Committees responsible for elaborating new policies and strategies had been created in the Niger with Agency support.

45. The Niger had become a member of the forum of the authorities in charge of nuclear safety and security of the G5 Sahel countries and Senegal created in July 2018.

46. The Niger valued the Agency's programmes, peer reviews and consultation services, which helped Member States strengthen their national nuclear safety and security infrastructures; it also benefited from training and various other forms of assistance in its priority areas, through national, regional and international projects. It intended to strengthen its partnership with the Agency in accordance with its CPF for 2016–2021.

47. Mr GYAWALI (Nepal) said that, consistent with his country's deep commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, the values of the Panchsheel Treaty and the norms of world peace, it was only through engagement, negotiations and cooperation in multilateral settings that the world community could address the increasingly complex global challenges it faced.

48. Three years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it was time to consider how nuclear science and technology could be utilized to attain the SDGs. Nepal noted with

satisfaction that the Agency was facilitating that process through its contribution to the attainment of goals related to health, clean water, agriculture, nutrition, food security, climate action and access to energy for all. Such areas were critical to the reduction of poverty, sustained progress and enhancing the benefits of technological advancement for humanity, as encapsulated by the slogan ‘Atoms for Peace and Development’.

49. Nepal deeply valued its membership and partnership with the Agency. Although the use of nuclear science and technology was still very limited in Nepal, the country had broadened its understanding of the applications of nuclear technology and its utility for socio-economic development since becoming a Member State in 2008. Important innovations in medicine, energy and other industrial applications had been developed through the use of nuclear technology. Countries like Nepal needed technical support in properly utilizing nuclear science and technology for development, building capacity, complying with the safeguards regime and ensuring the safety and security of nuclear and radioactive material.

50. Since signing the RSA and the Fifth Agreement to Extend the 1989 RCA, Nepal had been a beneficiary of Agency technical cooperation, which included building national infrastructure for radiation safety, developing radiation health service infrastructure, increasing animal productivity and transboundary disease control, improving crop yields for food security, providing education in nuclear physics and chemistry and conducting non-destructive testing, among others.

51. As a result of the application of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes in Nepal, nuclear medicine services had been strengthened and expanded, cancer diagnosis and treatment were more effective and accessible for poor people, and the capabilities of technical experts and academic and scientific institutions had been improved. Nepal was now prioritizing national programmes and projects in order to sustain its progress and help to implement the SDGs. During the Director General’s visit to Nepal in 2017, the implementation of technical assistance projects had been assessed and areas of future cooperation identified. Nepal wished the Director General a good recovery.

52. Having signed a CSA with the Agency in 1972, Nepal had since then adhered to the provisions of the agreement, championed stringent safeguards measures and Agency verification, introduced nuclear material regulatory directives and adopted a national nuclear policy. In addition, a separate nuclear law to create a sound national regulatory framework was currently being enacted, as only such frameworks could ensure better nuclear security and safety at the global level.

53. The international community should also espouse the principles of general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, particularly chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons. Resources dedicated to armaments should be diverted to peace and development. Sustainable peace could be achieved only through dialogue and collaboration, not through armaments. Science and technology should be used for creating new and fair development opportunities for all, and existing disarmament mechanisms should be made more relevant and effective.

54. Nepal had been one of the original signatories of the NPT, which it had ratified in 1970. Having also signed the CTBT, in 2017, it had supported the adoption of, and later signed, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; priority was being accorded to the ratification of both treaties. A State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, Nepal strongly supported UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and remained fully committed to its implementation. Those international regimes complemented one another in the promotion of the non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament agenda, with the NPT at its centre.

55. As part of its successful transition to democratic peace and stability, Nepal had concluded a decade-long armed conflict, managed arms and armed combatants, integrated those former combatants into society, restructured the State, empowered women and marginalized communities, managed diversity and adopted a democratic constitution, also forming stable governments at various levels. The

process had been led, owned and supported by Nepal's own people. In order to sustain the political gains and build on the democratic foundation laid, Nepal was now focused on attaining economic development.

56. In a globalized world, no country could walk alone in the pursuit of development and prosperity; it was only through partnership, cooperation and collaboration that States could collectively achieve that goal. Nepal was eager to forge that partnership for collective prosperity.

57. Mr TOUKAN (Jordan) said that, in line with its national energy strategy for 2007–2020, his country was building on the progress already made in its nuclear power programme, including through the development of a nuclear power plant and research and training reactors, the prospecting and mining of uranium, the development of human resources, the establishment of a nuclear regulatory authority and the adoption of relevant legislation. Jordan's intention to incorporate nuclear power into its energy mix did not conflict with its belief that renewable energy would be a key part of future power production. Jordan remained convinced that nuclear energy was a sound choice for the generation of electricity, as it played a key role in overcoming challenges such as identifying reliable sources of energy and mitigating the negative environmental impact of traditional energy sources.

58. Jordan was considering developing a nuclear power plant with an SMR, as that technology seemed best-suited to his country's energy market and to achieving the Government's vision. Plans had been developed to build a 1000 MW nuclear reactor in 'Amrah district. The selected site had been visited by an Agency expert mission, and studies on the main aspects of the infrastructure for the plant had been completed.

59. With regard to the use of SMRs in the short term, Jordan had signed a number of memorandums of understanding and agreements with leading manufacturers of SMR technology in order to examine the economic feasibility of developing SMRs for various uses, and had employed a methodology provided by the Agency to study the suitability of using SMR technology in Jordan. Given the importance of SMR technology to numerous States, Jordan called on the Agency to intensify its efforts to develop the regulatory infrastructure required to overcome the challenges of licensing SMRs and bringing them into service in an effective and efficient manner.

60. The Jordan Research and Training Reactor had been commissioned at the Jordan University for Science and Technology in December 2016 and brought into service in 2017. In addition to producing medical radioisotopes, it played a pivotal role in training engineers and specialists in nuclear science and applications. The Jordan Food and Drug Administration had licensed the use of radioisotopes and pharmaceuticals produced by the reactor, with the aim of gradually reducing Jordan's dependence on imported products. The reactor would also be used for research into neutron activity in areas of benefit to the industrial, environmental and mining sectors, among others.

61. The SESAME project, with its laboratory centre in Jordan, played an important role in promoting scientific research in pharmacology, natural sciences, medicine, materials science, archaeology and other sciences and in encouraging regional cooperation. Not only SESAME member States, but other neighbouring countries, were benefiting from the research capabilities of the centre, as the first X-ray spectrum experiment had been launched at the centre using one of the first beam lines, which had begun operating in November 2017. The strong response to the official announcement on opening up the first two beam lines for experimentation reflected the scientific credibility of the SESAME facilities and their ability to compete on an international level. Two new beam lines were also scheduled to be brought into service by 2020.

62. With regard to the uranium prospecting project in central Jordan, a third report on uranium ore reserves based on the global classification standards of the Joint Ore Reserves Committee had been published. The design of the pilot station had been completed, and work on construction, the electricity

supply and industrial automation had begun. The station was expected to be brought into service by the end of 2018.

63. He thanked the Agency for providing continuous support to the Jordanian nuclear power programme through national, regional and interregional TC projects, in particular with regard to developing Jordan's nuclear power plant, supporting uranium extraction, improving its radiation and nuclear regulatory infrastructure, encouraging the use of nuclear research reactors and promoting nuclear applications in the areas of medicine, agriculture and water resources management.

64. Thanks to the Agency's technical support, Jordan had developed the national infrastructure required to combat cancer. A Swedish company, Elekta, had donated a linear accelerator for cancer therapy worth nearly €2.5 million, which had been financed by donors and through PACT.

65. Jordan attached great importance to the safeguards regime as nuclear proliferation posed a grave threat to international peace and security and the stability of the Middle East. Reiterating its call for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in the Middle East, Jordan urged Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards, which would serve to achieve the universalization of the NPT in the region, rid the region of nuclear weapons and contribute to international peace and security.

66. Lastly, he commended the role played by the Agency in improving living standards and encouraging prosperity around the world through the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

67. Mr PLACHKOV (Ukraine), having wished the Director General a swift recovery, commended the Agency for the progress made in 2018 towards fulfilling its key missions. His country recognized the irrefutable authority and independence of the Agency in applying safeguards and encouraged all States to adopt a CSA and an AP, which constituted the current verification standard.

68. Ukraine strongly supported the SLC and its further development. The consistent and universal application of the concept would help strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's safeguards system and thus contribute to global non-proliferation efforts. Ukraine remained fully committed to its obligations under the NPT, its CSA and its AP.

69. Since the act of aggression committed by the Russian armed forces in February 2014, the Agency had stood fast against attempts to use its framework to recognize a change in the status of the Crimea. Ukraine highly valued the important role played by the Agency in meeting challenges in accordance with its Statute and UN General Assembly resolutions.

70. Ukraine fully supported the Agency's verification and monitoring role in the Islamic Republic of Iran and commended the Agency for providing timely, comprehensive and substantial reports on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and the JCPOA. It welcomed the Agency's efforts to enhance its safeguards operational readiness, for example by forming the DPRK team and executive group within the Secretariat.

71. Although responsibility for nuclear security rested with each State, all countries had a duty to work together to improve nuclear security globally. The Agency played a central role in that regard. In that connection, Ukraine strongly supported the universalization of the CPPNM and its Amendment.

Ukraine also supported the Agency's efforts to strengthen the capabilities of the ITDB, which remained an essential component of the information platform for the Nuclear Security Plan 2018–2021.

72. Nuclear power remained an important component of his country's national economy. It had recently extended the lifetime of three units, started construction of a centralized spent fuel storage

facility and loaded a full core of fuel into a water-cooled, water-moderated power reactor at the South Ukraine nuclear power plant.

73. Nuclear safety remained a top priority for Ukraine. Activities to implement the CNS, the Joint Convention and other legal instruments contributed to enhancing the safety of peaceful nuclear energy use worldwide. In that connection, the Agency had a duty to investigate thoroughly the occurrence of high levels of airborne ruthenium in Europe in 2017, as such incidents had a significant impact on public opinion regarding the ability of countries with nuclear technologies to provide reliable and consistent information about their nuclear activities.

74. He thanked the Secretariat for providing valuable advisory and technical support to Ukraine on a broad variety of issues in the field of technical cooperation. During the 2018–2019 period, Ukraine would continue to cooperate actively with the Agency through, inter alia, the ongoing implementation of a national project to support decommissioning and radioactive waste management at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant units and within the exclusion zone.

75. Commending the comprehensive nature of the IAEA Annual Report for 2017, Ukraine welcomed the fact that it complied fully with the norms of international law, the Agency's Statute and Member States' safeguards agreements.

76. Mr BOATENG (Ghana), having wished the Director General a speedy recovery and an early return to Vienna, said that his country continued to work with the Agency in the sphere of nuclear applications for the training of nuclear scientists and engineers. Ghana had signed a Practical Arrangement with the Agency in September 2012, for an initial and two subsequent three-year periods, for the provision of accredited postgraduate courses at the School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences, an AFRA regional designation centre. A total of 121 postgraduate students of medical physics, and radiation protection and safety of radiation sources, 377 nuclear science and technology Master's degree students and 26 PhD students from 30 African countries, including Ghana, had graduated from the School since its establishment in 2006, and it was gratifying that the School was providing core personnel who would preserve and expand nuclear knowledge in their respective countries.

77. The Government of Ghana was committed to introducing nuclear power to the country's energy mix and expressed appreciation for technical support from the Agency's Department of Technical Cooperation and Department of Nuclear Energy. A Phase 1 INIR mission had been conducted in Ghana in January 2017 and the country had been implementing its recommendations. The Ghana Nuclear Power Programme Organisation was currently compiling a comprehensive report, based on all the Phase 1 studies on the country's nuclear programme to support implementation of the programme by the Government.

78. Ghana recognized the importance of the safe management of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste, having acceded to the Joint Convention in May 2011, and three areas of strong performance by Ghana had been highlighted at the Sixth Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties in 2018. The first was the safe removal and handling of the HEU core from the Ghana Research Reactor, with international cooperation, for conversion to LEU. The operational experience gained had been used to establish the international MNSR Core Removal Training Centre. The US Department of Energy had funded the construction of the Centre, where Nigerian experts were currently being trained for the conversion of their own country's MNSR. The second area was the adoption and implementation of the borehole disposal concept for the timely management of disused sealed radioactive sources. The third area was the creation of a regulatory framework, including the independence of the regulatory body.

79. Under the plan to implement a borehole disposal system through the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission, a suitable site had been identified and implementation documents had been reviewed.

80. Following approval by the European Commission of support for Ghana's Nuclear Regulatory Authority through the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation, staff members were currently attending sessions organized by the European Nuclear Safety Training and Tutoring Institute.

81. The US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, through the IRDP, had been supporting the training of Ghana's Nuclear Regulatory Authority staff and the US Department of Energy had continued to support the development of the regulatory framework in Ghana through the International Nuclear Safeguards and Engagement Programme and its international nuclear security and radiological security offices.

82. Mr HLOAELE (Lesotho) said that his country valued the contributions of the TC programme, including around 100 fellowships, scientific visits, and long-term training programmes. His country had also benefited from the provision of equipment under various projects in fields such as agriculture, water management and radiation safety. Aware of the need to keep up with nuclear security trends, his country was grateful for the Agency's support under the INSSP. Five projects relating to nutrition, agriculture, human health and regulatory infrastructure had been approved for the 2020–2021 TC cycle.

83. The passing of the Radiation Protection Agency bill by Lesotho's national assembly was a significant milestone contributing to the development of an efficient legislative framework, the regulation of nuclear material and radioactive sources and the construction of the country's first radiotherapy centre. Lesotho thanked the Secretariat for its guidance in drafting the bill and for the legislative awareness mission conducted in February 2018. His country recognized the immediate need to establish and maintain an independent regulatory authority.

84. In July 2018, Lesotho had hosted the 12th Stop Cervical, Breast and Prostate Cancer in Africa Conference, which reflected its willingness to collaborate with other African countries in combating cancer. Access to treatment for patients had been expanded through working with Apollo Hospitals in India, where health professionals from Lesotho were being trained to facilitate the establishment of the chemotherapy centre. The Agency had assisted his country in developing its national cancer control plan and bankable project document so that it could realize its goals.

85. Lesotho would have the honour of delivering a statement on the role of nuclear applications in adapting, mitigating and monitoring climate change to the 2018 Scientific Forum. As climate change was a universal phenomenon, a concerted global effort was required to tackle it.

86. Lesotho had developed its second CPF for 2018–2023, which would be signed before the end of 2018, highlighting the continuing cooperation between his country and the Agency.

87. Mr YULDASHEV (Uzbekistan) said that, since his country had begun cooperation with the Agency nearly 25 years previously, much had been done to improve radiation and nuclear safety in his country. The Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia had been initiated by Uzbekistan.

88. With Agency technical assistance, projects had been implemented on: improving radiation safety at cancer centres, procuring high-technology scientific medical equipment, and training personnel in radiation medicine; training in new methodology in university nuclear physics laboratories; the modernization and continual improvement of the nuclear and radiation safety of the research reactor at the Academy of Sciences Institute of Nuclear Physics; shipment of highly enriched spent nuclear fuel to its country of origin; and the decommissioning of the FOTON research reactor which had been using HEU, which would soon be completed.

89. Technical cooperation was an essential tool for transferring and implementing advanced ideas, technologies, and experience in the nuclear field, and Uzbekistan highly appreciated the Agency's professionalism and competence in implementing TC projects.

90. With nuclear power providing approximately 15% of the world's electricity, the role of environmentally safe and economically justified technologies was growing. The Agency's assistance to countries like his own that wished to build nuclear power plants was of great importance. Uzbekistan had decided to construct two 1.2 GW units and an agreement had recently been signed between the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan on the construction of two nuclear power plants. His country hoped to receive technical and expert assistance from the Agency to ensure the establishment of the foundations for safe operation.

91. Strengthening the Agency's safeguards system was important, and having signed an AP in 1998, his country reaffirmed its adherence to the principles of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and strengthening the Agency's authority in that regard. An effective national export control system had also been established in Uzbekistan with Agency assistance.

92. Finally, he wished the Director General a speedy recovery.

93. Mr COULIDIATI (Burkina Faso) welcomed the recent participation of the Director of the Division for Africa in the regional high-level cancer awareness meeting hosted by African First Ladies, held in Ouagadougou in August 2018. The Director had also visited the construction site of the Ouagadougou cancer centre.

94. Burkina Faso particularly welcomed the Agency's technical assistance in the implementation of the national cancer control programme, which had been jointly developed by his country and the Agency. The construction of the Ouagadougou cancer centre, begun in March 2017, was on schedule thanks to support from both the Government of Burkina Faso and the Agency; it was due to become operational in 2019. In terms of human resources capacity-building, he thanked Morocco for providing training for his country's doctors and the Agency for sharing the costs.

95. With regard to agriculture, Burkina Faso had made enormous progress in the use of SIT, becoming the first West African country where that method had been successfully tested. The Insectary of Bobo-Dioulasso had started to distribute sterile male tsetse flies to some countries in the subregion, including Senegal. Burkina Faso thanked the Agency for its support through the provision of specific complementary equipment, particularly the delivery of a mobile laboratory which would facilitate the feeding of the flies reared at the centre.

96. With the Agency's help, researchers had created more than 170 high-yield mutant rice varieties. One of them, a type of low-amylose glutinous rice, fulfilled the expectations of producers as it yielded 7–8 t/ha, and of consumers who required a high-quality sweet rice.

97. With Agency support, a sequencing platform had been set up at the Institute for the Environment and Agricultural Research, and the Nazi Boni University of Bobo-Dioulasso had been equipped with an animal nutrition laboratory. The supply of fully solar-powered incubators to local poultry breeders had removed a major barrier to their work.

98. Regarding water resource management, Burkina Faso welcomed the successful implementation of the project 'Integrated and Sustainable Management of Shared Aquifer Systems and Basins of the Sahel Region', as well as the project that would build on it, 'Adding the Groundwater Dimension to the Understanding and Management of Shared Water Resources in the Sahel Region'.

99. Despite mixed reactions to the development of nuclear power, the Government of Burkina Faso remained convinced that such power represented one means of solving energy problems and combating climate change. It also appreciated the discussions at the regional level under the auspices of the Agency.

100. Projects in past TC cycles had strengthened the national regulatory infrastructure for the control of radioactive sources, radiation protection and safety, and nuclear security and environmental

monitoring. The projects had also enabled his country to: build up its inventory of ionizing radiation sources nationwide; strengthen the regulatory framework for radiation protection, and for the safe and secure transport of radioactive sources; expand the technical capacities of the National Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Authority for the quality control of radiological installations, monitoring the future cancer centre and radiological monitoring of the environment; and strengthen the professional and technical capacities of the defence and security forces in the area of nuclear security.

101. The threat of nuclear terrorism was a concern for all States, in particular those in the Sahel region. It was vital to make every effort to prevent terrorist groups from using radioactive sources, so Burkina Faso called on Member States to support the States in its region in that regard.

102. Burkina Faso welcomed the significant progress made towards the entry into force of the Amendment to the CPPNM following its ratification by the United States of America. Burkina Faso had already ratified the Amendment on 2 May 2014, which reflected its commitment to combating all forms of nuclear terrorism. It called for such physical protection to also apply to Category 1 and 2 sources, as recommended in the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

103. Technical assistance from AFRA and the Agency helped significantly to strengthen the operational capacity of the National Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Authority of Burkina Faso. Valuing the Agency's technical and financial support for AFRA, he appealed to the Agency and the international community to also provide substantial support to the African Commission on Nuclear Energy. The establishment of a fruitful partnership between AFRA and the Commission would be a major asset in the advancement of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology for the development of Africa.

104. He reaffirmed that his country had taken measures to ensure that its financial contributions to the Agency would be paid on time.

Mr ISTRATE (Romania), Vice-President, took the chair.

105. Mr D'UJANGA (Uganda) expressed appreciation for the Director General's visit to his country in January 2018, during which he had held high-level consultations on enhancing technical cooperation with Uganda and attended the official commissioning ceremony for the radiotherapy centre at the Uganda Cancer Institute. Uganda commended the Agency for its support for the restoration of its radiotherapy services.

106. Uganda also commended the Agency for its assistance to Member States in advancing the use of nuclear energy for socio-economic development. The Agency's contribution to safety, security and safeguards would go a long way towards supporting the realization of the SDGs in the areas of food and agriculture, water resources management, industry, and energy development.

107. In furtherance of its national development agenda, Uganda reaffirmed its commitment to developing its nuclear power infrastructure and strengthening its national nuclear safety, security and safeguards regime, in order to introduce nuclear power into the diversification strategy for meeting future electricity needs. It welcomed the Agency's assistance in that regard.

108. He expressed appreciation to AFRA Member States and the Secretariat for supporting Uganda as chair of AFRA, a role it had assumed in September 2017. His country encouraged the AFRA Member States to support efforts to review the operationality of the Agreement, as much had changed since it had last been reviewed in 2007.

109. His country applauded the Agency for its international coordination role in enhancing the nuclear security regime and in monitoring and safeguarding nuclear material to ensure that peaceful nuclear activities did not entail any risk of nuclear terrorism and weapons proliferation.

110. Mr KOSTOV (Bulgaria), said that his country was committed to the international community's efforts to achieve non-proliferation and thereby strengthen global security and stability. Safeguards were key to those efforts and, to that end, Bulgaria called for the universalization of the NPT and AP.

111. Bulgaria fully supported the establishment of a zone free of WMDs in the Middle East and encouraged all States in the region to renew their efforts to convene a conference on that issue with the participation of all stakeholders. Only through the spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding could the desired consensus be reached and progress made towards implementing the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East; in that connection, it was regrettable that the item on Israeli nuclear capabilities had been included on the agenda of the General Conference.

112. Bulgaria accorded high importance to the continuing full and effective implementation of all parts of the JCPOA, whose implementation by Iran had been verified by the Agency. It was important that Iran should continue to abide strictly by all its nuclear-related commitments and cooperate in a timely and proactive manner in relation to site and location access requests from the Agency. The full implementation of the JCPOA would contribute to building stronger and more predictable global nuclear non-proliferation architecture and might result in a better set of instruments for tackling issues such as the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programme.

113. Bulgaria welcomed the agreements reached at the summit between the US President and the DPRK Chairman of the State Affairs Commission in Singapore on 12 June 2018 and expected strong measures to be taken to implement those agreements in order to reach the ultimate goal of the comprehensive, verifiable and irreversible cessation of the DPRK nuclear and missile programmes. Bulgaria called upon the DPRK to return to full compliance with all its NPT and Agency safeguards obligations and to provide the Agency with prompt access to individuals, documentation and facilities.

114. Turning to the Annual Report for 2017, he conveyed Bulgaria's appreciation to the Agency for the revision of the Safety Requirements, taking into account lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, and for its wide-ranging efforts to support Member States in building capacity to manage nuclear knowledge and information. Bulgaria encouraged the Agency to continue supporting human resource development programmes in Member States through activities such as the Nuclear Operators Forum held in Vienna in 2017.

115. At the end of 2013, a preparation programme for the long-term operation of Unit 5 of the Kozloduy nuclear power plant had been submitted to the Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Authority and a periodic safety review had been conducted between 2014 and 2016, on the basis of which the operating licence for Unit 5 had been renewed for a period of 10 years.

116. In 2018, the Bulgarian Council of Ministers had decided, on the basis of a report submitted by the Minister of Energy, to restart the Belene nuclear power plant project for financial reasons and to guarantee the country's long-term energy security. The Ministry of Energy was currently preparing the procedure for selecting a strategic investor, which was due to be completed by the end of October 2018.

117. Bulgaria had been one of the first Member States to host an ARTEMIS mission, in June 2018. The mission had concluded that Bulgaria was committed to the safe management of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel and that the Bulgarian national programme contained all the necessary elements for the safe performance of such activities. The areas for potential long-term improvements identified by the mission would be taken into consideration when developing the Bulgarian national nuclear programme.

118. Bulgaria had welcomed the visit of the Deputy Director General for Nuclear Safety and Security in July 2018, and the opportunity to discuss Agency programmes concerning new nuclear capacities and joint Agency and Member State activities regarding the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants. The

Deputy Director General had emphasized that the Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency was the main national representative of the Agency and played a key role in attracting other Bulgarian institutions to cooperate with the Agency.

119. In accordance with its CPF priorities, in the current TC cycle, Bulgaria was running national projects in the fields of nuclear medicine, environment and agriculture, and was participating actively in various European regional projects.

120. Ms MAJOLA (South Africa), having wished the Director General a speedy recovery, said that recent developments in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation had had some positive and some less positive outcomes. A major achievement had been the adoption in September 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. That Treaty complemented instruments such as the NPT, the various treaties establishing NWFZs, and the CTBT.

121. South Africa welcomed the various Agency reports confirming Iran's compliance with its nuclear-related obligations under the JCPOA and urged all signatories to work tirelessly towards the preservation of that historic agreement. It also supported all diplomatic efforts and initiatives aimed at the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula; the resolution of that key challenge would strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

122. Access to affordable, modern forms of energy was key to economic and human development. Nuclear power was an integral part of the energy system to reduce carbon emissions and part of South Africa's energy mix that provided baseload electricity. Her country had recently released for public consultation the updated Integrated Resource Plan which reinforced its commitment to the energy transition.

123. The Agency's important role in supporting Member States' use of nuclear science and technology to achieve their developmental goals resonated with Africa's Agenda 2063: The Africa we Want and the SDGs. However, for that programme to be sustainable, resources needed to be sufficient, assured and predictable. It was thus crucial that all Member States should pay their assessed contributions on time and in full.

124. Transboundary diseases, such as Ebola, dengue, Zika, and chikungunya, posed a major threat to both animals and humans and slowed down advances in health and agriculture, thereby constituting a major obstacle to poverty eradication efforts in Africa. Through the VETLAB Network project, the Agency continued to assist Member States to strengthen their capabilities to detect, diagnose and characterize those diseases. South Africa, Japan and the United States of America had provided the necessary seed funding for the project; however, more resources were needed in order to respond to the ever-increasing demand for support from Member States.

125. South Africa welcomed ongoing efforts to modernize and renovate the Nuclear Applications Laboratories in Seibersdorf, and looked forward to the successful completion of the project that would transform those laboratories into world-class facilities.

126. Her country continued to work closely with the Agency to implement its safeguards obligations under the integrated safeguards approach. While South Africa supported the strengthening of the Agency safeguards system, it was important that the process should be transparent and inclusive, to inspire the necessary confidence.

127. As part of its commitment to attaining the highest possible standards for its nuclear facilities, South Africa continued to support the objectives of the CNS. It welcomed the Agency's efforts to encourage Member States to become contracting parties to the Joint Convention, and to actively promote the objectives thereof. Her country particularly welcomed the increase in the number of Contracting Parties since 2015.

128. South Africa attached great importance to nuclear security, and appreciated the important role played by the Agency in supporting Member States in developing national security plans, as well as in coordinating global nuclear security efforts. With the Agency's support, her country planned to update its INSSP as well as ratifying the Amendment to the CPPNM. For the global nuclear security system to be truly effective, it must be comprehensive. Similarly, nuclear security should not hamper the right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

129. The Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology to be held in November 2018 would provide an opportunity to further appreciate the enormous strides being made in the utilization of nuclear science and technology towards human progress, particularly in enabling the attainment of the SDGs.

130. Ms PETRICK (Peru), having wished the Director General a speedy recovery, said that, as a founding member of the Agency, her country fully supported the Agency's statutory work in fulfilment of its Atoms for Peace and Development mission.

131. The TC programme was of the utmost importance at both the national and regional levels, particularly through its contribution to the achievement of the SDGs. In view of the benefits ARCAL had brought to the countries of the region, it was essential to extend that Agreement. The support provided by the Agency to Peru had helped to strengthen nuclear medicine and other areas of human health, as well as facilitating progress in industry and agriculture. Peru continued to work towards improving the productivity of its staple food crops, such as quinoa and potatoes, of which there were more than 3000 varieties in the country. It had also begun work to improve coffee, which was a valuable resource for social development as an alternative crop to coca destined for illicit drug trafficking. Peru would therefore make the necessary efforts to pay its contributions to the TCF.

132. Her country stood ready to exchange technical and scientific knowledge with other countries of the region under South-South cooperation. Efforts to find joint solutions to regional problems had translated into the signing of scientific and technical cooperation agreements between the Peruvian Institute of Nuclear Energy and prestigious institutions such as the National Institute for Nuclear Research of Mexico and the Atomic Energy Commission of Costa Rica. Peru hoped to sign similar agreements with other neighbouring countries and was working on mechanisms that would ensure even development of the region in terms of addressing urgent health needs and accessing clean water and food.

133. Peru had identified new areas of technical cooperation with the Agency that aimed at the application of nuclear technology to studies of hydrology, climate change and glaciers, which were particular priorities of its CPF.

134. Peru particularly appreciated the Agency's support in the modernization and operation of the RP-10 research reactor, which was undoubtedly fundamental to converting the country's nuclear centre into a regional technical and scientific cooperation centre.

135. Over one million people had suffered owing to the floods caused by El Niño which had engendered huge losses in the national production system and in infrastructure. She expressed appreciation for the medical equipment donated by the Agency and the Japanese Government to the worst-affected areas of the country, as well as the crucial application of nuclear technology in inspecting the affected infrastructure.

136. Acknowledging the importance of strengthening the nuclear safety and security regime and universalizing the pertinent legal instruments, Peru valued the Agency's role therein, and its support to Member States in technological implementation, capacity building, and continuous regulatory improvement. FORO was a great asset to its members, and her country valued the support that the Forum

received from the Agency in updating, improving and harmonizing the regulations of each of its member States.

137. Her country thanked the Agency and the USA for their support for the repatriation and management of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive sources, which had helped to alleviate the security problem represented by keeping those materials in its territory. As part of Peru's commitment to global security, it had launched a radioactive and nuclear material detection system at its main port, Callao.

138. The implementation of the JCPOA was important to ensuring that the Iranian nuclear programme was of a strictly peaceful nature. Peru welcomed the decision of the majority of the parties to the JCPOA to remain committed to its implementation and to supporting Agency verification. It specifically encouraged Iran to continue to meet its JCPOA commitments and to apply its AP.

139. As a member of the first NWFZ, Peru was convinced of the need to ensure that nuclear energy was used exclusively for peaceful purposes, which was why it had signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and it aspired to the complete elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons, reinforcing the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

140. With those deep convictions, Peru had welcomed the dialogue initiated between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK as well as the Panmunjeom Declaration, which represented an important step towards creating a climate that would lead to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and lasting peace in the region. Her country also had hopes in connection with the meeting held in Singapore between the leaders of the USA and the DPRK. However, Peru joined the international community in hoping that the DPRK would demonstrate commitment and willingness to finding a peaceful solution that would lead to the denuclearization of the Peninsula. Her country called on the DPRK to abandon its military nuclear programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to allow safeguards to be applied.

141. Mr OSMAN (Bangladesh), having wished the Director General a speedy recovery, expressed appreciation for his visit to Bangladesh in 2017 in the context of increasing collaboration. Bangladesh aspired to become a higher middle-income country by 2021 and a front-ranking developed nation by 2041; the peaceful use of atomic energy in various sectors with Agency support would contribute to accelerating its socio-economic development and to achieving the SDGs.

142. Under bilateral cooperation agreements with the Russian Federation, the main construction phase had recently begun for Units 1 and 2 of his country's first nuclear power plant, Rooppur. Implementing an integrated work plan for national infrastructure, which had been developed with Agency support, Bangladesh had already started recruiting and training the necessary personnel to ensure safe operation and maintenance of the plant, and it expressed gratitude to the Russian Federation and India for their assistance and cooperation in training and experience sharing. An independent regulatory authority had also been established to oversee the safety and physical protection of nuclear material and installations, waste safety and the transport safety of radioactive material, as well as emergency preparedness and response.

143. As one of the first countries to have signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in 2017, Bangladesh urged the global community to strengthen and effectively implement the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

144. Through the TC programme, the Agency had been assisting Bangladesh in capacity-building for the introduction of nuclear techniques in various sectors, and he hoped that such support would continue.

145. The RCA was a powerful tool that would continue to promote regional capabilities and expertise in different areas, such as energy, health, agriculture, industry and environment, research reactor and radioactive waste management, nuclear safety, and radiation protection.

146. Mr MUSA (Sudan), having wished the Director General a speedy recovery and return to work, said that, by promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in various fields, the Agency's TC programme contributed greatly to ensuring peace and development and achieving the SDGs.

147. The Sudan had continued to support the implementation of Agency programmes in 2017 and 2018 by hosting regional and international activities such as workshops, training courses and expert visits.

148. In collaboration with the Agency, his Government had developed a national project to establish a reference laboratory for food security, with a view to measuring the residue of insecticides, fertilizers and antibiotics in animal and plant products, thereby improving human, animal and plant health and raising living standards. The Sudan was also working with the Department of Technical Cooperation to produce plant mutations resistant to the high temperatures and water shortages prevalent in the Sudan; a successful strain of corn had been developed, which had been presented at the FAO/IAEA International Symposium on Plant Mutation Breeding and Biotechnology held in 2018.

149. The Sudan planned to greatly expand its cancer control programme by improving existing services and introducing new technologies. It hoped that the Agency and donors would provide support for the implementation of those plans.

150. The Sudan appreciated the Agency's assistance in developing its capacities and national frameworks in the areas of priority specified in its CPF. The Sudan had helped build regional capacities, in particular through the Regional Centre of Excellence for Training and Forensics, which was part of the regional laboratory established during the 2013 conference of the EAPCCO held in Kampala. It was important that the centre, which served as a reference centre for EAPCCO member States, received the support of the Agency and donor States.

151. With the Agency's support, the Sudan was carrying out a national project to train researchers and university lecturers in the field of nuclear science and technology and to develop programmes on new teaching and training methods. His country hoped to set up a virtual research reactor to support those efforts.

152. The Sudan had prepared a self-assessment report on its nuclear programme and, after hosting an initial Agency review mission in May 2017, it had delivered its final report to the Agency in July 2018. An INIR mission in August 2018 had confirmed that the infrastructure developed thus far met the Phase 1 requirements and that the Government was committed to developing the infrastructure for a safe nuclear programme for peaceful purposes; areas for further improvement had also been identified.

153. In November 2017, the Sudan had signed an agreement for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with the Russian Federation. In addition, the Ministry of Water Resources, Irrigation and Electricity had signed an agreement with the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation "Rosatom" to develop a nuclear power plant in the Sudan. His country had also drawn up a comprehensive plan for developing its human resources, under which students had been sent to China and the Russian Federation.

154. Following the adoption of an act regulating nuclear and radiological activities in 2017, the Sudan had established the Sudanese Nuclear and Radiological Regulatory Authority and had adopted a number of regulations in that regard, including provisions on radiation protection for the public, in the workplace and during medical treatment.

155. In cooperation with the Agency, the Sudan had developed a comprehensive nuclear safety plan and had hosted a visit from the Deputy Director General for Nuclear Safety and Security, in addition to several national and regional workshops on nuclear safety.

156. The Sudanese Government had also established the National Technical Committee for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies, comprising representatives from all agencies working in that field. The Committee was in the process of preparing a national nuclear emergency plan.

157. Mr SANTANA NÚÑEZ (Cuba) said that, as a developing country that could attest to the importance of nuclear energy and technology in many areas, his country defended the inalienable right to carry out research on, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without conditions or discrimination and in full compliance with international law, the UN Charter and relevant treaties. It opposed the imposition of undue restrictions on access to the nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes that were required by less-developed countries.

158. Cuba would work tirelessly to promote peace and the negotiated settlement of conflicts, and to ensure that more resources were dedicated to nuclear applications for development and environmental protection, in line with current efforts to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. In that regard, he congratulated the Agency and the Director General, to whom he wished a swift recovery, for their efforts to promote nuclear applications and technical cooperation under the motto 'Atoms for Peace and Development'. Such activities should be prioritized and systematically coordinated with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

159. In 2019, ARCAL would mark its 35th anniversary, with the apt slogan 'Nuclear applications for a sustainable region'. Cuba would be assuming the presidency of the ARCAL Technical Co-ordination Board and would work diligently to harness the opportunities ARCAL offered the region.

160. In 2017, the technical cooperation between Cuba and the Agency had included national and regional projects, training events in the form of fellowships and scientific visits, training courses and technical meetings, expert missions to various countries and regional events hosted by his country. The Agency's TC programme in Cuba had proved an effective mechanism for cooperation and the transfer of technology, scientific information and knowledge, despite the severe constraints presented by the ongoing economic, financial and commercial embargo imposed on Cuba by the USA.

161. Cuba reaffirmed its support for FORO, in particular its action plan for 2018–2020, which set out measures to respond to challenges relating to the long-term sustainability of FORO, the strengthening of links with the Agency and other organizations, regulatory harmonization and the continuation of its rigorous technical programme.

162. In 2017, Cuba had deposited its instruments of ratification of the CNS and of accession to the Joint Convention, demonstrating its genuine commitment to nuclear security. It had recently notified the Agency of its intention to adopt, in a harmonized manner, the Guidance on the Management of Disused Radioactive Sources, supplementary to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

163. Cuba attached great importance to activities under the INSSP and gave priority to expanding border detection architecture and building capacity to ensure its sustainability. It also intended to establish a training centre for front-line officers.

164. His country complied strictly with all its nuclear-related commitments. It had signed a CSA and AP and had received regular Agency inspections, with satisfactory results. It had demonstrated its firm commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and had been awarded double certification for 11 consecutive years.

165. Cuba was proud to belong to the first densely populated area recognized by the Tlatelolco Treaty to be an NWFZ, and of the fact that Latin America and the Caribbean had been declared a zone of peace that promoted nuclear disarmament.

166. The only effective means of ensuring that humanity would never again suffer the terrible impact of nuclear weapons was through their total prohibition and elimination. To that end, Cuba had ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 30 January 2018, demonstrating the political will and commitment of its Government and people to strengthen and consolidate multilateralism and international disarmament treaties.

167. Cuba would continue to support developing countries by sharing the experience it had gained over many years of technical cooperation with the Agency.

168. Mr MUCIŅŠ (Latvia) said that as the NPT approached its 50th anniversary, his country called on all States that had not yet done so to accede to that Treaty that constituted the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

169. As part of its contribution to efforts to promote a rules-based international order to tackle security challenges, Latvia had assumed the Chair of the NSG in 2018.

170. Latvia strongly supported strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of Agency safeguards, and highlighted the importance of the Agency's comprehensive and highly professional monitoring and verification work in Iran. It also recognized the crucial role of the Agency's ongoing efforts to report on safeguards issues, in accordance with its mandate and the provisions of the JCPOA.

171. Latvia strongly supported a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the situation on the Korean Peninsula. To that end, it was necessary to maintain international pressure on the DPRK until real and verifiable progress had been made towards nuclear disarmament. Latvia fully supported the restrictive measures imposed on the DPRK by the UN and the EU, and had applied its own national sanctions. In that regard, it welcomed the Agency's readiness to address the situation on the Korean Peninsula and the nuclear disarmament of the DPRK in accordance with its mandate.

172. The Agency's assistance to Member States was essential to ensuring that new technologies were applied in accordance with the highest safety standards and nuclear security guidance. Similarly, international agreements and standards set the right conditions for the construction of nuclear power plants. The safe construction, use and maintenance of nuclear facilities could have a broad impact on regional and global security. Stress tests and the principles in the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety regarding safety assessments for existing nuclear power plants were important in that regard. The foundation for ensuring nuclear safety globally comprised transparency, international cooperation and an efficient information exchange among neighbouring countries.

173. In the 2020–2021 TC cycle, Latvia planned to strengthen radiation safety culture in the medical field, competence in radiation technologies and safety for biomedicine and material science, and maintain continuous professional improvement of regulatory staff. Latvia attached great importance to continued collaboration with the Department of Technical Cooperation and to the ongoing exchange of best practices with international experts on radiation security and nuclear safety. In 2018, it had hosted a regional training course for nutrition and health specialists on the management of quantitative data.

174. The stable isotope technique to assess body composition would popularize the use of nuclear technologies in that field. It was an important step toward achieving the SDGs because it aimed to reduce non-communicable diseases related to premature mortality and end all forms of malnutrition.

175. The Agency's work was a testament to the effectiveness of international cooperation and dialogue, which was the best approach to solving the complex issues of international peace and security.

176. Mr LEE Jin Gyu (Republic of Korea) said that, in keeping with the global response to climate change, his country's energy paradigm had also changed, and a balanced development of nuclear and renewable energy was encouraged, while the safety of the people was the top priority. In that connection,

under the Republic of Korea's energy transition policy, the relative proportion of nuclear power would be scaled down gradually, while the use of renewable energy would be expanded. However, four more nuclear power plants were planned to be constructed by 2023 to maintain the competitiveness of the country's nuclear industry.

177. The future nuclear energy development strategy to reinforce the comprehensive capability of nuclear technology would focus on research on safety and decommissioning, the expanded use of radiation fusion technologies, and support for nuclear technology exports. The Republic of Korea was enhancing safety and decommissioning technologies to secure the safety of nuclear power plants in operation. It was focusing on safer and more environmentally friendly management of radioactive waste through the development of spent fuel technologies. In terms of safety and regulation, the Republic of Korea was working to meet the Agency's strengthened safety standards, which would establish a regulation system that its people could trust.

178. His country had contributed US \$1 million to the PUI in 2017. In 2018, it had hosted the RCA national representatives' meeting and the Third International Conference on Human Resource Development for Nuclear Power Programmes: Meeting Challenges to Ensure the Future Nuclear Workforce Capability. In addition, it planned to hold the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network annual meeting in November 2018.

179. His country's wide range of technologies for research reactors and fuel could meet both domestic and international needs. Its system integrated modular advanced reactor with improved safety was also well-suited to a small-scale power grid and seawater desalination, and its outstanding nuclear power plant technologies with strong supply chains were based on accumulated experience in construction and operation. With its experience in supplying the international community with reactor technology, his country would continue to share its experiences and technologies in cooperation with the Agency and Member States.

180. Since the Winter Olympics in 2018 and the subsequent inter-Korean summit, the door to dialogue had been opened on the Korean Peninsula. The DPRK had made commitments to complete denuclearization as stated in the Panmunjeom Declaration and the US-DPRK Joint Statement. In addition, the third inter-Korean summit of 2018 would be held in Pyongyang from 18 September 2018. The leaders of the DPRK and the Republic of Korea would discuss ways to establish permanent peace and shared prosperity on the Korean Peninsula as well as practical measures to realize denuclearization. His country would continue to work with the international community to achieve complete denuclearization and the establishment of permanent peace. His country appreciated the Agency's efforts to enhance its readiness to verify the DPRK's nuclear programme, following the recent developments.

181. Mr ALI ABADI (Islamic Republic of Iran), exercising his right of reply, said that allegations made against his country by the USA and Saudi Arabia in their statements that morning were irrelevant and baseless.

182. The JCPOA was a focused agreement that covered only the nuclear issue and should not be linked to irrelevant issues, such as regional ones. As the Director General had reported to the Board of Governors and the General Conference, Iran's nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA were being implemented fully. However, the USA had backed away from its commitments. It was obvious that the US administration was trying to dismantle the JCPOA by obstructing its implementation by all other parties.

183. He questioned whether the US administration was creating a constructive atmosphere in accordance with the stipulations of the JCPOA. Almost all Member States — except for a few isolated countries like the USA and Saudi Arabia — considered the JCPOA an achievement of multilateral

diplomacy and a diplomatically negotiated solution to an unnecessary crisis. Most Member States had expressed their support for the implementation and preservation of the JCPOA, while the USA made statements aimed at destroying that diplomatic achievement.

184. As the JCPOA also stipulated that senior government officials of the E3/EU+3 and Iran would make every effort to support the successful implementation of the plan, including in their public statements, any such statements against the JCPOA by President Trump and US representatives were clearly in violation of the JCPOA and UN Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). The allegations and obfuscations expressed by the USA in its statement that morning regarding Iran and the JCPOA were the latest examples of the continued violation of the plan.

185. The USA would be responsible for any consequences of its reckless policies against the JCPOA, which sent an unambiguous message to others that the USA was not a trustworthy party in any bilateral or multilateral agreement. The unilateral nuclear actions and policies of the USA presented the gravest threat to the future of the NPT and the objective of nuclear disarmament.

186. Iran had shown the utmost restraint in its response to the US decision and thus far had continued to meet its obligations under the JCPOA and to cooperate fully with Agency inspection requirements. The Agency had continued to carry out its verification and monitoring programme without restriction or hindrance. In turn, Iran should continue to receive the economic benefits to which it was entitled.

187. Turning to the statement made by Saudi Arabia, he said that Saudi Arabia had discredited its own image by continuing to spend billions of dollars on spreading extremism, which in turn inspired Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida and other extremists. The failed attempts of Saudi Arabia in the region, in particular its aggression against Yemen, were desperate attempts to distract the international community from the realities there and the catastrophic humanitarian situation that had resulted from the relentless and brutal attacks by the Saudi-led coalition during the preceding three years. Due to the massive, indiscriminate aerial bombings and the blockade of Yemen, which had exacerbated the humanitarian situation there, the international community had an urgent and serious responsibility to take the necessary measures to counter war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law in that country, and hold the perpetrators and their supporters accountable.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.